

# *The Macrotheme Review*

*A multidisciplinary journal of global macro trends*

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## Employee Engagement – Review

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### Abstract

*The work comprises of review of papers on “Employee Engagement”. The concept being relatively new still has a lot of scope to be researched upon. It is very hard to come up with a definition that is inclusive of all the constructs which make up employee engagement. The significance of human resource has now been identified, it is easy to replicate almost all the resources which an organization has but it is very difficult to replicate an organization’s human potential. A satisfied and engaged workforce can act as a competitive advantage for any organization. Employee Engagement includes psychological as well as emotional quotient and effects on an employee’s performance. It is through perception of the job and workplace an employee has in his/her mind that gives meaningfulness and satisfaction which plays a very crucial role in employee engagement which ultimately results in performance. It has been observed during review that employees with high levels of engagement have shown high performance levels too. This is the reason not only researchers are studying employee engagement topic with different dimensions.*

Keywords: Employee engagement, performance, psychological and emotional quotient

### 1. Introduction

Employee Engagement is a contemporary topic which is gaining importance not only in the field of Human Resource but in the organizations also. It has been realized by the organizations that the most intangible asset the human resource which is fully engaged and satisfied can provide an organization a sustainable competitive advantage in the market over its rivals as it is very difficult to duplicate the human potential of any organization. This is the reason the researchers have chosen the work of reviewing various papers present on of “Employee Engagement”.

The main objective of this work was to review papers on employee engagement and to understand the concept. Being a contemporary topic finding a definition which encompasses all the aspects highlighted by different researchers is difficult. The concept of employee engagement is still at a very nascent stage hence a comprehensive definition of the same is still not available.

Employee engagement constitutes variety of constructs like organization citizenship behavior (OCB), psychological meaningfulness and safety of work, emotional aspects attributed to workplace and the job, environmental factors and perception an employee has of the workplace and the job he/she is doing.

The researchers in their work have made an attempt to encompass important work done by various other researchers in the field of employee engagement and also make an interpretation of the understanding of the work reviewed. It is one of the burning topics due to its inherent advantages. This topic gives an insight to the psyche of employees and the organizations and also helps human resource professionals to come with practices which can enhance the levels of employee engagement within an organization. The work is an attempt to have a better understanding on the same by reviewing thirty papers on employee engagement.

## 2. Review Work

Solnge Le Jeune in “Employee engagement - How human capital management can drive business returns” (2012) emphasizes on the fact that employee should be treated as an asset of the company which would bring in profits rather than viewing them as a cost to be managed. It is basically the way an organization views its employees which make up the culture and policies of an organization and these in return affect the engagement of the employees. This is the core reason why human resource management is now viewed as profit centre and not cost centre. Organizations have understood that the fact that it is the human resource of an organization which is crucial for its success as any other resource can be replicated but it is the people of an organization which cannot be replicated and are hence can be one of the competitive advantage on which an organization can capitalize on. Human capital management also deals with the concepts of employee engagement, employee retention and employee satisfaction. These concepts have been identified as the key drivers to profit maximization and so are seen as potential strengths of any organization. According to the study an area where the situation has been improving continuously is employee engagement which is a multi definition notion. It is the notion which broadly includes that aspect of human resource management that mainly focuses on employee’s commitment to his/her work and workplace. It is an amalgamation of attitude, personality, demographics and working environment. It also encompasses various constructs which are beyond the scope of work related issues. It has become so significant that some companies have already taken hold of the rationale behind the concept of employee engagement and its potential impact on employee retention and the optimization of human resources. Another area of focus is employee well-being, from occupational health and safety through lifestyle to management of stress, as it is increasingly perceived as a key determinant of employee engagement, and it presents heavy downside risks.

Dr. C. Swarnlatha and T.S. Prasanna in “Employee Engagement-Literature Review” (2012) have defined employee engagement as a positive attribute which an employee has towards an organization and the values of the organization and the employees. Due to its inherent attributes organizations have realized its significance in the workplace which has accounted for increased popularity in today’s world. According to the study employee engagement affects the organization and due to the inherent advantageous offered by employee engagement, organizations should focus more on the parameters which are responsible for increasing the levels of the same than any other parameters. It proposes that an organizations one of the main focus should be its employees as they are the most powerful contributors to an organizations rise or fall and hence decide its competitive position in the market. It is the engaged employees who with the virtue of being highly motivated create a base of engaged consumer base. In the study it has been highlighted that an engaged employee will assist an organization to realize and meet its mission and vision and will further execute strategic plans and objectives for the organization and in

return will generate required business results. It has been therefore suggested that the process of employee engagement and the programs which facilitate employee engagement should be on a perpetual basis. The process should provide a room for continuous learning, training, improvement, up gradation of knowledge and measurement of the same. The paper focuses on various aspects which influence employee engagement which a practitioner should keep in mind. It has been noticed that leaders outperform their competitors in terms of profitability and it is the engaged employees which provide leader companies with the real competitive edge over its rivals. There exists a strong relationship between engaged employees and profitability of an organization. Hence every organization's endeavor should be to identify various factors which affect the employees and leverage the factors which improve the levels of engagement.

