

# A STUDY OF MEASURING THE MODERATING EFFECT OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT ON CAREER DEVELOPMENT

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## ABSTRACT

*A number of studies have shown that employees tend not to be fully engaged in their work. Thus, taking a clue from the previous studies the current research work was undertaken linking the employee engagement with career development. The career development program is an integral part of any comprehensive employee development system. The current research work has undertaken Career Development as the dependent variable and Employee Engagement as an independent variable. The research design used for the study is descriptive and quantitative. Data was collected online using Google form from 337 samples having varied work backgrounds and working at different levels of organization using a structured questionnaire with 5-point rating scale. Findings of the current research work suggest that the employee engagement has many positive outcomes for the organization, especially in developing the career of employee. In addition, the current research work indicates that the employee engagement is having predictive validity for future endeavor in career development space for the organization. The analysis of data also demonstrates that the additional personal variable of age, income, qualification, gender and experience has a moderating effect on the predictive capacity of employee engagement constructs.*

**Keywords:** Employee Engagement, Career Development, Employee Development.

## INTRODUCTION

Several studies have found that employees, in general, are not fully engaged in their work and in this context Employee engagement is particularly essential today. They do what is required of them but do not contribute extra mental and physical effort to be excellent. The need for the study is directed towards strengthening the area of employee engagement by analyzing the effect on career development. The linkage of employee engagement with career development as one of the important outcomes will cover the gaps in human development in the organization. The study attempts to cover the question of employee engagement with special reference to career development. The current study aims at presenting a coherent account of employee engagement and its impact on career development of employees working in organizations. The interaction of additional variable has also been taken into account while covering for relationship between employee engagement and career development variables. Employee engagement dimensions are measurable and can be influenced by organizational practices. One of the most reliable measures of engagement was designed and developed by Gallup organization is having 12 standard questions on engagement issues. Gallup model classify employees into Engaged, Actively disengaged, and not engaged Cheng et al. (2022).

Career Development (CD) program is an integral part of any comprehensive employee development system. A career may be defined as an “*Individually perceived sequence of attitudes*

and behaviors associated with work-related experiences and activities over the span of the person's life" The objective of career development is to ensure that there is a talent flow that creates and maintains the required talent pool in organization (Hall, 1976). The upward view of a career progression does not always integrate with the current conditions of leaner and fitter organizations with fewer promotion opportunities .With fewer opportunities for career progression available, lateral moves like job rotation ensures continual career development.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The survival of corporate industries depends on maximizing profits from capabilities at hand, while identifying and amending to the fact that what may work at present may not essentially work in the upcoming days (Kortmann et al., 2014). To make or maintain the profitability of the company, leaders associated must work firmly to engage employees (Kortmann et al., 2014).The conceptualizations of employee engagement fall into two main categories, namely, those that analyze the employee engagement as a psychological state or attitude and those that view it as a form of behavior (Macey & Schneider, 2008). Schaufeli et al. (2002) define the attitudinal employee engagement as "A positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication and absorption".

Career development has been defined as a succession of related jobs, arranged in a hierarchy of prestige, through which persons move in an ordered, predictable sequence (Wilensky, 1960). Careers consist, objectively, of a series of status and clearly define offices. Subjectively, a career is the moving perspective in which the person sees his life as a whole and interprets the meaning of his various attributes, actions and things which happen to him (Hughes, 1937). Kanter (1989) explains traditional organizational career as "Bureaucratic" career. The "professional" form of career (Kanter, 1989) is defined by craft or skill; Kanter further says (Kanter, 1989) professional occupational status is achieved through the 'monopolization of socially valued knowledge' and "Reputation" is a key resource for the individual. The "Entrepreneurial" career develops 'through the creation of new value or new organizational capacity' (Kanter, 1989). Its key idea is the capacity to create value, while freedom, independence and control over tasks and surroundings are the outcomes. A "Bureaucratic" career has security and a "professionals" can grow and command a market rate. However, the entrepreneur benefits from exploring opportunities. It is the "Bureaucratic" form of career that is now under challenge, but the "Professional" and "Entrepreneurial" career forms are thriving (Watts et al., 1996). Hall (1976) sees career development as the "Protean career", in which people engage in 'interminable series of experiments and explorations' (Super et al., 1996).

