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## Employee Engagement and Productivity-Evidences from Higher Education Institutions of Telangana State in India

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**Abstract:** There are significant researches on Employee productivity as one of the important management concept which is always considered as an important factor to achieve organizational success. Enhancing employee productivity in any organization is required significant amount of attention to understand the key factors that influence employee productivity. This study intended to examine the effect of employee engagement on employee productivity in business education sector. The dimensions of work engagement as vigor, dedication, absorption and career development were used in this study. The primary data using questionnaire were collected from 350 employees of higher education sector from throughout Telangana State by using online survey method. SPSS was used to analyze the collected data. The result indicated that work engagement had significant positive influence on employee productivity however, regression analysis confirmed that all the dimensions of work engagement used in the study does not have equal effect on employee productivity.

### Introduction

Employee engagement has lately become popular among researchers, academicians and corporate professionals. An engaged employee will be fully absorbed in their work contributing positively in the growth of the organization. Whereas, a disengaged employee will look at work only as a means of getting their paycheck and might not be interested in contributing to the probability of the organization. Employees who are engaged can help organization enhance profits and enables organizations agility, improves organizations efficiency in driving growth related changes. Hence industry professionals are always looking out for different ways to engage their employees, leaving more scope for researchers, to work on employee engagement. However, there is very little work done in employee engagement in Higher education sector. Gallup survey that was conducted in higher education sector found out that 52% of higher education faculty are disconnected in their work, 14 are actively disengaged, 61% of higher education institutes have difficulty in sourcing top notch faculty, 59% of higher education institutions has difficulty in retaining the best faculty, 27% report above average turnover rates for faculty, challenges sourcing and retaining top administrative staff are even higher.

In Samantha Stainburn's New York Times article, The Case of the Vanishing Full-Time Professor, the writer reveals in 1960, in higher education sector 75% of the instructors were full time professors, unfortunately in next 50 years around 2010 there were only 27% full time professors and the number continued to drop further. "The rest are graduate students or adjunct and contingent faculty — instructors employed on a per-course or yearly contract

basis, usually without benefits and earning a third or less of what their tenured colleagues make.”

There is very limited research available in employee engagement in higher education sector and even lesser in India. Higher education sector is the most neglected sector and the faculty and administrative staff are the most disconnected from their work due to their mundane activities they perform year on year. There has been increasing changes over the last decade in the higher education sector such as changes in policy, increasing competition, cuts in government funding, new regulations, low pays etc. making it more difficult for the disengaged employees.

India is one of the country that has done very limited research in employee engagement in Higher Education Institution in General and B-Schools to be specific. A noticeable gap has been found in India on availability of best employee engagement practices in Higher Education Industry and specially research relating to the relationship between employee's performance and employee engagement. It is well established from the available research, that the employee performance enhances the organizational performance and also improve the quality parameters of an organization along with exactly replicate in the education sector. Higher education role is crucial in the socio-economic development of a nation and HEIs are the sanctuaries of high quality graduates. It is important that HEI should identify and retain experience and capable academic staff, by putting in practice various employee engagement practices. To develop employee engagement practices, HEI should understand the importance and its impact on the performances. The number of HEIs apart from very few IIMs and IITs are recognized by the world. This study is significant for the very need of developing the quality of Higher Education Institutions in comparison with International HEIs.

Employee engagement is the most important factor behind an organizational success. High levels of engagement in global firms reduces attrition, improves customer loyalty, improve organizational performance and stakeholder value (Kumar, Swetha -2011). Employee engagement plays a very important role in business as it helps organizations to optimize the intellectual power inherent in today's diverse workforce (Albrecht, Elgar-2010). It is like a key Improving employee productivity has been the top most priority in various organizations because higher level of productivity will result in more engaged employees leading to more profitability in an organization (Hanaysha. 2015). Employers should in fact consider spending more on engaging workforce, it is not only going to increase company profitability but also improve factors such as work engagement, performance outcomes, employee retention and productivity (Markos, Sridevi, 2010).

### **The Concept of Employee Engagement**

Employee engagement is defined as “connects employee with their organization” (Kahn, 1990; Wellins and Concelman, 2005), “Employees feel passionate about their jobs” (Custom Insight), “Emotional commitment “(*Maslach, Leiter Annu 2001*), “Mutually respectful relationships - happy, loyal and productive “(Nesco resource)

The research in the areas of concept and drivers of employee engagement has gained popularity, it has found special mention management journals and websites of various consulting firms recent

Many researchers have used scale developed by (Schaufeli and Bakker 2006), this scale focuses on various parameters responsible for employee engagement, namely vigor,

dedication, absorption. . Vigor refers to high levels of energy and mental resilience while working, and the willingness to invest effort in one's work (Rothmann, S. and Rothmann Jr, S., 2010). Vigor focuses on energy levels of employees, if the employee is highly motivated they will always exhibit high energy levels and enthusiastic towards the growth of the organization, thus increasing the productivity.