In his work Muhammad Anther (Employee Engagement – A Review of Literature and Academic Definition 2011) has reviewed different papers which have defined employee engagement and he has tried to give a comprehensive definition of his own which is not only complete but also encompasses various aspects of the concept. In the paper various drivers which are responsible for employee engagement have been identified. Employee engagement focuses on personal interest and professional development of individuals. Thus the prerequisite of having high employee engagement is to have emotionally connected employees who are not only have emotional attachment with work at workplace but are connected to it in places where it can be realized. It is believed by HR that employee engagement is closely related to what employee feels about the work and the workplace and how much connected does he feels in the organization and the way they are treated. Though there are few individuals who might never feel connected and hence do not perform up to their potential no matter how much support they get from the organization, but this lot of people is very less in number. But maximum numbers of employees want to contribute to a significant purpose of the organization. Employee engagement is an instrument that identifies the level of attachment that an employee feels with the organization. Employee engagement has also been defined as the degree to which an employee is committed to his/her work and is willing to go that extra mile if need be. Hence it is the emotional connection and the intellectual excitement which an individual experiences with the organization and the level of trust he/she implant in the core values of the organization. The researchers have also described the concept as a series of events that helps a company to emotionally involve an individual, where the employee is ready to improve his/her performance and exhibit a behavior which can be set as a benchmark for others.

Like many other works on employee engagement the work of Robert Knight (Employee Engagement A study of employee engagement at Topaz's South Dublin Region Service Stations 2011) also explain employee engagement in the context of cognitive, psychological and physical aspects of work which combine to determine the levels of engagement for different individuals. The study suggests that engagement is not yet another jargon used by Human Resource department but in fact plays a very crucial role in today's world where employee burnout is common phenomenon. It is a long term process which is perpetual in nature and should be dealt with due diligence as its success is very closely linked with core aspects of any business house which are values, culture, strategy and managerial philosophy. It again recommends that employee engagement is a multi-functional concept comprising of mainly three interacting elements (cognitive, psychological and physical aspects of work). Every organization which aims at fostering employee engagement should focus on factors which improve engagement levels. However in the absence of a universal definition for employee engagement this concept is still on a nascent stage. This is the biggest problem being faced by managers and organizations as there is

not a definite metrics to measure levels of engagement. Hence it is the biggest challenge faced by organizations today. Organizations have realized that it is no more technology, machineries and infrastructure which give them a competitive edge over their competitors but there human resource which determines competitive edge in the market. Human resource is no more viewed as cost center but is now seen as profit center. Employee engagement is a complex area as individual preferences play such a pivotal role in the engagement process and individual preferences being subjective in nature are not only difficult to measure but even more difficult to identify which factor is important for an individual. It has been recognized that it is the people module which results in the contribution and adds value to the organization.

In their work D. Pradeep Kumar and G. Swetha (*A Prognostic Examination of Employee Engagement from its Historical Roots* 2011) have stated that employee engagement is a multi faceted construct and lacks a universal definition. There are so any ways this concept has been defined that it becomes challenging to come to a single agreed definition of employee engagement and hence existences of various concepts on the same have focused themselves on a different aspect of employee engagement. It becomes extremely important to take each block of work and understand it concepts and as work deals with diverse filed of employee engagement. In their work they have not identified the potential problem which each work creates by following a different protocol but they have also found a similar pattern in each work where in it was found that highest number of employees fall under the category of ‘not engaged’ employees. Further people’s perception about the workplace and the work allotted to them also plays a pivotal role in determining one’s engagement. In addition, in their work they also throw light on an employee’s personality, demographic factors, physical health which affects employee engagement. It is believed that an engaged employee is expected to show a discretionary behavior. In their work they have recommended various steps which an organization can undertake in order to enhance their employee engagement. Some of them are facilitating an environment of flexibility and training. The organization should assist employees to use their skills at workplace as it results in higher levels of satisfaction. Employees should not be just treated as employees but as valuable assets of the organization. Further a positive environment at workplace boosts morale of the employee which results in enhancing the levels of employee engagement in the organization.

