

A Study on Employee Engagement and its Impact on Employee Retention of College Teachers in Kolkata

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Abstract:

Employee Engagement is considered to be one of the cornerstones of a successful organizational team performance. The more engaged employees are the more determined and focused they are in achieving the organizational goals. Engaged employees experience more job satisfaction, have less of absenteeism problems and are prone to stay in the organization for a long period of time thereby reducing turnover and achieving better employee retention rates.

When Employee Retention is high in organizations, it is usually seen that employees have no lack of determination and self-motivation to achieve organizational goals. In fact employees with long tenure are seen to align with organizational goals with ease and without any resistance. Employees are the real assets of an organization and are a source of competitive advantage. Therefore retention of talent in the organization is useful for the overall development and growth of the organization.

In this backdrop 231 college teachers were studied for finding out their level of employee engagement in their services. Further it also researched whether the employee engagement of the same participants had any impact on their retention levels.

Statistical measures used in the research were mean, standard deviation, anova, regression and correlation. Cronbach Alpha was also used for checking the reliability of the construct scales.

Key Words: Engagement, retention, gender, teachers

Introduction:

In recent times HR is considered as a strategic partner to the business. Ensuring profitability of the organization is considered one of the major tasks of the human resource department. It is therefore imperative to ensure employees are fully engaged in their jobs, not just physically but also emotionally and mentally. Employee engagement is a critical driver of business and positively impacts employee morale, business productivity and employee retention (Bedarkar & Pandita 2014).

Organizations are able to increase employee engagement by employing strategies like job design by using motivational potential of job resources. Job rotation may also challenge employees, stimulate their learning and development and therefore improve their motivation (Schaufeli, W.B. 2012).

In the higher educational institutions, students are the most important stakeholders. Faculties contribute to the success of the students by providing them support through academic activities, orientation programs, mentorship and learner – centered courses. An engaged faculty in this situation will show increased level of passion, commitment, devotion and involvement in the job. This will lead to success of the students and thereby the educational institution as teaching for the faculty is more of a passion than fulfillment (Srivastava & Misra 2018).

Literature Review:

It was researched that there was a significant difference in engagement levels of women faculty members with respect to their designations. She also found out there was a minor difference was found in the engagement levels of faculties where associate professors were more engaged in comparison to assistant professors and professors. She further stated that associate professors were experienced and well settled in their career and were looking out for opportunities to steadily grow in their career path where as assistant professors were in a job with more work load in teaching, upgradation of qualification and student centric in co-curricular and extension activities. In comparison, a professor was satisfied in his career with strong credentials (Chandel 2023).

There is a positive relationship between organic leadership style and employee engagement. Employees experience higher work engagement when leadership is distributed and the members have the capacity to self-lead and take decisions. Therefore, it is recommended that organic leadership style should be adopted in organizations so that employees will be encouraged to exhibit self-motivating abilities (Dang & Basur 2017).

The older employees are found to be more engaged as they have a good control over emotions and have a fair sense of career identity. Married employees on the other hand experienced more engagement as they are more dedicated at work since they have responsibility in the family. The employees experienced high level of vigor as the primary motive for working was supporting their family and they were grateful for their job, they loved their job and were passionate about it. Employees were dedicated to the job as they thought of their job as important. Recognition in addition have fuelled their morale to continue with the job. Most of the employees scored high on absorption as they felt highly engaged with their jobs and were comfortable with their job environment. In fact, they felt happy when they were working intensively (Redondo et al. 2023).

When teachers are provided with an opportunity to grow and develop their skills, the positive environment motivates them to express themselves and be more engaged with their current job. In addition, a rewarding relationship with coworkers and colleagues makes the job very enjoyable. Here in the midst of a worthwhile connection with coworkers one can express themselves freely, experience psychological safety without the fear of receiving negative consequences and criticism. It was also observed during the research that engaged employees are better performers as they experience positive emotions of happiness, joy and enthusiasm. The positive emotion experienced by the employees motivated them to broaden their awareness and encouraged novel and varied thoughts and actions (Rajput & Sharma 2022).

It was observed that teaching, research and community services were the areas where professors in universities are supposed to be working on. The study pointed out the best practices for faculty retention:

- Monitoring of the health and welfare practices of department or college
- A supportive and welcoming working environment should be created
- Professional development was to be supported and encouraged at every level
- Leadership development should be encouraged at every level

Organizations can retain teachers and faculties in the organization when they provide fair and equitable remuneration. Employees were seen to feel a strong sense of belongingness with the company when compensation was paid fairly. Employees are usually feeling motivated when they are empowered and given the responsibility to control how organizational resources are to be utilized to meet team goals. Organizations should also motivate their faculties by funding FDPs and encouraging teachers to attend them in large numbers. Employees were seen to be retained if their colleges when they felt competent and motivated in their work (Pradhan & Choudhary 2022).