Dedication refers to deriving a sense of significance from one's work, by feeling enthusiastic and proud about one's job, and by feeling inspired and challenged by it. (Rothmann, S. and Rothmann Jr, S., 2010). Employee should feel a sense of responsibility towards the growth of the organization, this is only possible when the employee looks beyond their paycheck and starts taking up work that results in the organization growth of the organization.

Absorption will help employee involve him/herself in work completely. Direct (passive and active) participation is positively correlated with all the dimensions of work engagement (i.e., vigour, dedication, and absorption) (Baran, M. and Sypniewska, B., 2020).

Career development has major impact on engagement for employees and thus retaining the most talented employees and providing various growth opportunities (Gupta, M., 2015). Career Development is one among various other important factors and can also negatively influence the most engaged employee. When in an organization, there is least possibility of one's growth and career development, the most engaged employee will also start disconnecting from their work, resulting in negatively affecting the growth and profitability of the organization.

### **Employee Engagement and Employee Productivity: Literature Review**

Research done in the field of IT sector shows that employee engagement has three main motives namely vigor, absorption, dedication that are responsible for organizations growth by improving employee performances. Results show that employee engagement also affects job satisfaction when vigor become very important. (Al-dalalmeh, M., Khalaf, R. and Obeidat, B., 2018). Vigor refers to high levels of energy and mental resilience while working, and the willingness to invest effort in one's work (Rothmann, S. and Rothmann Jr, S., 2010). Dedication refers to deriving a sense of significance from one's work, by feeling enthusiastic and proud about one's job, and by feeling inspired and challenged by it. (Rothmann, S. and Rothmann Jr, S., 2010). Absorption is characterized by being totally and happily immersed in one's work and having difficulty detaching oneself from it (Rothmann, S. and Rothmann Jr, S., 2010). Organizations which focuses on engagement provides employees with overall growth opportunities.

Career development opportunities helps the organizations to retaining the most talented employees by providing opportunities for personal development (Gupta, M., 2015). Absorption will help employee involve him/herself in work completely.

It is also worth noticing that in contrast to people-oriented management, there is no direct correlation between non-people-oriented management and absorption, which is one of the dimensions of work engagement. While people-oriented management influences engagement in three dimensions (i.e., vigour, dedication, and absorption), non-people-oriented management only exerts influence on two dimensions (vigour and dedication) (Baran, M. and Sypniewska, B., 2020). Job Content, Interpersonal Relations, Career Opportunities, Objectivity, Benefits, Pay (Sharma, Sombhala and Ningthoujam 2014). Compensation and benefits, Performance, management, Job content, Learning and development (Sharma, Y. and

Sharma, B. R. 2010) . Work/Life balance, Top- Management, employee relation, Scope of advancement, career growth, Team Orientation and Welfare facilities (Joshi & Sodhi 2011). Kind of Work, Amount of Work, Physical Work Conditions, Supervision, Financial Reward (Clifford, 2010). The mian factors of employee engagement are Vigor, Dedication, Absorption, Productivity (Hanaysha, J., 2016). The other factors that affect employee engagement are proper information system, knowledge or enhancing, employees skills and ability, Reward system (Konrad, 2006). Empowerment, teamwork and training (Hanaysha, 2016; Lawler, et al,1992; (Kyzlinková, Dokulilová and Kroupa, 2007; Bhat, 2013; Hanif and Abdullah, 2013; Sultana et al., 2012; Vasudevan, 2014) could act as factors that help in changing the disconnected employees to engaged employees.

### Conceptual Framework

Past Studies have confirmed that there is significant impact of vigor, absorption, and dedication on employee productivity across the sectors in different countries except India. But the effect of career development on employee productivity was not at all researched in higher education sector in general and in Indian HE sector to be specific. This study intended to test the model given in figure 1.