The main objective of the study conducted by Sebastian Rothmann and Sebastian Rothmann Jr. in *Factors Associated with Employee Engagement in South Africa* (2010) was to understand the various factors which can be associated with employee engagement within the boundaries of South Africa by investigating two models namely, the personal engagement model by Kahn (1990) and the work engagement model by Schaufeli and Baker (2004). The study has shown that psychological meaningfulness and psychological availability have had a positive impact on employee engagement, which can be attributed to Personal Engagement Model by Kahn. Considering the work of Schaufeli and Baker, the Work Engagement Model, it suggested that job resources such as organizational support, growth opportunities, advancements and social support are positively related to employee engagement and the various constructs of employee engagement included dedication, absorptions and vigor. The strongest impact on employee engagement came from growth opportunities such as autonomy, variety and learning opportunities. The study also showed that employee engagement was sturdily connected to four categories of job resources, which were organizational support, growth opportunities, advancement and social support. It has also been suggested in the study that absorption which is actually regarded as the cognitive component of employee engagement can be predicted by the

intrinsic and extrinsic factors of the job itself as well as job demand. The researchers have made certain suggestions for further research in the same field; one of them is to develop a scale which has psychometric properties that can be used to gauge various parameters like emotional, cognitive and physical components of employee engagement. The researchers recommend that there is a need to conduct further longitudinal researches which can establish a relationship between psychological conditioning, work-related factors and employee engagement. Hence research should be conducted not only in the area which can increase employee engagement but also on interventions that will prove to be effective in reducing employee burnout and distress.

According to the study conducted by Gemma Robertson Smith and Carl Marwick in “Employee Engagement-A Review of Current Thinking” (2009), though engagement is a concept which has connection with various other concepts but it is completely different from its antecedents and consequences. The concept of employee engagement is basically a synergy of job satisfaction, empowerment at workplace, organizational commitment and job involvement, a concept which is superior to the sum of its parts. Though it is very evident that engagement has an overlap with various other organizational concepts but is however very distinct in its own way, which should be understood by the organizations in order to leverage the same for the benefit of its employees and the organization as a whole. Employee engagement is a beautiful incorporation of organizational citizenship behavior and organizational commitment and both these factors are very crucial in giving a competitive edge over other competitors in the market. Organizations are suggested to inculcate an environment which enhances and supports engagement within the workplace. The process of engagement is a perpetual process and is not expensive; improving the levels of engagement will only provide benefits to the organizations which will in future outweigh the costs incurred in the process. It is because of the fact that most of the factors that drive employee engagement are subtle and do not require a lot of money to be spent on them but if support is granted they do enhance engagement. An organization should understand that nurturing engagement is a two-way process in which employees also have to be taken into confidence, which should demonstrate the well-being of the people. In the process needs, wants and expectations of the employees have to be understood as every individual has different sets of need and expectations which motivate them. Identification of these is very crucial for the process to meet its aim. Hence try to link individual performance with organizational performance and further encouraging an atmosphere of overall development of employees.

In the study Admasachew and Dawson (Employee Engagement –A Brief Review of Definitions, Theoretical Perspectives and Measures 2009) have examined a range of constructs on employee engagement which have been proposed by so many researchers in last few decades. The study talks about employee engagement in the light of psychological environment, where it is described as an experiential state which determines the level of engagement within the organization. It includes the feelings, the expression of thoughts, perception, and levels of motivation, creativity, innovativeness and questioning. It also encompasses cognitive process of an individual. The psychological facet of engagement has two aspects to it, first is attention and the second is absorption of roles. Attention of role is defined as the thought attached to the role while absorption is defined as the intrinsic motivation which is attributing to the role being performed. The study also talks about burnout and engagement as diametrically opposite concepts. The factors that contribute to the enhancements in the levels of engagement are almost the same factors which have a negative link with burnout. Energy, self-efficacy and involvement which have a direct and positive relation with employee engagement are deemed to have negative

relation with burnout. Similarly, exhaustion, inefficacy or decreased efficacy and cynicism have positive impact on burnout. Thus one can relate these concepts in opposite ways and by decreasing burnout the organization is focusing on fostering an environment of enhanced employee engagement.

According to Bakker et al in “Work Engagement-An emerging concept in occupational health psychology” (2008), it is the researches which had been conducted on burnout that have been instrumental in increased researches on employee engagement. Burnout may be defined as the ‘an erosion which an employee experiences towards engagement with work’. According to the researches employee engagement mainly focuses on the experience of an employee which is related to his/her work. The important parameters which can be associated with employee engagement are personal resources and job; hence the focus remains job and personal resources. In the study the researches have also talked about JD-R model i.e. job demand resources model. It is assumed in the JD-R model that although every profession might have certain specific work related characteristics associated with well being but these characteristics can be modeled into two broad categories which are job demands and job resources. Job demand refers to all the physical, social, psychological and/or organizational aspects of the job that would require a sustainable amount of psychological and/or physical efforts which are in return bear some psychological and/or physical cost for example: work pressure, emotional demands and role overload. While job resources may be defined as those aspects of the job which are functional in attaining goals, stimulating personal growth and development and reducing job demands. These aspects of the job can be physical, psychological, social and/or organizational. The study suggests that job resources can play either of the two role i.e. either an extrinsic motivator or an intrinsic motivator. The intrinsic motivational role means fostering employee’s growth by way of learning and development, while extrinsic motivational role means facilitating work goals by being instrumental in the process of achieving the same. It is the support one gets from organization which promotes an environment of learning and growth, thereby augmenting competence for any job. Autonomy and participation also improves competence for job.

