

ANTECEDENTS AND CONSEQUENCES OF FACULTY ENGAGEMENT: A CASE STUDY OF BUSINESS SCHOOLS IN PAKISTAN

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Abstract

Employees Engagement is psychic construct and relatively a newer concept in personal psychology and organizational behavior. Employees engagement can be considered as a deep psychological connectivity between employees and work. Researchers are yet struggling to elaborate the concept of employees' engagement with its empirical essence in relation to its antecedents' and consequences. Thus, this research study aims to find antecedents of employee engagement and its impact on Discretionary Efforts. A quantitative survey is used with quota sampling technique to collect data from 500 faculty members of business schools across Pakistan. The study findings reveal that; three independent factors of the model are significantly contributing to faculty engagement. Furthermore, work engagement influences discretionary efforts and is mediator between antecedents of the study framework and discretionary efforts. This research study contributes to strategic HR policies of Business Schools to increase engagement, and discretionary effort of faculty members.

Keywords: Employees Engagement, Faculty Engagement, Discretionary Efforts, Antecedents, Consequences.

JEL Classification: Z000

Introduction

The concept of employee engagement has created huge interest amongst academic researchers and consultancy firms (Albrecht, 2010). Since, the last two decades' researchers paid substantial focus to understand the concept in order to examine its practical implications (Mary, 2011). Nevertheless, little research evidence has been found in literature relating to the conceptualization of employees' engagement. The concept is still at infancy stage that requires huge research to understand its essence and significance in various research contexts. The main reason for vague conceptualization is using different approaches by various researchers while operationalizing the construct. Despite the vigorous efforts, yet the researchers and practitioners are probing the antecedents and consequences of employees' engagement (Vreede & Palman, 2017). Yet, there is a need to understand fundamental aspects of the construct, and its working mechanism.

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The concept of engagement is defined in many ways in academic literature, Rothbard (2010, p.10) engagement is “a psychological presence in ones work”. Furthermore, Macey et al. (2009) expanded the concept of engagement as a psychic energy to achieve organizational goals. In addition to this, Albrecht (2010) has coined employee engagement as “a positive psychological state of mind”. Although, researchers have no agreement to a common definition of employees’ engagement due to its multidimensional nature but at least the authors have reached at theoretical underpinning of the concept.

In fact, engagement in service sector is one of the greatest challenges and a biggest business differentiation (Itan & Singh, 2017) specifically in higher education system engagement of faculty is almost untouched area. In the context of Pakistan specially at human part, universities need to capture minds and souls of employees by deeply focusing diverse competencies of faculty. Thus, this study aims to identify the antecedents of faculty engagement and to examine its impact on discretionary efforts.

Literature Review

The concept of engagement has been derived from personal psychology; the construct has an essence of attitudinal, behavioral, and trait components. Employees’ engagement is a psychic construct influenced by strong commitment, deep involvement, and vigor (Macey et al., 2009). Different authors have described engagement as deep level of enthusiasm, vigor and dedication. Engaged employees have an active internal stimulus, motives, abilities, and autonomy, to be engaged at the work place (Leither & Maslach, 2016).

There are numerous definitions of the term ‘Engagement’ which covers different features of the construct. The most frequently used definition of engagement in academic literature is given by Schaufeli et al. (2008) the authors described engagement as “the state of mind characterized by vigor, dedication and absorption”. Moreover, Maslach et al. (2008) defined the concept of engagement as ones’ deep involvement with the work. Based upon literature review some key antecedents of employees’ engagement are discussed below:

Job Characteristics

One of the most important dimensions of employees’ engagement is job characteristics (Kahn, 1990; Saks, 2006). There are numerous models of job characteristics available in literature but JCM model given by Hickman and Oldham is considered the most frequently used model in organizational behavior literature. This model consists of five dimensions, each facet of the model carries high motivating stimuli that creates psychological connectivity between individuals and work (Lee & Timothy, 2010). Therefore, a job characteristic is one of the most important antecedents of employee engagement.

H1: Job Characteristics positively influences upon employees' engagement.

Job Involvement (JI)

Job involvement is a reflection of cognitive belief, employees hold to connect their psychological identification with job and organization. The construct encompasses satisfaction of psychological needs (Scrima, Lorito, Parry & Falgares, 2014). It improves self-confidence of employees' that subsequently brings in higher level of performance. Moreover, there is also a consensus of various authors that engagement is a thinking, reactive and physical attachment of employees with their work. Therefore, the construct is taken as one of the facets of employees' engagement in this study.

H2: Job Involvement influences positively upon employees' engagement.