### Research Gap

Most of the studies which have been undertaken to explain the phenomena of employee engagement deals with finding out antecedent of employee engagement. In most of the studies, career development has been equated with upward mobility of employee, which is mostly an internal perspective. The broader view of career development which defines it in terms of individual development as well as growth has been particularly absent. Therefore, this study fills a research gap on the lines of contributions of employee engagement practices which is especially oriented towards career development.

### Research Objectives

1. To measure the relationship between employee engagement and career development.

2. To find evidence about the causality of employee engagement on career development.
3. To assess if demographic variables such as age, experience, qualification, gender and income act as a moderator on the relationship between employee engagement and career development.

## **RESEARCH HYPOTHESES**

Seventeen hypotheses were generated for the study. Null Hypotheses have been stated as follows;

**H<sub>10</sub>:** *There is no significant relationship between employee engagement and Career Development.*

**H<sub>20</sub>:** *Employee engagement in organizations will not result in employees' career development.*

**H<sub>30</sub>:** *There is no moderation effect of employees' experience on the relationship between employee engagement and career development.*

**H<sub>40</sub>:** *There is no moderation effect of employees' age on the relationship between employee engagement and career development.*

**H<sub>50</sub>:** *There is no moderation effect of employees' income on the relationship between employee engagement and career development.*

**H<sub>60</sub>:** *There is no moderation effect of employees' qualification on the relationship between employee engagement and career development.*

### **Scope of the Research**

The scope of the study is an attempt to evolve a human system of employee engagement in organizations. This system would help in developing a robust system of career development for employees. This study is confined to manufacturing industries, but the range of observation would also be applicable in sector other than the studied sector in developing a generalized model of employee engagement directed towards career development.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **Career Development**

This dependent variable indicates the extent to which individuals are expected to progress in their career. A questionnaire was developed to measure this variable. This scale has 12 variables with a reliability of .843.

### **Employee Engagement**

This independent variable was tapped by using scale consisting of 12 variables with a reliability of .839.

### **Research Design**

The research design used for the study is descriptive and quantitative. As it is a quantitative research, hypotheses have been formulated; a representative sample is selected to collect data. The analysis and finding have been derived using suitable statistical tools.

### **Sample Design**

The sample size of 337 is selected using a sampling frame where each element of the population was listed. The primary business activity of selected organizations are manufacturing of cement, engineering and refractory. Data was collected online using Google form from varied work backgrounds and different levels of organization using a structured questionnaire with 5-point rating scale. These individuals were chosen through random sampling technique using

random number tables, where each and every member of the population has an equal chance of being included in the sample (Table 1).

## RESEARCH DATA ANALYSIS

	<b>N</b>	<b>Min.</b>	<b>Max.</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Dev.</b>	<b>Variance</b>
Excellent work place	337	1	5	3.78	.949	.900
Attachment and dedication	337	1	5	3.89	.875	.765
Involvement	337	2	5	3.86	.934	.872
Understanding mission	337	1	5	3.86	.938	.880
Participation	337	1	5	3.58	1.005	1.01
Contributions	337	2	5	3.94	.925	.855
Feeling of pride	337	2	5	3.52	1.225	1.500
Discretionary effort	337	1	5	3.94	.832	.692
Care for Organization	337	1	5	4.14	.670	.449
Personal accomplishment	337	2	5	4.00	.800	.640
Goal achievement	337	2	5	4.01	.822	.675
Excitement in the job	337	2	5	3.48	1.119	1.252
Valid N (list wise)	337					

Source: Primary Data.

## Interpretation

The variance on all the variables is high, indicating that the most respondents are very close to the mean on all the variables. Overall, most of the respondents perceive themselves to be engaged at the workplace (Table 2).

	<b>N</b>	<b>Min</b>	<b>Max</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Dev</b>	<b>Variance</b>
Career Development	337	1	5	3.38	1.187	1.408
Potential development.	337	2	5	3.22	1.126	1.268
Career prospects	337	1	5	3.43	.962	.925
Advancement	337	1	5	3.45	1.032	1.065
Performance	337	2	5	3.26	1.036	1.073
Learning & Development	337	2	4	3.38	.924	.853
Counselling	337	1	5	3.28	1.179	1.390
Appraisal	337	2	5	3.39	.916	.839
Cross-functional transfers.	337	1	5	3.40	.995	.990
Job rotation	337	1	5	3.12	1.144	1.308
Mentoring	337	1	5	2.91	1.317	1.734
Work flexibility	337	2	5	3.30	1.005	1.010

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### Interpretation

From the results, it may be seen that most of the respondents have positive view of the career development climate (Table 3).