According to WH Macey in *Industrial and Organizational Psychology...*, 2008 the meaning of employee engagement is ambiguous among both academic researchers and among practitioners who use it in conversations with clients. The term is used at different times to refer to psychological state, traits, and behaviors as well as their antecedents and outcomes. Drawing on diverse relevant literatures, it is about (a) behavioral engagement; (b) psychological state engagement; and (c) trait engagement. In the study, they have focused their work on the various constructs of employee engagement. It has been argued in the work that different scholars and practitioners have explained the concept in different light. It has been suggested in the study that a complete and comprehensive definition of employee engagement is still missing from the horizon of HR and organizations. Even scholars and academicians have not succeeded in coming up with the definition which can be viewed as inclusive of all the constructs of engagement. It also focuses on the increasing importance of engagement in today’s world and how organizations can gain competitive advantage by leveraging on employee engagement in the workplace. In a globally competitive space where technology can be replicated, resources can be acquired, infrastructure can be built, product-life cycle has been reduced, it is only the human capital of a company has which tends to assist in achieving the mission and goal. Hence the real challenge that the companies would be facing will be to enhance levels of state and behavioral engagement within the employees. The organizations which will be successful identifying and tapping the

constructs of engagement and therefore getting the conditions right for the same will be able to realize something which their competitors have not. And this something would be very difficult to replicate unlike other factors. It is easy to alter and replicate all resources other than a behaviorally engaged workforce.

Hamsley in “Engagement by Design (2008)” has talked about various aspects in the organizational set-up which are affected by engagement of employees and has underlined the importance of the concept because of the inherited attributes which affect the organization. In previous studies it was said that it is the attitude of an individual which affect his/her engagement but here Hamsley has suggested an opposite saying, where in it is the engagement of the employees which account for his/her attitude towards the work and the workplace. Apart from attitude, engagement also affects absence, turnover rate and productivity. The study has also suggested that there exists a very high correlation with individual, team and organization’s performance and engagement. Performance is usually measured in terms of customer loyalty and satisfaction by way of providing quality product and services. Hamsley has recommended in his work that engagement should be enhanced in the organization by way of conscious efforts. It should be initiated from top to bottom. He said that engagement is not achieved accidentally. Like quality, engagement has to be incorporated as a process which is aligned with the culture, vision and mission of the organization. While designing a process to enhance engagement all the factors should be kept in mind and weightage should be allotted accordingly. Further the study also indicates the pivotal role played by HR in employee engagement. Its aim should be to improve engagement by identifying the various factors which affect the people. HR should play a role of strategic partner in formulating the design for the same.

According to Lockwood’s work ( Leveraging Employee Engagement for Competitive Advantage: HR’s Strategic Role 2007)it is the engaged employees who are loyal to the company and who work harder as they are motivated to do so and are more ready to go that extra mile for the organization. In the study it has also been suggested that engagement may result in positive health effects and positive attitude towards work and workplace. This is because engagement enhances levels of commitment and reduces stress, also the employee feels more connected to his/her work and provides a sense of belongingness. These feelings foster good health. Employee engagement is also related to organization citizenship behavior, where the employee feels and behaves in a way where he/she is the citizen of the organization. Engagement and investment of oneself into one’s work may result into ethical behavior, increased productivity, intrinsic motivation, non-defensive communication, creativity, mindfulness, authenticity, increased efforts and an overall happy and satisfied employee. In the study light has been thrown on various aspects on organizational level which affect engagement, few these factors include the culture and leadership in the organization, the style of management, the quality of communication, the organization’s reputation and the levels of trust and respect employees have for the organization. Lockwood suggested that it is the amount of pleasure and pride an individual receives by way of disposing his/her responsibilities and duties in the organization which determines the level of engagement. In order to enhance employee engagement and performance, organizations should need to leverage employee’s emotional connection with the work and the workplace. Also various aspects of work-life are strongly connected to engagement, so work-culture should be such that in increases engagement within the employees. It has been seen that organizations which have been branded as ‘employer of choice’ have higher levels of employee engagement for the same reason. Even work-life balance is an important factor which influences engagement.

Hence all these factors should be measured and leveraged to have high levels of engagement in the organization.

