

Employee engagement and emotional intelligence management essay



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Success of any organization largely depends upon its productive workforce. Research has demonstrated that emotional intelligence plays significant role in influencing the performance and productivity of employees at workplace. Emotional intelligence is the ability to recognize and monitor one's own emotions, ability to motivate one self and others and being empathetic to others. Past research studies focus on the importance and linkage of emotional intelligence with job satisfaction and its impact on the job performance and productivity. Still there is significant requirement of research to be conducted in the Indian context to study the relationship between emotional intelligence and employee engagement which has become the topmost challenge for the organizations in today's world of cut throat competition. The paper attempts to investigate the relationship between employee engagement and emotional intelligence among service sector employees. For the purpose of data collection, questionnaires were administered among 92 respondents by targeting service sector organizations located in the region of Jalandhar. Pearson correlation analysis was utilized as a tool to determine the relationship employee engagement and emotional intelligence. The findings of the study indicated that out of four factors which define emotional intelligence viz well-being, self-control, emotionality and sociability , well being had a significant positive relationship with employee engagement while emotionality showed significant negative relationship with employee engagement.

Key words: Emotional intelligence, emotionality, engagement, sociability and well-being.

OVERVIEW

With the advancements in technology and globalization, organizations recognize that success of any business depends on the human capital which drives and supports the achievement of organizational objectives. Focus of the organizations is now to connect and engage with employees to provide them with an organizational identity. Engagement can help foster cohesion within an organization by creating a shared sense of purpose and loyalty. A fully engaged employee is intellectually and emotionally bonded with the organization, gives his best, feels passionately about its goals and is committed to its values. Research studies have shown that more the employees demonstrate emotionally intelligent behavior at workplace, greater is their level of engagement. This implies that higher levels of engagement and business results can be considered as a contribution of emotional intelligence. Therefore, organizations are now taking initiatives to improve the physical, psychological, emotional and mental capabilities of their employees. Emotional intelligence works as a stress easer at work and has positive effect on employee productivity. Emotional intelligence is thus highly significant for regulating the performance and engagement of employees at workplace. This is because of the fact that social interaction, effective decision-making and high motivation which actually determine the emotional intelligence have a strong impact on the organizational culture. It has become very much vital for management consultants to develop and nurture their talent through the development of emotional competencies of their employees. Through this , employees will be able to contribute effectively and efficiently towards the achievement of organizational goals.

For this, it is also essential for organizations to understand the linkage
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between emotional intelligence and employee engagement. Hence, there is significant requirement of creation of awareness about the importance of emotional intelligence among the employees. Organizations need to follow a proactive approach in this context by developing the emotional competencies and emotional skills of their employees by providing training and propagating research. This can be further supplemented through establishing a link between various components of emotional intelligence and understanding their relationship with the engagement level of employees at workplace.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Framework- Employee Engagement

Kahn (1990) referred to engagement as a situation where people express themselves physically, cognitively and emotionally during work role performance. Schaufeli and Bakker (2003) described employee engagement as “ A sense of energetic and effective connection of employees with their work activities and they see themselves as able to deal well with the demands of their job”. Measure (2004) defined employee engagement as a level of commitment and involvement of employees towards their organization and its value. The primary behavior of engaged employees is speaking positively about the organization, co workers, potential employees and customers, having strong desire to be the members of organization and exerting extra effort to contribute to organization success. Later on Stairs (2005) stated that employee engagement may be defined as the degree of commitment to a particular job. According to Stairs commitment is further divided as rational and emotional where rational commitment is driven by

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self interest of getting some financial rewards and emotional by deeper beliefs in the job or organization. Pritchard (2008) described employee engagement in terms of “ Say, Stay, strive” where say means how employees talk about their organization with others whereas stay stands for commitment and loyalty of employees and strive means employees are willing to do anything for their organization. Markos and Sridevi (2010) described employee engagement as a harmonious and positive relationship between employer and employee, where employee is emotionally committed towards organization and work with zeal. Their study concluded that employee engagement is a totally distinct and a broader concept than job satisfaction, employee commitment and organization citizenship behavior. Organizations are therefore putting special efforts to enhance the level of engagement among their employees.