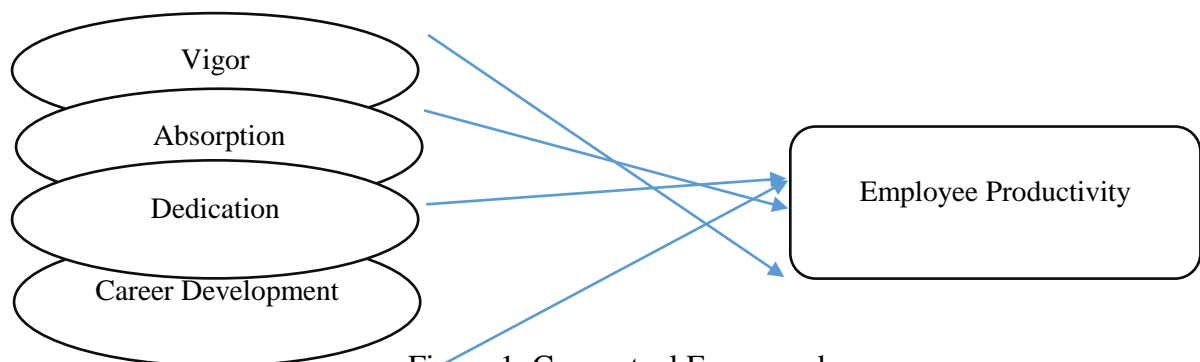


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

The objectives of the study are:

- To examine the relationship in vigor, dedication, absorption and career development and productivity according to the demographic profile of the employees.
- To assess the extent of influence between employee engagement dimensions namely, vigor, dedication, absorption and career development on employee productivity.

### Research Methods

Descriptive and Analytical Research was conducted by collecting samples from faculty and staff of higher education institutions of Telangana state. As per a report published by AISHE in 2019, there are 80318 faculty and staff in higher education institutes of Telangana. The sample size required for the given population is 382 considering 95% of confidence level and 5% margin of error, however, the actual data collected for this study is 390 but data were filtered and used 350 responses for the analysis. Data was collected through structured questionnaire, that was prepared to collect the data by using online survey methods.

The survey instrument is having two sections, first section is about employee's demographic profile and the second section follows Five Point Likert Scale (1= "Strongly Disagree" and

5= “Strongly Agree”). All items in this section were drawn from various conceptual and empirical papers. All the dimensions were measured using the scale developed by Schaufeli and Bakker (2003); Hanaysha, J., (2016) Vigor (four items), dedication (five items), and absorption (four items), career development (four items). Furthermore, employee productivity was measured using five items taken from the studies of Chen and Tjosvold (2008); Lee and Brand (2010).

### Result of Analysis

Data generated from the responses analyzed with suitable tools of analysis by using SPSS (20). Appropriate statistical calculations like frequency and percentages, correlation and regression analysis computed to check whether it fulfills the objective of the research. The analyzed data is presented in tables. The respondents were faculty and staff of Higher education institutes of Telangana. The profile of the respondents is given below:

**Respondent’s Profile:** The results of respondents’ profile are presented in Table 1. As it can be seen in the table, 194 (55.4%) of the participants are male, while 156 (44.6%) are female. On age profile, the majority of the participants (50%) belong to the age group of 36 to 45 years old, followed by the age of 26 to 35 years that is represented by 34.2%. In terms of education, this study has 130 (37%) holders of master’s degree, 122 (34.8%) staff who have undergraduate degree, 53 (15.2%) with doctorate, and 33 (9.8 %) who acquire other professional certification. The majority of respondents (51.2%) had more than 5 years of working experience.

	Category	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Gender</b>	Male	194	55.4
	Female	156	44.6
	Total	350	100
<b>Age</b>	18 - 25 years	40	11.4
	26 - 35 years	120	34.2
	36 - 45 years	130	37.2
	46 years and above	60	17.2
	Total	350	100
<b>Qualification</b>	Diploma	12	3.3
	Undergraduate	122	34.8
	Master	130	37
	Doctorate	53	15.2
	Others	33	9.8
	Total	350	100
<b>Work Experience</b>	1-2 years	27	7.6
	Between 2 to 5 years	144	41.2
	More than 5 years	179	51.2

	Total	350	100
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**Table 1: Respondents Profile**

Moreover, the reliability analysis was conducted on all variables using Cronbach’s alpha. The findings of the Cronbach’s alpha are given below in table 2. Specifically, overall employee engagement achieved a Cronbach’s alpha value of 0.98. Therefore, it can be concluded that the values of Cronbach’s alpha for all variables are acceptable.