### Hypothesis Testing

*H<sub>10</sub>: There is no significant relationship between employee engagement and Career Development.*

*Results: The obtained value indicates substantial relationship between the two variables, i.e. large amounts of employee engagement variable tend to accompany large amounts of career development. Most of the correlation coefficients among variables are significant ( $p < .05$ ).*

*H<sub>20</sub>: Employee engagement in organizations will not result in employees' career development.*

<b>Sources of Ariation</b>		<b>SS</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Variance</b>	<b>F ratio</b>	<b>Level of Significance</b>
1	Regression	9769.686	3	3256.562	103.304	.000 <sup>a</sup>
	Residual	10497.623	333	31.524		
	Total	20396.320	336			

Source: Primary Data.

a. IV: Drive, Commitment, Proactive Behavior

b. DV: Career\_Development

## Interpretation

The F ratio of 103.304 with 3 degrees of freedom is significant at the level of 0.001. Therefore, null hypothesis is rejected and the overall regression equation is statistically significant. Thus, hypothesis 2 is substantiated i.e. Employee engagement in organizations will significantly result in the career development of employees (Table 4).

*H3<sub>0</sub>: There is no moderation effect of employees' experience on the relationship between employee engagement and career development.*

Table 4 INTERACTION					
	R2-chng	F	df1	df2	P
X*W	0.0819	14.778	3	329	.0000

Focal predict: COMMIT(X)  
Mod Var: EX(W)

## Interpretation

Overall interaction with R<sup>2</sup> change of 8.19 % is statistically significant (Table 5).

*H4<sub>0</sub>: There is no moderation effect of employees' age on the relationship between employee engagement and career development.*

Table 5 EMPLOYESS ENGAGEMENT					
	R2-chng	F	df1	df2	p
X*W	0.014	2.798	3	329	0.0397

Focal Predict: DRIVE (X)  
Mod Var: AGE (W)

## Interpretation

Overall interaction with R<sup>2</sup> change of 1.4 % is statistically significant (Table 6).

Table 6 AGE AND FOCAL PREDICT					
	R2-chng	F	df1	df2	P
X*W	0.059	10.498	3	329	.0000

Focal predict: COMMIT(X)  
Mod var: AGE(W)

## Interpretation

Overall interaction with R<sup>2</sup> change of 5.9 % is statistically significant (Table 7).

*H5<sub>0</sub>: There is no moderation effect of employees' income on the relationship between employee engagement and career development.*

<b>Table 7</b>					
<b>COMMITMENT PROACTIVE BEHAVIOUR</b>					
	R2-chng	F	df1	df2	P
X*W	0.0121	2.327	3	329	0.0734

Focal predict: DRIVE (X)

Mod var: INCOME (W)

### Interpretation

Overall interaction with  $R^2$  change of 1.21 % is statistically not significant (Table 8).

<b>Table 8</b>					
<b>CARRER DEVELOPMENT</b>					
	R2-chng	F	df1	df2	P
X*W	0.0116	1.889	3	329	0.1291

Focal predict: COMMIT (X)

Mod var: INCOME (W)

### Interpretation

Overall interaction with  $R^2$  change of 1.16 % is statistically not significant (Table 9).

<b>Table 9</b>					
<b>INTERACTION MODERATE VALUES</b>					
	R2-chng	F	df1	df2	P
X*W	0.0043	0.598	3	329	0.5789

Focal predict: P\_BEHAV (X)

Mod var: INCOME (W)

### Interpretation

Overall interaction with  $R^2$  change of 0.43 % is statistically not significant (Table 10).

**$H_{60}$ :** *There is no moderation effect of employees' qualification on the relationship between employee engagement and career development.*

<b>Table 10</b>					
<b>MODERATION EFFECT OF EMPLOYESS</b>					
	R2-chng	F	df1	df2	p
X*W	0.024	7.596	2	331	0.0006

Focal predict: DRIVE (X)

Mod var: Qualif (W)

### Interpretation

Overall interaction with  $R^2$  change of 2.4 % is statistically significant (Table 11).