In his work John Gibbons (*Employee Engagement A Review of Current Research and Its Implications*(2006) has tried to summarize the meaning of employee engagement and its implications on organizational mind set and practices. He has also pointed out the ways companies today are trying to cultivate engagement within the workplace to become employers of choice and to get a competitive edge over their rival in the market place. According to Gibbons employee engagement is the state of mind where in the employee feels connected to the organization and his/her work, displays discretionary behavior to not only help his/her organization to meet its vision and mission but also make an effort to motivate its colleagues to realize their potential and meet their goals. The study emphasizes on the role played by first line managers to motivate their sub-ordinates and to foster employee engagement within them. There are various organizational interventions which again play a very significant role in identifying the factors which affect engagement and also in enhancing these factors. These interventions support employee engagement. The study also focuses on the impacts of high level of employee engagement. It has been seen that only an engaged employee by the virtue of being committed to his/her work and organization will create a base of engaged and loyal consumer base, this will further account for the increased profitability of the organization. Employee who is engaged will also show high levels of performance by the way of being committed to the workplace. The various interventions recommended in the study are organizational interventions, managerial interventions and communication development interventions. These when incorporated in the right way and right proportion will bore desired results by right way and right proportion one means that the organization has to first understand the needs and expectations of the people and the culture of the organization and then it should implement these interventions. In their study C. Truss, E. Soane, C. Edwards, K. Wisdom, A. Croll and J. Burnett (*Working Life: Employee Attitudes and Engagement* 2006) have interlinked the way people are managed in the organization, people's attitude and performance of a business house. This is why engaged employees tend to outperform their disengaged counterparts. However the concept of engagement is still at a very nascent stage and has no complete definition. There is also lack of academic literature on the concept. The most significant impact on employee engagement is the way employees are managed in the organization. The effect on engagement has found to have a positive impact on the environment and employees and hence facilitates good health. It provides stress free ambience which is instrumental in good health of employees. It was also found that engaged employees were less likely to leave the organization. Hence employee engagement is closely related to retention. This is the reason that employees who remain with an organization for a considerable amount of time are dealt to be engaged, but it might not be true always. It has been found that there has been a decline in overall engagement levels in the organization and its time to do something to solve the issue. The study also suggested that differences of personal values and health impact engagement such that some individuals 'live to work' while others might just 'work to live'. But the most critical finding is that is the way an organization manages its own people decides the level of the engagement of employees (Truss et al, 2006).

I. Robinson in "Human Resource Management in Organization" (2006) has talked about an important construct of engagement are the individual differences which again plays a very important role in influencing and then determining the potential level of employee engagement (Robinson 2006). Thus another factor which comes into light is perception one has which

determines the individual behavior. Perception may be defined as the organization, identification, and interpretation of sensory information in order to represent in order to understand the environment by using its sensory faculty. It is a dynamic and psychological process by which an individual attribute meaning to its environment. It is very subjective so perception is not right or wrong and every human being tends to receive and interpret information differently. According to Robinson (2006) human beings have a tendency to first categorize and then attribute meaning to the environment and situations which is unique as it reflects the past experiences, expectations, personality, knowledge, interests and current needs and priorities of the individual. Personality is believed to play a most pivotal role in the process of perception. This is because it is the personality of the individuals which act as perceptual filters which ultimately sways our view. It is because of the same reason that it has been argued that it is an individual's perception of social as well as physical environment that finally shapes and gives direction as to how engaged an employee will be rather than any external reality.

Richman A. in "Everyone wants an engaged workforce how you can create it?" (2006) and Shaw K. in "An Engagement Strategy process for communicators"(2005) have explained that the term "Employee Engagement" is a multi faceted construct which is usually referred to the levels of involvement and commitment of the employees which are demonstrable and implied towards his/her organization and it's values. Though it is a very vague term and various people through research have tried to come up with their definitions but it is still not complete and this is the most glaring issue which not only HR managers face but also the organizations face. The concept of employee engagement is still naïve and needs to explore. Richman and Shaw in their respective work have tried to throw some light on employee engagement. Richman (2006) and Shaw (2005) have also talked about role of emotions in employee engagement. In their research they have said that employee engagement cannot be understood without understanding the emotional facet which one experiences in the job visa-a-visa in organization. This is true as in many researches engagement has been defined in context to the emotional experiences of the employee which is experienced during his/her stay in the organization. Research has also shown that there exists a link between organizational performance and employee engagement. It has been seen that organizations which have strong culture and policies which focus on employees have displayed a significant levels of productivity, financial performance and satisfaction within the employees. It has therefore been suggested in the research that employee engagement should be viewed by the organizations a strategic process which is of perpetual nature and would require a number of steps to facilitate involvement and contribution of members of the organizations which will result in increasing levels of engagement.

Alan Saks (*Antecedents and consequences of Employee Engagement* 2005) has used cross-sectional and self-report data in his study which limits the scope of the study as there might be some bias present. The researchers have suggested that further researchers should be carried out in the field of employee engagement as it is a very meaningful construct. The study focuses on various job and organizational related factors which have an impact on employee engagement like the ones suggested by Kahn and Maslach et al. but he insists on finding more factors in context with the present and future scenario which affects the same. He has laid emphasis on training, learning and development, various HR practices, compensation and incentives plans that might also be important for engagement. He has suggested looking out for more predictors in future researches which might focus on particular types of predictors which might affect engagement of a particular type of job. He has also laid stress on individual factors which are

instrumental in enhancing employee engagement in an organization. He has made recommendation for future researches to focus on the impact of various organizational interventions on employee engagement. The study has some practical implications also like the one on managers. The study suggests that managers should provide enough benefits and resources to the employees, so that they feel obliged to reciprocate with higher levels of engagement. One should also understand that every employee has different needs and expectations from the organization and hence these have to be gauged on individual levels. Hence one size fits all approach should be dropped and wherever possible practices should be customized. Organizations need to understand that employee engagement is a long-term process which needs continuous attention and support of top management. The study has also drawn a vertical between the concepts of job engagement and organizational engagement; though together they make up the concept of employee engagement.