Emotional Intelligence- Concept

According to Pfeiffer (2001), Mayer and Salovey have been credited with coining the phrase “ emotional intelligence”. Mayer & Salovey (1993) stated that emotional intelligence is a type of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor’s one’s own emotions as well as those of others, to discriminate among them , and to use the information to guide one’s thinking and actions. Emotional intelligence involves abilities that may be categorized into five main domains namely self-awareness which includes observing yourself and recognizing a feeling as it happens, managing emotions(handling feelings so they are appropriate), motivating oneself (channelizing emotions in the service of a goal and emotional self-control), empathy (sensitivity to the feelings of others), handling relationships

(managing emotions in others, social competence and social skills). Goleman (1995) also popularized the concept of emotional intelligence. He suggested that there are two components of emotional intelligence-personal competence and social competence. Personal competence consists of self-awareness, self-regulation and motivation. Social competence consists of empathy and social skills. Further, Goleman et al., 2002 stated that the four main domains of emotional intelligence are self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management. Self-awareness includes an accurate self-assessment and self-confidence. Self-management pertains to emotional self-control, adaptability achievement, and optimism. Social awareness refers to empathy and service, meeting subordinates' or customers' needs. Relationship management covers inspirational leadership, influence, teamwork, conflict management, being a change catalyst, and building bonds. Cooper and Sawaf (1997) stated that emotional intelligence is a concept which has its roots in the theory of social intelligence which is the ability to sense, understand and effectively apply the power and acumen of emotions as a source of human energy, information and influence. They added that emotional intelligence emerges "not from the musings of rarefied intellect, but from the workings of the human heart". Emotional intelligence requires that people learn to acknowledge and value feelings in themselves and others and appropriately respond to those feelings. In this manner they effectively apply the information and energy of emotions to their daily lives and work. Humphrey (2006) demonstrated that emotional intelligence is a key in coping with conflict. The key emotional intelligence elements of empathy and the ability

to recognize and express one's emotions enable one to more effectively deal with the emotionally-arousing process of conflict.

Emotional Intelligence at workplace

Since the social world is rapidly changing, and interpersonal social skills and emotional intelligence are becoming increasingly critical to successful organizational operations (Fisher et al., 2005), organizational leaders and researchers see emotional intelligence as a mechanism for improved organizational performance (Goleman et al., 2001; Robbins, 2005).

Emotional intelligence is related to organizational performance, and leaders who can recognize the relationship can position their organization more effectively to maximize benefits. Management success is contingent on emotional intelligence and on cognitive and technical skills (Skinner & Spurgeon, 2005). Emotional intelligence, the ability to understand people and human interactions (Goleman, 1995), has become a significant factor, even surpassing cognitive intelligence, for effective performance at all levels within organizations (Goleman, 1998; Harvey et al., 2006; Porterfield & Kleiner, 2005). Hence, organizations have become more aware of the dynamic of teams, and the emotional intelligence of the team players, and the effect it can have (Miles & Mangold, 2002; Prasad & Akhilesh, 2002).

Emotional intelligence can have an enormous impact upon the organization, and implementation of emotional intelligence training into an organization will produce positive results (Cherniss & Goleman, 2001). There is a relationship between Intelligence Quotient(IQ), emotional intelligence, and managerial competencies (MQ) (Dulewicz et al., 2005). The higher up the organization one goes, the more important a high emotional intelligence

becomes (Dulewicz et al., 2005; Goleman et al., 2002). Emotional intelligence also motivates people to pursue their unique potential and purpose and activates their innermost values and aspirations , transforming them from things they think about to what they live (Cooper et al., 1997).

Objective of the study

Using the survey of existing literature , it was found that there have been very few studies which demonstrate the linkage and connect of employee engagement with the emotional intelligence.

The present study thus aimed to determine the relationship between employee engagement and emotional intelligence. To accomplish the objective of the study, following hypotheses were framed and tested:

H1: There exists significant relationship between well being and employee engagement

H2: There exists significant relationship between emotionality and employee engagement.

H3: There exists significant relationship between sociability and employee engagement.

H4: There exists significant relationship between self control and employee engagement

Sample size

Sample size consisted of 92 service sector employees particularly from the middle and top level management. Data was collected through

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administration of standardized questionnaires among the employees by targeting six organizations including beauty salons, banks and hotels located in the region of Jalandhar city.

Measures

(i) Emotional Intelligence

To measure the emotional intelligence, Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire was administered among the service sector employees. The TEIQue is composed of fifteen facets that were derived from a comprehensive content analysis of prominent EI literature: adaptability, assertiveness, emotion appraisal (self and others), emotion expression, emotion management (others), emotion regulation, impulsiveness (low), relationship skills, self-esteem, self-motivation, social competence, stress management, trait empathy, trait happiness, and trait optimism (Petrides & Furnham, 2001). These fifteen subscales were used to provide scores on four broader factors: well-being, self-control, emotionality, and sociability (Petrides, 2001).

A high well-being score indicates an overall sense of well-being. In general, individuals with a high score on this factor are fulfilled and satisfied with life. On the other hand, low scores represent individuals that have poor self-esteem and are not satisfied with life at the present time.

The self-control factor refers to one's degree of control over their urges and desires. Individuals with a high self-control score have the ability to manage and regulate external pressures. However, individuals with a low score tend to display impulsive behaviors and are unable to properly manage stress

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Emotionality is the another factor where individuals with a high emotionality score possess a wide array of emotion-related skills: recognizing internal emotions, perceiving emotions, and expressing emotions. In turn, these skills are often used to form and nurture close relationships with family and friends. On the contrary, individuals with a low emotionality score have difficulty recognizing their own emotions and conveying their feelings to others. In turn, these individuals generally experience less gratifying personal relationships with others.