The quality of support received from colleagues and coworkers that early career teachers receive creates a substantial difference to their ability to manage their teaching assignments. Unsupportive colleagues often discouraged the early career teachers to continue with their profession. However when experienced colleagues shared their expertise with the early career teacher, it often acted as a morale booster as it taught them how to cope with demands of the job. It was found in the research that demanding schools often could not provide the emotional and other resources of existing teachers to the newcomers and retention of teachers were lower in such organizations. Teachers mostly entered the

profession with the desire to help students learn; those teachers continued in the profession who were reported to becoming better teachers early on in their career (Buchanan et al. 2013).

Theoretical Background:

Engagement:

Engagement has now become a highly popular concept in business, consultancy and also very recently in academia (Schaufeli & Bakker 2010).

The expression Employee Engagement is defined as a work – related state of mind that is both positive and fulfilling and which comprises of vigor, dedication, and absorption. Employee engagement is not a momentary state but rather is a persistent and pervasive affective – cognitive state. Vigor consists of an individual giving high levels of energy and mental resilience while working who is inclined to willingly invest effort in his work even while facing adverse situations. Dedication implies being determined and strongly being involved in one's work and feeling a sense of value, significance, pride, enthusiasm and inspiration. Absorption is characterized by an employee being fully engrossed in one's work with full concentration, whereby the individual finds it difficult to detach oneself from work (Schaufeli et al. 2002).

Employee Engagement was initially spoken of as personal engagement as harnessing of employees to their work roles, where individuals are using their physical, cognitive and emotional self for carrying out their role performance. Three psychological factors determine whether an individual will be engaged or disengaged at work; meaningfulness, safety and availability. The employee should find his tasks and job roles to be meaningful and valuable. The employee also feels psychologically safe and is able to engage oneself without fear of negative consequences to his self – image. Finally, the employee should have the physical, emotional and psychological resources to immerse oneself completely in their job performance (Kahn 1990).

Since its inception, Employee Engagement has been an important concern for the organizations as engaged employees meant organizations would be earning profitability and gain competitive advantage (Memon et al. 2020). The engaged employees are the assets of the organization who invest high energy in their work, are committed and will not leave the organization as they are very dedicated to their work. Organizations are therefore always on the lookout for engaged workforce who will be working with full commitment, devotion, passion and dedication.

As per research, it has been proven that committed employees perform better and engagement is construed to be a step up from commitment. In this scenario, it becomes important to understand the key drivers of engagement. They are as follows:

- Employee feels valued and involved in the organization
- Employee is involved in decision making
- Extent to which employees can voice their opinion and managers listens to them and values their contribution
- Opportunities to employees to develop their job
- Extent to which an organization is concerned about employees' health and well-being.

(Robinson et al. 2004)

Retention:

Retention is the process in which employer takes step to prevent their talented employees from leaving their company and switching jobs. In fact, retention is an effort by organizations using policies such as training and development, compensation, usage of organization culture, leadership and feedback to retain key employees to achieve organizational goals. Talented workforce is treated as an asset by the organizations as they have a good amount of expertise over knowledge, skills and experience (Munish & Agarwal 2017).

Research has shown that joy of teaching; administrative support and financial support are a few key stimuli for a faculty in joining an educational institution. However, status of tenure of a faculty's job is one of the primary factors for retention of teaching staff. Permanent faculties are more relaxed and their retention is higher than contract based and adjunct faculties who keep on searching for better opportunities. Other factors, which play an important role in retention of faculties, are immigration policies of countries for life time, social benefits and opportunities for children's education and personal investments (Khan et al. 2021).

It was noticed in self – financing degree colleges that individual autonomy, position structure, reward orientation, and warmth and support were major retention factors. However, it was found out that there was no significant difference in all the above-mentioned factors for Arts teachers and Science teachers. Teachers of both the streams were more or less treated equally with respect to retention. When a teacher is in love with the teaching profession, they themselves are self – motivated towards learning new concepts and teaching those concepts to the students. College based innovations and reformations which will benefit student's overall learning and development, are carried out by dedicated and committed teachers. Therefore it is very necessary to retain committed and engaged teachers for the success of an educational organization. Mere existence of knowledge and skill will not create quality education, but motivation of teachers, their enthusiasm and commitment to the profession will result in high quality in academic teaching profession (Srivastava, M. 2024).

