

COMPREHENSIVE STUDY ON IMPACT OF WORK FROM HOME AGAINST EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AND PRODUCTIVITY IN COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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ABSTRACT

Employees that are highly engaged and devoted to their companies provide important competitive advantages, leading in minimal employee turnover and great productivity. Surprisingly, firms of all sizes and kinds have begun spending significantly on policies and practises that encourage employee engagement and commitment. The pandemic COVID 19 has placed an exceptional burden on organisations to keep their staff completely engaged in their job during these times of widespread stress and concern due to the epidemic. The study begins by discussing the variables affecting the workplace engagement of work-at-home workers during the Corona epidemic, as well as the correlation between employee engagement and production throughout the pandemic.

Keywords: Employee Engagement, Pandemic - COVID 19, Productivity.

INTRODUCTION

In the recent years the term Employee engagement occupied a significant place in the organisational concept. Person engagement is exactly the amount of dedication and connection that employee has to his company, notwithstanding its many definitions. Numerous articles in newspapers, blogs, and conference agendas emphasise the significance of employee engagement and assert that it increases profitability and decreases staff turnover. Many executives from around the globe mention employee engagement is one among the top five global business strategies in today's competitive market place and has appeared as a key driver of business success. It is also regarded as the miracle drug for treating the workplace challenges. Engaged employees do not typically switch employment, foster client loyalty, and offer superior outcomes. Occasionally, they serve as ambassadors for the organisation. It is closely related to client happiness and the reputation of the organisation. Hence it is important to give due importance to Employee engagement at times where the businesses are struggling and searching for appropriate ways to maintain business continuity in face of pandemic COVID 19. In fact this is the most appropriate time to organizations to engage your employees to create a resilient work environment. During the first phase of COVID 19 majority of the companies have done solid job in addressing the basic needs of employees like safety, stability and security. Now the organizations need to focus on fostering engagement and productivity in the lives of employees daily. The prerequisites for successful functioning in the remote working environment are supportive managers, influential work culture and proper team work

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Gupta et al. (2015), Three major determinants, namely implicit benefits, organisational culture, and organisational rules, are identified as impacting employee engagement in an Indian corporation that outsources financial services. Nagesh et al. (2019) established a favourable association between employee engagement and the work environment, supervisor and co-worker interaction, training and development, and organisational image. Anitha (2014) did a research on workers at the middle and lower levels of management in small-scale businesses. Working environment and team and coworker relationships have been recognised as the two most influential elements on employee engagement, and it has also been shown that employee engagement has a considerable influence on employee performance. Hassan et al. (2018) did a research on Pakistani service sector organisations and found that self-evaluation and fairness & treatment of workers are the two primary elements that have a greater influence on employee engagement than the services provided by a company. Sharma & Sharma (2014) sought, with the aid of Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory, to identify the major factors of employee engagement. It was discovered that highly engaged workers assist the firm in fulfilling its objective and producing the required business outcomes, and that there is no one ideal technique to engage the workforce. Chandra Sekhar(2013), reviewed various research articles regarding employee engagement and found that highly engaged employees results in more commitment and involved in his/her job resulting in motivated workforce ultimately which realizes in achieving the goals of organization. Organizations must not only concentrate on hiring a qualified personnel, but also take the necessary steps to retain them and cultivate organisational loyalty. According to study done Hanaysha (2016) on Malaysian educational institution workers, job engagement has a strong beneficial effect on employee productivity. So organizations need to focus on work engagement which can be possible through frequent progress evaluation and also they need to focus on the welfare and satisfaction of the employees. It was suggested that the required financial, physical or the material resources which are required by the employees are necessary to reinforce the employee productivity

Need for The Study

COVID 19 which was swept across our nation and the entire world made an entirely different world today than it was earlier or few month ago. Both the homes and the workplaces are experiencing a complete disruption giving raise to uncertainty everywhere. There is neither a quick fix nor a silver bullet. To curb the spread of COVID 19 virus both the central and state governments in India announced and started implementing strict lockdown and social distancing norms resulting the businesses to make huge changes in the work place. Keeping in view the health and well being of employees, organizations decided to move their employees to temporary remote work. Organisations need engaged employees to overcome this challenging period. During the pandemic as everyone are supposed to be at home, employees need to share the same space with partners, kids, parents as well as pets, at the same time they are supposed to coordinate live video calls related to the office. This article explores the elements that lead to increased employee engagement and attempts to establish the connection between employee engagement and productivity Dajani & Zaki (2015).

Objectives of the Study

1. Identifying the elements affecting employee engagement among work-from-home workers during COVID 19.
2. Determine the connection between employee engagement and staff productivity during the epidemic.