A study by May et al (2004) recommended that wellbeing and emotional experiences of the employees also impacts the engagement and disengagement. According to the study, the emotional factors are related to the individual's satisfaction and inspiration as well as affirmation that they get from an organization. He also proposed that flow and involvement plays pivotal role in employee engagement. Job involvement is a psychological or cognitive state where in the employee is concerned about his/her performance by the way of employing him/herself to the work assigned. 'Flow', is the holistic consciousness which is felt by an employee when they are in contact with the environment. It is the involvement in an activity of an employee which is basically cognitive for monetary gains, but by the act of being cognitive it is argued that in a flow experience an employee do not need goals and external rewards in order to be motivated. The study also talked about various psychological conditions such as meaningfulness and safety which one seeks at workplace and in his/her work. These parameters being psychological are subjective in nature and hence every individual have their own way of assigning meaning to their work depending on the way these parameters have been evaluated by them. The findings of this study have pivotal implications on managers while designing a job and selecting a candidate for the same. First it is the meaningfulness which has been linked to the attitudes of the employees. Managers should also design a job such that it establishes a sense of safety. The workplace should encourage an environment of trust, development and support. Managers should also persuade its employees to solve work related problems on their own and facilitate development of new skills. Finally the job design should be such that it reduces physical, emotional and cognitive stress on the employees.

D. Robinson, S. Perryman and S. Hayday have explained that as employee engagement is a multifaceted construct it becomes very unlikely to settle down for a single definition which can be considered to be universal. But most of the organizational constructs which contribute to employee engagement are not the same as employee engagement itself. According to Robinson et al (2004) engagement though is related organizational behavior construct but is very different from the same. He further argues that organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) and commitment are often confused with employee engagement but are not the same. The former is more informal and also voluntary in nature and is usually referred to an attitude of an employee to make efforts in the direction which will help his/ her colleagues to reach their organizational goals. It also encompasses the role of an employee which one plays in towards the development of the organization. Organization commitment is also about the attachment which one feels for the organization. While employee engagement is the extent to which an employee feels and puts into

action their attentiveness and works towards high performance by being absorbed in the work. Sachs (2006) also proposed the same idea of engagement being distinct from other constructs though related. They have defined engagement as the next level of commitment towards the organization. Robinson et al has defined employee engagement as a two relationship between employee and the employer. Hence factors which affect both employee and employer should be taken into account. The Gallup Organization (2004) found vital links between customer loyalty, employee engagement, profitability and business growth. The scores of these variables were compared among a sample of stores scoring in the top 25 per cent on employee engagement and customer loyalty with those in the bottom 25 percent. The stores who were amongst the bottom 25 percent had underperformed significantly across the three parameters which had been set under productivity: customer complaints, turnover and sales. Even a team of International Survey Research (ISR, 2005) had found strikingly similar proofs which substantiated that fact that for an organization to attain their full potential need emotionally engaged employees who can create equally emotionally engaged customer base.

K. Moore in “Healthy Balance among work, family and personal relationships: Fact or fiction” (2004) has shared their view that employee engagement has also been found to be affected by personal relationships one shares with their family and friends. Recent research have signaled an interlink between work related stress and family stress (Moore, 2004; Crabtree, 2005).

According to the study by Johnson “Otherwise Engaged”, (2004) more than half of the employees are not engaged or are disengaged towards their work and workplace. Furthermore, in a research it has also been concluded that women are likely to be more engaged as compared to men (Johnson 2004). It has also been suggested in the study that every individual has different set of needs, expectations and wants and so are motivated by different things. Hence one size fit all approach should be done away with. Factors like values, culture, economy, demographics and style of leadership and management should be kept in mind before deciding the course of action for enhancing the levels of engagement in the organization. Organizations which function across boundaries should try to understand the culture of the country and the region of operation. Even psychological differences that are a result of cultural and demographic differences play an important role in employee engagement. Demographic factors are pivotal but they should not be considered alone as demographic factors alone are not capable of predicting an individual’s inclination towards the concept of employee engagement.

According to Holbeche and Springett (2003), it is people’s perception about their workplace and various inter personal relationships which affect the performance and in turn the engagement of employees. In their work they have also suggested that people tend to seek more meaning in their day-to-day work as compared to their personal lives. This implies that employers of an organization should focus on what exactly motivates employees and based on it the work content should be designed and reviewed at various junctures of time. While designing the work and the workplace it should be borne in mind that different people have different needs so their what factors motivate them are bound to be unique from each other. So the organizational structure should be flexible and capable of accommodating personal differences. They also suggested that for better employee engagement there has to be some check on free flow of emotions as better productivity can be achieved when emotions are managed well. In their work they have also pointed out that most of the employees do not seem to be happy about their work

and hence carry a negative connotation about their workplace. Hence to solve such problems, organizations should allow free movement of emotions so that employee feels more attached to the company. Free movement of emotions does not imply that there is no room for rules, regulation and policies but it means that there has to be good communication system at place. HR practitioners should also facilitate communications networks which provide two way communications. At times ambiguity at workplace also results in low level of employee engagement. This should also be taken care of. Hence emotional quotient of the employees has to be given due importance and it has to be dealt with utter care in order to enhance engagement.