S. No	Scale	Items	Alpha
1	Vigor	4	0.99
2	Absorption	4	0.97
3	Dedication	5	0.99
4	Career Development	4	0.78
5	Employee Productivity	5	0.98
6	Overall	22	0.98

**Table 2: Reliability Test Results**

**Relationship between Employee Engagement and Employee Productivity:**

In order to examine the relationships between Employee Engagement and Employee Productivity, the composite scores obtained for all the subscales of Employee Engagement and Employee Productivity were correlated. Results relating to their inter-correlation are presented in the table 3.

Correlations						
		Vig	Ded	Abs	CD	EP
Vigor	Pearson Correlation	1	.999**	.996**	.413**	.999**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0	0	0	0
	N		350	350	350	350
Dedication	Pearson Correlation		1	.998**	.405**	1.000**
	Sig. (2-tailed)			0	0	0
	N			350	350	350
Absorption	Pearson Correlation			1	.392**	.998**
	Sig. (2-tailed)				0	0
	N				350	350
Career Development	Pearson Correlation				1	.405**
	Sig. (2-tailed)					0
	N					350
Employee Productivity	Pearson Correlation					1
	Sig. (2-tailed)					
	N					

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

**Table 3: Correlation among Employee Engagement Variables with Employee Productivity**



As it can be seen from the table-3, all the dimensions of employee engagement are positively and significantly correlated with the employee productivity. Thus, multiple regression analysis was conducted treating employee engagement variables as independent variables and employee productivity as dependent variable. The result of regression analysis is presented in table-4.

Multiple Regression Analysis							
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig. (P=)	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			
S. No	(Constant)	47.481	6.789		6.994	0.00	
1	Vigor	1.101	0.398	0.282	3.157	0.01	
2	Dedication	1.654	0.272	0.485	6.093	0.0000	
3	Absorption	1.326	0.414	0.276	3.203	0.002	
4	Career Development	0.073	0.382	0.016	0.19	0.849	
Model Summary							
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	F Statistic	DF	P=Sigma
1	.702 <sup>a</sup>	0.493	0.483	16.6127	47.413	4,350	.000 <sup>b</sup>
a. Dependent Variable: Employee Productivity							
b. Predictors: (Constant), Vigor, Dedication, Absorption and Career Development							

From the above table, it is interesting to note that of all the predictors variables namely Vigor (Beta = 0.282, P = 0.01), Dedication (Beta = 0.485, P = 0.00), Absorption (Beta = 0.276, P = 0.02) and Career Development (Beta=0.016, P- 0.849) yielded significant beta coefficient. To be more specific if Vigor improves by one unit, employee productivity will increase by 0.282 units significantly. Similarly, if Dedication, Absorption and Career Development improves by one unit, employee productivity will increase by 0.48 units, 0.27 units and 0.19 unit, respectively. The coefficient of determination yielded value of 0.483 which is statistically significant evident from F statistics presented in the table. This means all the predictor variables namely vigor, dedication, absorption and career development put together explained 48 percent of change in employee productivity. Their remaining 52 percent of change may be because of extraneous variables.

### Discussion and Conclusion:

The rationale of this study was to examine the extent of relationship between employee engagement and its dimensions with employee productivity at higher education institution in India. The findings indicated that employee engagement has a significant positive effect on employee productivity. It is also found that all dimensions of employee engagement (vigor,

dedication, absorption and career development) have significant positive influence on employee productivity. Previous studies have discussed that non-engaged employees waste their times on tasks that have low priority and fail to show their full commitment to do their tasks. Many studies have reported that engaged employees' general have emotional job attachment and higher productivity (Abraham, 2012; Shuck et al., 2011). Hence, this study provides empirical evidence of the impact of employee engagement on employee productivity in higher education sector of Telangana state of India. Therefore, administrator of HEI should give sufficient focus on engaging faculty and staff and frequently monitor the progress to achieve organizational success. Higher Educational Institutions are supposed to develop the suitable strategies by taking into consideration the level of employees work engagement and their productivity to achieve the desired organizational goals.

The limitation of the study is firstly, the sample of the study are from all types of higher educational institutions and a combination of teaching and non-teaching staff of only Telangana state of India. It cannot be generalized across the world and throughout India. Hence, future study can be conducted in different types of higher educational institutions with larger sample selection. Secondly, this study was conducted by using cross-sectional design and survey method of data collection. This study results may differ if future research focus qualitative research design and data collection method as personal interview or focus group discussion on different levels of employees from higher educational institution. Finally, future research can examine the effect of human resource practices or other extraneous variables influence on employee productivity in India.

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