Table 11 INTERACTION					
	R2-chng	F	df1	df2	p
X*W	0.0929	25.279	2	331	0

Focal predict: COMMIT (X)  
Mod var: Qualification (W)

**Interpretation**

Overall interaction with  $R^2$  change of 9.29 % is statistically significant (Table 12).

*H<sub>70</sub>: There is no moderation effect of employees’ gender on the relationship between employee engagement and career development.*

Table 12 FOCAL PREDICT					
	R2-chng	F	df1	df2	p
X*W	0.0106	5.086	1	333	0.0245

Focal predict: COMMIT (X)  
Mod var: Gender (W)

**Interpretation**

Overall interaction with  $R^2$  change of 1.06 % is statistically significant

**FINDINGS**

1. The study indicates the positive association between employee engagement and career development. The results indicate that the number of employee engagement variables has significant correlation with career development, with coefficient value of 0.59 (highest) at p value of 0.5.
2. Employee engagement is having predictive effect for career development in the organization. A significant regression equation was found (F=103.304, p=.0001) with an adjusted R2 of .478.
3. The predictive effect of employee engagement on career development is moderated by variation in employees’ experience. Also, the predictive effect of employee engagement on career development is moderated by variation in employees’ Age.
4. The predictive effect of employee engagement on career development is not moderated by employees’ levels of income. The predictive effect of employee engagement on career development is moderated by employees’ qualification.
5. The predictive effect of employee engagement on career development is moderated by gender. That is, the gender of the employee influences whether or not employee engagement has a positive effect on Career development.
6. Employee engagement in organizations is influenced by the age of the employees. Research has indicated that there are significant between age-group mean differences on Employee Engagement with F statistics equal to 18.561 with a p-value of .0001. Similarly, Employee engagement in organizations is influenced by the experience of the employees. Research has indicated that there are significant between Experience-group mean differences on Employee Engagement with F statistics equal to 17.208 with p-value of .0001.
7. Career development in organizations is influenced by the age of the employees. Research has indicated that there are significant between Age-group mean differences on Career development with F statistics equal to 3.903 with a p-value of .009. Similarly, Career development in organization is influenced by the experience of the employees. Research has indicated that there are significant between Experience-group mean differences on Career development with F statistics equal to 3.696 with a p-value of .012.



8. Career development experience in organization is not affected by the income- levels of the employees. Research has indicated that there are no between Experience - group mean differences on Career development with F statistics equal to 2.355 with a p - value of .072.
9. Career development in organization is influenced by the qualification of the employees. Research has indicated that there are significant between qualification-group mean differences on Career development with F statistics equal to 3.655 with a p – value <.05. However, Career development in organizations is not affected by the gender. Research has indicated that there is no significant difference between male and female employees with respect to Career development.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it would be worthwhile to mention that employee engagement has many positive outcomes for the organization, especially in developing the career of employee. Career development, perspective being either subjective or objective, of the employees of an organization is vital to gain competitive advantage. The study indicates that there is an association between employee engagement and career development. In addition, employee engagement is having predictive validity for future endeavor in career development space for the organization.

The analysis of data demonstrates that the additional personal variable of age, income, qualification, gender and experience has a moderating effect on the predictive capacity of employee engagement constructs. Therefore, organizations have to suitably modify the employee engagement programs taking into account the personal variables to achieve the career development objectives for the employee. Besides, employee engagement level independently varies with age, income and experience of the employees. Career development experiences also vary with age and experience of the employees, except level of income.

## LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

The organizations selected for study were all in the manufacturing sector. Today, the vast majority of organizations are all in the service sector. These organizations are having a distinct set of culture and demographic profile. Therefore, research covering these dimensions will have to be suitably factored the characteristics of the industry.

As the Covid-19 has affected the People dimensions within organizations, the employee engagement and career development approach may evolve and take on new nature and characteristics in the near future, while the log-term stability of these novel concepts of people management may remain intact.

The study is not having organizational level as a demographic classification

## Scope of the Future Work

Employee Engagement must be recognized as an integral part of any program of career development in organization. It is the responsibility of operation managers, employees and the top team of the organization. Career development plan must be stimulating and realistic in all respects and should be available to all eligible employees.

There is a scope to consider career development as an umbrella function encompassing other human resource development activities in organizations. This could be an area of exploration by the researchers in order to improve the status and contribution of the people management activities to the growth and development of the organizations.

Many of the theoretical frameworks of employee engagement is behavioral in nature, the challenge is to transform these into practical frameworks for employees' development.

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