Motivation

One of the significant element to consider human behavior is Motivation. Human behavior could be in any form, it may be vigorous, active or inactive depends upon certain situations influencing people to behave in a particular way (Berg et al., 2013). There are various theories' underlying the concept of motivation, for an example, self- determinant theory (STD); that revolves around three major components: autonomy, relatedness, and competence to fulfill innate psychological needs of individuals. This theory is considered as an effective theory to explain positive work behavior. It encompasses multidimensional view of motivation construct (Rich et al., 2010). This is also stated by various authors that employees' engagement is a state of deep motivation (Zinta & Hochwarter, 2008). Thus, in this study motivation in relation to SDT theory is taken as antecedent of employees' engagement.

H3: Motivation influences positively upon employees' engagement.

Organizational Support

Organizational support theory based upon two components; perceived organizational support (POS) and perceived supervisors support (PSS), Eiseberger (2014), the theory spins around the satisfaction of socio-economical needs of individuals. The theory revolves around the first line order support which boosts employees' confidence and gives them a sense of belonging. Saks (2006) empirically tested significant influence of perceived organizational support and perceived supervisor support upon employees' engagement. Similar evidences have been found in burnout literature as Suan and Nasuridin (2016) explained perceived supervisors support and perceived organizational support have positive impact upon engagement. Ahmed et al. (2015) also found a positive relationship between employees' engagement and social support. This study carries POS and PSS under organizational support theory as antecedents of employees' engagement.

H4: Organizational Support influences positively upon employees engagement.

Organizational Justice

Organizational justice is one of the important components of organizational factors influencing behaviors of individuals. Organizational justice creates a sense of safety that is pre-condition to enhance employees' engagement. The construct has three facets: procedural justice, distributive justice, and interactional justice, (Prem, 2012). The author further explained distributive justice as fairness of decisions, procedural justice fairness of the whole process of decision making especially distribution of rewards and, interactional justice the level of interaction of management with the employees in relation to convey required information. Organizational Justice predicts job and organizational engagement, Saks (2006). Fairness in organization creates positivity among workers that enhances positive work attitudes like work engagement (Colquitt, 2013).

H5: Organizational Justice influences positively upon employees' engagement.

Discretionary Effort

Discretionary efforts are extra in-role efforts employees take with the fundamental belief in reciprocity system. This can be linked with expectancy theory, Guest (2006) that focuses upon cognitive process that reflects reciprocity in the system (Prem, 2012). Discretionary effort is a positive work outcome and is positively related with employees' engagement (Macey & Schneider, 2009).

H6: Employees engagement influences positively upon discretionary efforts

Research Methodology

This research is quantitative and deductive in nature. A survey method is used to collect primary data from permanent faculty members working in higher education both in public and private business schools of Pakistan. Total estimated population size is in thousands; therefore, a sample of 500 faculty members has been taken on the basis of 5% margin of error by using quota sampling method. The response rate remained 77.8%. The scale of the study consists of seven constructs borrowed from different studies.

The reliability of the scales has been checked before data collection by using pilot testing method. Next, EFA was applied to check the validity of the questionnaire. The results of factor loading revealed that except a few items of various subscales all factors were exactly loaded by using Principle Component Analysis (PCA) with varimax method. Further, to test normality of the data box-plot technique has been applied to carry data for advance statistical analysis. Descriptive analysis, bivariate correlation, step-wise regression and Sobel's tests are used to examine the study hypotheses.

Data Analysis

The overall reliability of the scale is .881 that shows the scale is highly reliable.

Table 1
Profile of respondents

Description		Frequency	Percent
Province	Sindh	96	24.7
	Punjab	95	24.4
	Baluchistan	99	25.4
	KPK	99	25.4
Gender	Male	232	59.6
	Female	157	40.4
University Sector	Public	226	58.1
	Private	162	41.9
Designation of Faculty	Lecturer	206	53.0
	Assistant Professor	130	33.4
	Associate Professor	26	6.7
	Professor	27	6.9
Qualification of Faculty	Masters	119	30.6
	MS/M.Phil.	169	43.4
	Doctorate	76	19.5
	Post-Doctorate	25	6.4
Total		389	

Profile of respondents is given in table-1. Depicts almost equal number of respondents represents all four provinces, 59.6 % respondents are male faculty members whereas 40.4% participation are female. Lecturers with M. Phil degrees working in public sector universities remained the most dominant group upon the study results.