Compensation and benefits have been understood to be primary factors in retaining teachers in their positions. Teacher may prefer to work elsewhere if they feel they are not getting paid fairly or are not receiving enough perquisites. Low paid educators who are unable to meet ends meet in their current organization may look out for work in other organizations with higher pay. Also, no access to healthcare or retirement benefits also makes the employees move out of their current jobs. Teacher retention in educational institutions is higher where teachers feel respected and appreciated. On the other hand, staff turnover is higher in toxic school climate where teachers are ignored and undervalued. Retention rate is also lower among teachers who feel lonely and unappreciated by their peers and coworkers. When employees are a part of a supportive and collaborative community they tend to stay back in the organization. Teachers with family responsibilities and young children may want greater work – life balance or a convenient location and may leave the organization also for their personal reasons (Aulia, N. & Haerani, I. 2022).

Hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1:

H_0 : There is no significant difference in employee engagement between men and women employees

Hypothesis 2:

H_0 = There is no statistically significant impact of Engagement on Retention

Research Methodology:

Research Design: The research consists of both descriptive and quantitative methods. The objective of the research was to find out how both men and women experience engagement in their teaching jobs and how it helps to retain them in their current companies.

Sampling: The sample size of the study is 231 teachers from colleges in Kolkata; 113 of them were men and 118 of them were women participants. The sampling techniques used were convenience sampling and snowball sampling. Participants close to the researcher were chosen. Close connections and networks of other participants were also selected for the research as a part of the snowball sampling.

Data Collection: Likert scale was utilised to capture survey data from the participants. Scales were created for constructs such as employee engagement and employee retention.

Data Analysis: Statistical analysis was done with the help of SPSS for Windows, version 20. Levene's Test of Homogeneity of Variance, Anova, Regression and Correlation have been used to analyse data. Cronbach Alpha was utilised to check the reliability of Employee Engagement and Employee Retention. Confidence level of 95 percent was taken into consideration in the study.

Scales Used in Research:

Employee Engagement Scale: Employee engagement typically shows the extent to which employees are passionate about their job (Andrade et al. 2021). The survey questions included in the scale were as follows:

1. Work makes me very happy and fulfilled.
2. I feel recognized and appreciated for my work.
3. I feel valued at work.
4. I find my job interesting and exciting.
5. My job in my current company aligns with my career goals.

Employee Retention Scale: Employee Retention is usually higher for high potential employees (Kyndt et al. 2009). The survey questions included in the scale are as follows:

1. I will recommend my current company to a friend.
2. I plan on working in my current organization for the next 2 years.
3. I will choose to stay back in my current company even if I were offered the same position and salary in another company.

Cronbach Alpha:

Scales	Cronbach Alpha
Employee Engagement Scale	.729
Employee Retention Scale	.870

Table 1

The Cronbach Alpha for Employee Engagement has been found out to be 0.729 and the same for Employee Retention has been found out to be 0.870. Alpha values ranging from 0.60 to 0.80 are considered moderate and acceptable whereas values ranging from 0.80 to 1.00 are considered to be good (Daud et al. 2018).

Results:

Results for Hypothesis 1:

Test of Homogeneity of Variances			
Engagement			
Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
.060	1	229	.806

Table 2

The above Levene's test checks the assumption that the variance of the given groups is equal which is a key assumption in the Anova test. Since the significance in the test is 0.806 which means p – value is greater than 0.05, we have failed to reject the null hypothesis. Therefore the requirement of homogeneity of variance has been met and we can now proceed with the Anova test.

ANOVA					
Engagement					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1.152	1	1.152	3.876	.050
Within Groups	68.060	229	.297		
Total	69.212	230			

Table 3

In the above table we see that significance is 0.05 that is the p – value is exactly 0.05 showing that we have failed to reject the null hypothesis. Therefore there is no statistical difference in the engagement of men and women college teachers.

In the sample we have men (n = 113) with mean engagement score of 3.9062 and standard deviation of 0.53390. On the other hand we have women (n = 118) with mean engagement scores of 4.0475 and standard deviation of 0.55573. The women have a slightly higher average mean score than men employees. However, since we have failed to reject the null hypothesis it means differences in mean scores of both the genders is likely due to random variation rather than a true gender based effect on employee engagement.

Result for Hypothesis 2:

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.738 ^a	.545	.543	.56924

Table 4

a. Predictors: (Constant), Engagement

In the model summary the correlation coefficient R has value of 0.738 which shows a strong and positive relationship between Engagement and Retention. R square has a value of 0.545 which means that 54.5% of the variance in employee retention can be explained by employee engagement.

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	88.771	1	88.771	273.952	.000 ^b
	Residual	74.205	229	.324		
	Total	162.976	230			

Table 5

- Dependent Variable: Retention
- Predictors: (Constant), Engagement

The high F – statistic of the Anova model signifies that the model has a significant predictive power. Since significance is 0.000 and p – value is lesser than 0.05, the model is statistically significant and it can be construed that Engagement does indeed influence Retention.

Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-.829	.275		-3.016	.003
	Engagement	1.133	.068	.738	16.552	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Retention

Table 6

The B – Coefficient of 1.133 means that for every 1 unit increase in Engagement, retention can be expected to rise by 1.133. The Y – intercept (constant) is – 0. 829 and predicts the retention score if engagement was zero. The T test (16.552) and significance (0.000) show that engagement is indeed a significant predictor of retention.)

Therefore the regression equation is:

$$\text{Retention} = -0.829 + (1.133 \times \text{Engagement})$$

Correlations

		Engagement	Retention
Engagement	Pearson Correlation	1	.738**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	231	231
Retention	Pearson Correlation	.738**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	231	231

Table 7

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Correlation between employee engagement and employee retention is statistically significant as p – value is 0.000. The results show a strong, positive correlation between engagement and retention at 0.738. It means as the employee engagement levels increase, the employee retention levels will also increase. This result shows clearly engaged employees are most likely to be retained and stay back in the company.

Discussion:

Work engagement is not gendered for teaching professionals in every situation. Teachers of both genders leave their gender identities while on duty in the academic field and work in the same manner. The academic field demands work output in a timely manner irrespective of ones gender and therefore it has been observed that those teachers who are more attuned to their true selves and beliefs are more likely to be engaged to their teaching jobs irrespective of their genders (Sood and Komal 2023).

The study has results similar to the ones conducted by Chaudhary and Rangnekar (2017), Sharma and Rajput (2021) and Kováčová and Drahotský (2022) where engagement was not gendered for employees. A research was conducted comprising of 4000 Dutch participants where the researcher did not find there was any relationship between gender of an employee and their engagement levels. However, he found out employees with complex jobs who have high level of control were more engaged than others. In addition older employees were found to be more engaged than younger colleagues (Smulders 2006).

Research has further identified that there is a perfect correlation between a compulsory gender sensitivity training and increase of work engagement of women employees in organizations. Organizations which have established successful gender training programs have an enhancement in engagement and participation of women employees (Thomas et al. 2019).

Engaged employees experience happiness, joy and enthusiasm; they are able to create their own job resources and inspire other employees with their positivity, thereby transferring their engagement to other employees. In a hostile work setting, engagement often boosts trust and loyalty enabling employee retention (Gorman 2003). Employee engagement also creates a strong emotional relationship of the employee with their work and organization which ultimately fosters employee retention by increasing employee commitment and loyalty. The researchers have concluded that through synchronized talent management and engagement initiatives it is possible to enhance engagement and commitment of the employees (Pandita and Ray 2018).

Research indicates that there is a critical role of leaders in stimulation of employee engagement. Organizations should develop cultures where employees support one another actively because of increased communication between seniors and juniors. Work related interactions can be increased when seniors are encouraged to coach, guide and mentor their juniors. Organizations therefore should hold training programs to improve supervisory and interpersonal skills of seniors so that subordinates are treated fairly and politely (Agarwal et al. 2012).

It was observed that when there is a higher level of employee engagement, it will create a better employee retention level in the organization. Positive and caring organizations with mentoring schemes, flexible working opportunities and leadership training programs can increase retention. As employees start feeling valued and satisfied there are higher chances of retention as employees are not looking out for alternative jobs (Thomas et al. 2019).

It was seen that disengaged employees are less satisfied with their work, less committed to the organization and more likely to seek work opportunities elsewhere. High level of disengagement can result in employees feeling undervalued and disconnected from their work environment which may lead to higher turnover rates or lower retention rates. Further the researcher have also added that employee engagement reduces turnover, increases productivity, creates a positive work culture, improves employee morale and makes the employees more satisfied leading to cost saving because of less turnover or more retention (Dhandayuthapani and Shalini 2024).

Limitations:

The research was only focused on engagement and retention. Antecedents of both research and engagement were not studied. Further a qualitative research would have found out the mindset of participants very clearly regarding their individual perceptions about engagement. Only full time teachers were studied in the research, part time and adjunct faculties were not taken into consideration.

Conclusion:

The research shows that there is no difference in engagement levels of men and women teachers and this is because in their career both genders put forward their determination and effort boldly leaving behind their traditional gender roles. Women are equally devoted and enthusiastic about their roles just like their men coworkers. On the other hand engagement was seen to be highly correlated with engagement as shown in both regression and correlation analysis. A slight positive change in employee engagement will result in employees being more loyal, faithful and sincere in their work that leads to a longer tenure of the employees.

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