A study conducted by Towers Perrin (2003) on engagement had acknowledged rationality and emotions as the core components of the same. It was revealed in the study that emotional factors are connected to the sense of inspiration and the personal satisfaction of an individual it was further backed up by the sense of affirmation and inspiration that one gets from his/her work and from being a part of their organization. According to Towers Perrin, constructing engagement is a process and is perpetual in nature which never ends and depends on the foundation of a meaningful and emotionally enriching work ambience. It should not be confused with just making people happy by way of money, but it includes intrinsic factors like autonomy, responsibility, strong leadership, a sense of control over one's environment and what opportunities one gets in the organization for one's own development. In the study they have also discovered that only a small fragment of the population is highly engaged, while majority comes in the category of moderately engaged employees and again a small number of population accounts for disengaged employees. It was also found that the senior level employees were usually highly engaged. This engagement can be attributed to income of senior executives, but these are not the only contributors to the high engagement of employees. More important factors that have an impact on engagement and thus have a stronger link with the same include autonomy, job design and characteristics, responsibility, resources, power, growth opportunities and access to data and information. The research has found that lowest level of engagement is found in the employees who work as hourly wage workers. This can be attributed to the fact that the income levels of such employees is very low and to top it all these employees face graver issues like lesser job satisfaction and enrichment and low levels of job security. In the study both rationale and emotions play a vital role in building up employee engagement. Hence sense of personal accomplishment and various emotions related to job should to be identified. Tower Perrins also believes that employee engagement is a process which has no end to it. It has to be inculcated in the values and culture of the organization. Compensation and award may be very important in attracting candidates but their impact has been found to be low in creating employee engagement. Personal relationship also impact employee engagement. So it's the intrinsic factors which have higher impact on employee engagement rather than the extrinsic factors.

J.K. Harter, F.L. Schmidt and T.L. Hayes (Business unit-level relationship between employee-satisfaction, employee-engagement and business outcomes-a Meta-analysis 2002) have recommended that in the field of employee engagement there exist a common conviction that employee engagement is connected to business results; Harter conducted a meta-analysis on the same link and confirmed the link. Their study concluded that meaningful business outcomes are related to employee engagement and satisfaction and this relation can bring about a relatively important and high magnitude outcome for any organization. It also believed that engagement being an individual-level construct is affected by individual's intentions, behaviors and attitudes.

According to Maslach et al burnout is a diametrically opposite concept of employee engagement. It is an antithesis of engagement, where engagement is characterized by enthusiasm, involvement, energy and efficacy and burnout is characterized by exhaustion, cynical, pessimism and inefficacy. It has been found out in various studies that have been carried out across the world that the core ingredients of burnout are exact opposite of that of employee engagement. According to Maslach et al there are six areas of work-life which might lead to either engagement or burnout, they are: workload, control, community and social support, rewards and recognition, values and perceived fairness in the organizational set-up. The study also throws some light on the antecedents and psychological factors that account for employee engagement in an organization, but it does not fully explain why some individuals exhibit different levels of engagement when antecedents and psychological factors are almost the same. The conditions of engagement as explained in Maslach et al model are both economic as well as socio-motional. It comprises exchange of resources, individuals receive these resources as a transaction from the organization in which they work as they feel obliged to repay the organization if they have high levels of engagement. If an organization fails to provide an environment where in the employees receive the resources needed by them then the employees are bound to feel disengaged from the tasks visa-a-visa the organization. Thus it is the emotional, cognitive, physical and psychological resources which decides for the level of engagement or disengagement which an employee will face for the job and in turn for the organization. These resources devote towards the performance of the employees in their respective jobs which further improves an organizations performance. The model also insists on the importance of control and workload conditions which are pivotal in engagement by way of job characteristics.

According to N. Rothbard (*Enriching or Depleting? The Dynamics of engagement in work and family* 1999) one more facet which to have an impact on engagement is the gender of an employee, in a way that men feel enriched from work to family while women tend to experience depletion from work to family but they feel enriched from family to work which is just the opposite for men work .