Table 2
Descriptive Analysis

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Job Involvement	389	1.00	4.60	2.3866	.59228
Organizational justice	389	1.00	4.85	2.5458	.73731
Discretionary efforts	389	1.00	4.41	2.1613	.54708
Organizational Support	389	1.00	4.44	2.4544	.66182

(Table Continued...)

Job characteristics	389	1.80	4.20	3.2634	.50676
Employees Engagement	389	1.00	4.29	2.1160	.58164
Motivation	389	1.00	4.58	2.3246	.58730

Table- 2 reflects the results of descriptive analysis, perception of faculty pertaining to employees' engagement antecedents and its outcome skewed to agree side except job characteristics, faculty opinion in relation to work engagement remains at positive side with (2.1 mean value) that exhibits business schools faculty reported engaged with their jobs. Business school's faculty also reported their involvement to jobs, they found fairness in the system that is organizational justice, faculty also feels motivated towards work, and they take discretionary efforts to accomplish job tasks. Moreover, based upon standard deviation <1 it can be said that the respondents have less variance in their response.

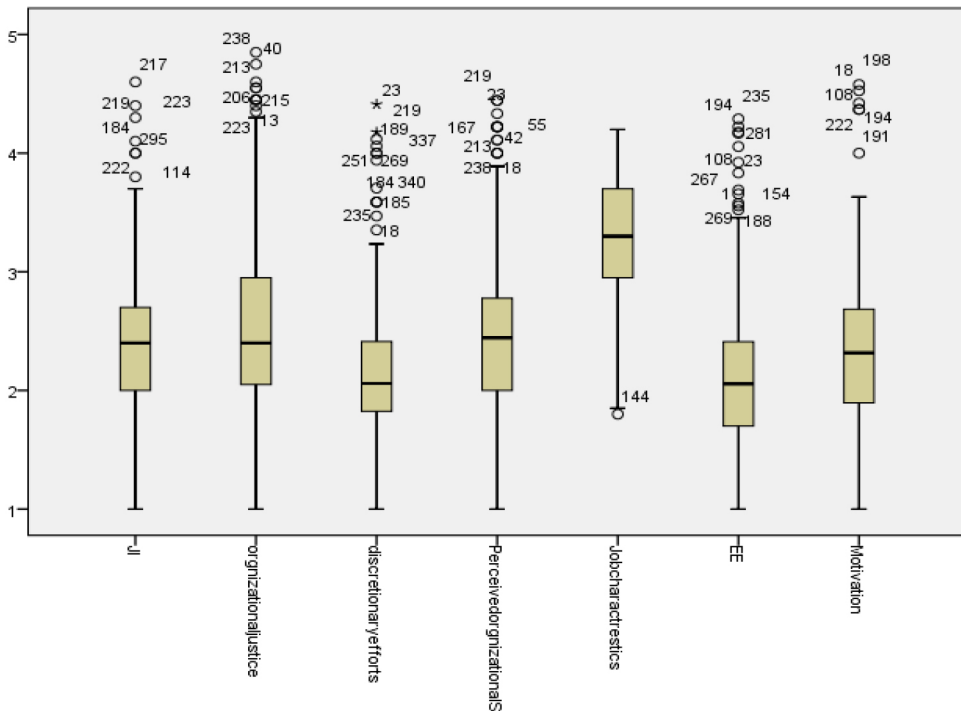


Figure 1: Box-plot of variables

The box plot displays the data for all seven variables is almost symmetric except organizational justice and discretionary efforts which are slightly left skewed. Further, some outliers are also present in the data hardly 1% which is normal. Thus, researcher has not applied any statistical technique to remove these outliers.

Table 3
Correlation among variables

	JI	OJ	DE	POS	JC	EE	Mot
JI	1						
OJ	.379**	1					
DE	.404**	.280**	1				
POS	.361	.561**	.363**	1**			
JC	-.145**	-.315-	.131**	-.213**	1**		
EE	.365**	.240**	.562**	.231**	-.234**	1**	
Mot	.389**	.341**	.455**	.401**	-.276**	.421**	1**

JI = Job involvement, OJ = organizational justice, DE = Discretionary efforts, POS = Perceived organizational support, JC = Job characteristics, EE = Employee engagement, Mot = Motivation

The correlation among variables explains strength and association among variables. The relationship among all study variables has been found moderate and significant at .01 level of significance. The highest correlation .562** exists between employees engagement and discretionary efforts whereas, very weak and low correlation has been found between discretionary efforts and job characteristics. The result is in consistency with existing body of knowledge that justified the variables strength in the study model.