Methodology of the Study

The study employs both exploratory and descriptive research methods, as well as both primary and secondary data. Using Likert's five-point scale, a structured questionnaire was used to gather the data. The sample population was selected using the method of convenience sampling, and data were obtained from 380 respondents Bratton & Gold (2017). Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, which speak the Telugu language, were used as the sample population. The respondents worked in both public and private enterprises in all sectors. The sample chosen for collection of data are graduates and post graduates working in all the three levels (i.e.)top, medium and high levels in the organisation. Quantitative method is used and the data was collected through online survey Albrecht & Marty (2020).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Multiple Regression Analysis of Job Engagement on All The Work From Home Factors of Employees

- Dependent Variable = Job Engagement (Y)
- Independent Variable = a) Work-Family conflict (X1)
- b) Utilization of ICT (X2)
- c) Work Location Enjoyment (X3)
- d) Work Location Stress (X4)
- e) Family-Work conflict (X5)
- Multiple R value = 0.492
- R square value = 0.242
- Adjusted R square value = 0.192
- F value = 4.794
- P value = 0.001**

From the results, it was observed that Multiple R value shows that 0.492 (49.2%) strong is the linear relationship between job engagement and the factors of work from home Table 1.

Table 1 VARIABLES IN MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSIS					
Variables	Unstandardized coefficient (B)	SE of B	Standard co-efficient (beta)	T value	P value
Constant	2.026	0.676	-	2.998	0.004**
Stress related towork Location	0.060	0.106	0.066	0.565	0.574
Enjoying working from home	0.395	0.082	0.499	4.827	<0.001**
Utilization of ICT	0.075	0.114	0.067	0.655	0.514
Family-Work conflict	-0.005	0.112	-0.005	-0.041	0.967
Work-Family conflict	0.114	0.111	0.141	1.026	0.308

** signifies significant at 1% level.

The equation for multiple regression is.

$$Y = 2.026 + 0.060X1 + 0.395X2 + 0.075X3 - 0.005X4 + 0.114X5$$

$$\text{Job Engagement} = 2.026 + 0.060 \times \text{work location stress} + 0.395 \times \text{work location enjoyment}$$

+ 0.075 x Utilization of ICT – 0.005 x Family-work conflict + 0.114 x Work-family conflict Guan & Frenkel (2018). From the above equation of job engagement it is observed that if there is an increase in family-work conflict then the job engagement of employees’ decreases Ng Kim Soon (2015). If there is an increase in work location stress, work location enjoyment, utilization of ICT and work-family conflict the job engagement of employees increases Babu & Krishna (2016).

Family - work conflict is how Family related issues are interfering with work and how they are showing impact on job-related duties when working from home Parakhina et al. (2017).

Work- family conflict is the way work related aspects are showing impact on family.

The above results clearly show that employee engagement decreases if there is an increase in family-work conflict. But employee engagement increases though work is conflicting with the family. Despite of the family work conflict and the strain it is causing employees are enjoying the work from home and are getting more engaged while working from home. Also provision and utilization of ICT also shows a positive impact on the job engagement Yadav & Katiyar (2017). Managers are successful in making the employees full engaged by constantly motivating and supporting using different ICT tools like Whats App, Webex, Zoom etc Dash & Sethi (2015).

A Multiple Regression for Productivity and job Engagement

Dependent variable = Productivity (Y)

- Independent Variable = Job Engagement (X)
- Multiple R value = 0.504
- R square value = 0.254
- Adjusted R square= 0.245
- F value = 26.936
- P value = <0.001**

From the results, Multiple R value determines that 0.504 (50.4%) as it shows that there exists relationship between productivity and job engagement Patro (2011).

R square value is 0.254 (25.4%) of total variation in productivity can be explained by the job engagement factors Patro (2013).

Adjusted R square value is 0.245 (24.5%) reliability is present in the regression equation Table 2.

Table 2 VARIABLES IN MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSIS					
Variables	Unstandardized coefficient (B)	SE of B	Standard co-efficient (beta)	T value	P value
Constant	1.045	0.512	-	2.041	0.045*
X	0.615	0.118	0.504	5.190	<0.001**

** signifies significant at 1% level.

The equation for the multiple regressions is

$$Y = 1.045 + 0.615X$$

Productivity = 1.045 + 0.615 x Job engagement.

From the above equation of productivity it Osborne & Hammoud (2017) is observed that if there is an increase in job engagement then the productivity Thakur (2014) of the employees also increases Bedarkar & Pandita (2014).

CONCLUSION

Corona virus, though is a health crisis, it is providing an unimaginable opportunity for the

companies to transform and is expediting one of the biggest transformation in business in decades. A research which was conducted in the mid of the pandemic exhibited an improvement in employee engagement when compared with the previous years. The research showed that amidst the pandemic employees are able to get engaged better and are trying to overcome the stress and stress resulting from work-family and family-family conflicts. ICT tools are playing a major role in overcoming the barriers of location stress for connecting and collaborating with the team members, thus resulting in higher productivity.

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Received: 20-Jul-2022, Manuscript No. AMSJ-22-12348; **Editor assigned:** 04-Jul-2022, PreQC No. AMSJ-22-12273(PQ); **Reviewed:** 18-Jul-2022, QC No. AMSJ-22-12273; **Revised:** 26-Aug-2022, Manuscript No. AMSJ-22-12273(R); **Published:** 02-Sep-2022