The sociability factor focuses on one's social relationships and social influence. This factor differs from the emotionality factor in that it evaluates one's influence in a variety of social contexts, rather than just in personal relationships with family and friends. Individuals with a high sociability score are good listeners and effective communicators. Individuals with a low score are not as effective at social interaction. They appear unsure of themselves in social interactions and are unable to affect others' emotions (Petrides, 2001).

(ii) The Utrecht Work Engagement Scale

The Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES-17) consists of a total of 17 items based on Schaufeli and Bakker (2003). All 17 items use the same frequency scale from 0-6; 0 being " never" to 6 being " always". Each item referred specifically to measuring one of the three constructs namely vigor, dedication and absorption. Vigor is characterized by high levels of energy and mental resilience while working, the willingness to invest effort in one's work and persistence even in the face of difficulties. Dedication refers to being strongly involved in one's work and experiencing a sense of

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significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride and challenge. Absorption is characterized by being fully concentrated and happily engrossed in one's work whereby time passes quickly and has difficulties with detaching oneself from work."

Analysis

Pearson correlation analysis was utilized as a statistical technique to measure the relationship between employee engagement and emotional intelligence. Hence, Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 17 was used to analyze and interpret data. Correlation measures the degree of association between the two set of quantitative data. It enables studying the relationship between two or more variables. It involves measuring the closeness of the relationship or joint variation between two or more variables at a time. To measure the relationship between employee engagement and emotional intelligence, Pearson correlation analysis was run between employee engagement and four factors of emotional intelligence namely well-being, self-control, emotionality and sociability.

Table 1

Well-being

Emotionality

Sociability

Self-control

Employee

Engagement

Pearson

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correlation

0.446**

-0.546**

0.009

-0.180

Sig.(2-tailed)

0.000

0.000

0.933

0.085

N

92

92

92

92

Table 1 represents correlation analysis. The correlation Table 1 shows the relationship between employee engagement and four factors of emotional intelligence that are well being, self control, emotionality and sociability.

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Hypotheses evaluation

H1: From the Table 1 it can be seen that there exists significant relationship between well being and employee engagement. Well being has significant positive relationship with employee engagement at $r = 0.446$, $p = 0.000 < 0.05$. Therefore, H1 can be accepted.

H2: Table 1 shows that there exists significant relationship between emotionality and employee engagement. $r = -0.546$. It signifies that emotionality and employee engagement has relationship but emotionality has negative but significant correlation with employee engagement at $p = 0.000 < 0.05$. H2 can be accepted.

H3: Table 1 indicates that sociability and employee engagement has positive relationship at $r = 0.009$. It signifies that sociability is positively correlated with employee engagement. However this correlation was found to be insignificant at $p = 0.933 > 0.05$. Therefore, H3 can be rejected. The relationship between sociability and employee engagement is not significant.

H4: Table 1 depicts that there exists no significant relationship between self control and employee engagement $r = -0.180$. This shows that there exists negative correlation between self control and employee engagement with $p = 0.085 > 0.05$. Hence, H4 can be rejected. The relationship between self control and employee engagement is not significant.

Findings

Firstly it is clear that emotional intelligence is positively related with employee engagement. Secondly, certain sub-factors of emotional

intelligence are related to employee engagement i. e. emotionality and well being, while self control and sociability was not significantly associated with employee engagement. One possible explanation for this can be as the data was collected from service sector, their employees should be more emotionally strong as they have to deal with customers day and night. And secondly they require more of well being as this indicates that they are satisfied with their lives and have high self esteem. Employees who are emotionally strong are more engaged as compared to employees who have fewer score on emotionality and well being. It was also found out that emotionality and well being show maximum variation on employee engagement. These are the two factors that affect employee engagement the most out of the four factors namely well-being, sociability, emotionality and self control.

CONCLUSION

This study was conducted with an aim to study the relationship between employee engagement and emotional intelligence among the service sector employees. For these service sector organizations like banks, hotels and beauty salons were targeted. Data was collected through administration of questionnaires among the service sector employees. For administration of questionnaires, only employees from top and middle management of hierarchy were considered because emotional intelligence is required more at these levels. Employees working in these organizations are more engaged in their jobs if they have good level of emotional intelligence. Factors like well being and emotionality have more affect on employee engagement as compared to the other factors. This can be justified as people in service

sector need to have good level of emotionality as in service sector employees are the touch points. They deal with customers in and out. Be it hotel, banks or beauty salons. They need to have emotional stability and should be able to understand other people viewpoints easily. Second most significant factor was well being. People in these organizations are happy from their present life that's why they have good level of employee engagement and is the most significant factor. So it can be concluded that employee engagement in service sector are affected by emotionality and well being factors of emotional intelligence.