In their work Marjan and Steven (*Work Can Burn Us Out or Fire Us Up: Conservation of Resources in Burnout and Engagement* (1998) has outlined a framework on engagement and burnout which is based on COR theory. Both burnout and engagement are multifaceted phenomenon which revolves around intrinsic energy. The reason for burnout has been stress and slow process of resource bleed out that is compensated by regain of resources and competencies which account for noteworthy losses. In the study engagement has been attributed to real or potential gain of resources. Gains are important in the sense that they contribute to the basic needs and wants of an individual and if these are fulfilled by the way of work the gains are deemed to be significant. It is so because these are essential for the survival of an individual and they connect to the basic needs of the employee. But at the same time these should also sustain an individual's psychological assets of self efficacy, self-esteem and sense of success. COR theory states that it is the level of resources that determines whether the processes of engagement and burnout will be activated and continued or subdued and shortened. This implies that performance alone cannot engage an employee, it has to be necessarily be complemented by resource gain. The framework hence proposed by Mrajan and Steven emphasizes on boosting employee engagement at workplace. This framework is called striving for dynamic stability and tolerance for failure. The preliminary point of this framework is innovativeness and creativity, which is the key to engagement. The edifice includes flexibility, balance, diversity, interdependence, trust,

loyalty and tolerance for failure. Synergy between teams and individuals is another construct which increases engagement. These edifices are important and very crucial to engagement and hence job design and organizational structure should be such that it facilitates these building blocks to grow for individual as well as for teams in an organization.

The impact of personal differences on performance vis-à-vis on employee engagement has also been suggested in a study conducted by Kahn (‘Psychological conditions of personal engagement and disengagement at work’1990). It is the personal differences which shapes a person’s nature which in turn, affects their ability to personally engage or disengage in all or some types or role performances. Further more studies also suggest the key influence of personality and perception on the response of individuals which in turn shapes and directs the level of engagement. Kahn’s study on employee engagement also identifies three psychological conditions which have an impact personal engagement which are psychological safety, psychological availability and psychological meaningfulness. Psychological safety is feeling where an individual is able to show and employ oneself in a work without having any negative notions about the consequences to career or status or self-image. This psychological state is facilitated in an environment where there is clarity of work and structure. Whereas it’s contrast will be seen in an organization which has a working environment which is menacing, indistinct and unpredictable. Employees tend to disengage themselves from work in case of unpredictable and ambiguous ambience. Psychological availability can be defined as the feeling of engaging one’s physical, emotional and psychological capital to be engaged at a particular instant. It reflects the level of confidence and readiness one shows towards an activity at workplace given he/she already has other activities to indulge in. There are various factors which influence psychological availability which include work role, individual’s resources and individual’s belief. Psychological meaningfulness refers to the feeling of return which one gets after investing his/her physical, cognitive and emotional energy into the work. It is very subjective and differs from one individual to another. A lack of meaningfulness can lead to disengagement and apathy towards work. This is a strong predictor of employee engagement.

Locke and Taylor (1990) in “Stress, coping and meaning of work (1990)” have known to identify the relatedness needs which are possessed by individuals. They have proposed that employees who have gratifying interpersonal interactions with their co-workers should also experience substantial meaning in their job. It has been suggested by Kahn that even the relationship one shares with the clients is also important in giving meaning to one’s work experience.

### **3. Conclusion**

From the studies so far researchers have conducted through literature survey they can conclude that -Employee Engagement is an important concept in the field of Human Resource which is relatively new and hence it is very difficult to give a definition which includes all aspects of it. The importance of the concept lies in the very fact that every other resource can be replicated but people cannot be. An organization can built competitive advantage by building a force of highly committed and engaged employees. This review paper is an attempt to understand the notion of Employee Engagement as described by various researchers. For employee engagement an organization needs to work on behavioral engagement, psychological engagement and trait engagement. Emotional and psychological satisfaction is one of the main constructs of

engagement. The emotional connect an employee feels within the organization plays a very crucial role. A link between employee performance and employee engagement has also been suggested by few researchers. It is believed that employees having high levels of engagement will automatically be high performers as they can connect to the job and the organization not on a professional level alone but have a very strong psychological and emotional connection too which drives them to perform to their full capacity. Perception of an employee about his/her work and the workplace and the inter personal relationship an employee shared at workplace also affects the performance and engagement. A healthy communication network within an organization can boost morale of an employee and hence can lift the levels of employee engagement too. HR professionals play a very vital role in raising the existing levels of engagement by facilitating two way healthy communication network. Psychological safety which an employee attributes to his work is a result of the environment of an organization and clarity of work, which tends to raise employee engagement. Psychological availability and psychological meaningfulness are also pivotal in employee engagement.

In another study it has also been suggested that employee engagement is a perpetual process and as an organization it should be conscious effort to keep the employees engaged. This can be done by taking in account extrinsic as well intrinsic factors at workplace. Both rationale and emotions play a vital role in building up employee engagement. Hence sense of personal accomplishment and various emotions related to job should to be identified.

Cultural factors also affect employee engagement. Psychological differences that are a result of cultural and demographic differences play an important role in employee engagement. Demographic factors are pivotal but they should not be considered alone as demographic factors alone are not capable of predicting an individual's inclination towards the concept of employee engagement. Hence the paper has tried to include great deal of definitions and constructs which make up the very concept of Employee Engagement.

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