Table 4
Model Summery

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.421a	.178	.175	.52817
2	.474b	.225	.221	.51335
3	.488c	.238	.232	.50974

Model summary displays increasing value of R and adjusted R² with the addition of sequential contributing variables. Model summary in first run shows that motivation, job involvement and job characteristics are predicting 23.8 % model fitness. It means that there are some other factors as well which may predict work engagement of faculty working in business schools of Pakistan.

Table 5
ANOVA

	Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	23.302	1	23.302	83.532	.000 ^b
	Residual	107.958	387	.279		
	Total	131.260	388			
2	Regression	29.539	2	14.770	56.046	.000 ^c
	Residual	101.721	386	.264		
	Total	131.260	388			
3	Regression	31.223	3	10.408	40.054	.000 ^d
	Residual	100.038	385	.260		
	Total	131.260	388			

On the basis of ANNOVA the model is found to be significant with $P < .000$.

Table 6
Coefficients

	Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.146	.109		10.470	.000
	Motivation	.417	.046	.421	9.140	.000
2	(Constant)	.803	.128		6.296	.000
	Motivation	.326	.048	.329	6.771	.000
	Job Involvement	.232	.048	.237	4.865	.000
3	(Constant)	1.327	.242		5.491	.000
	Motivation	.296	.049	.299	6.006	.000
	Job Involvement	.227	.047	.231	4.787	.000
	Job characteristics	-.135	.053	-.118	-2.546	.011

a. Dependent Variable: Employees Engagement

In first run, step-wise regression analysis depicts out of five variables only three variables remained significant to faculty engagement. Motivation remained the highest contributing factor followed by job involvement and job characteristics. However, organizational support and organizational justice were not loaded which means according to the opinion of business school's faculty, their engagement level does not influence organizational factors. This result also supports the basic theory of personal engagement that individuals are engagement towards their work due to psychological connectivity to work. Hence, all loaded factors are related with personal engagement that proves the basic concept of engagement coined by Kahn (1990).

Table-6 exhibits overall result of coefficient shows that motivation is highly contributing variable to enhance faculty engagement. This result proves that work engagement has deep roots in motivational construct (Smyth, 2007).

In second run of the model, the effect of faculty engagement upon discretionary efforts was tested.

Table 7
Model Summery

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.562 ^a	.316	.314	.45304

a. Predictors: (Constant), EE

The result of the model summary reveals 31.4% fitness of the straight line. That means there are also some other factors which are responsible for in role extra efforts of faculty working in business schools, although work engagement is considered as strong factor explaining variance in discretionary efforts.

Table 8
Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.043	.087		12.015	.000
	Employees Engagement	.529	.040	.562	13.371	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Discretionary Efforts

Table- 8 depicts Employees Engagement is significantly contributing to discretionary efforts of faculty working in Business Schools of Pakistan. The study result revealed the condition that if we increase one unit of engagement level, in result discretionary efforts shall be increased by 52.9 %. This is a very high contribution of one factor. Business Schools need to focus upon faculty engagement to have in role extra effort.

In third run, step wise regression has been applied to analyze the impact of all independent variables upon faculty engagement of Business Schools of Pakistan on provincial basis. The results are as follows:

Table 9
Model Summary

Province	Model	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Significance
Sindh	1	.187	.179	.000
	2	.271	.256	.000
	3	.349	.328	.000
Punjab	1	.210	.201	.000
	2	.268	.252	.000
Baluchistan	1	.145	.136	.000
KPK	1	.217	.209	.000

Table 10
Coefficients

Province	Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
			B	Std. Error	Beta		
Sindh	1	(Constant)	.749	.245		3.054	.003
		Motivation	.500	.107	.433	4.654	.000
	2	(Constant)	-.069	.342		-.203	.840
		Motivation	.442	.104	.383	4.259	.000
		Job Involvement	.400	.122	.294	3.274	.001
	3	(Constant)	1.308	.528		2.478	.015
		Motivation	.288	.109	.249	2.641	.010
		Job Involvement	.453	.117	.333	3.867	.000
		Job Characteristics	-.345	.104	-.309	-3.312	.001
	Punjab	(Constant)	1.353	.206		6.573	.000
		Motivation	.416	.084	.458	4.971	.000
		(Constant)	1.011	.236		4.277	.000
		Motivation	.318	.089	.350	3.581	.001
		Job Involvement	.233	.086	.264	2.694	.008

(Table Continued...)

Baluchistan	1	(Constant)	1.441	.189		7.616	.000
		Job Involvement	.323	.080	.380	4.049	.000
KPK	1	(Constant)	1.155	.185		6.242	.000
		Motivation	.402	.078	.465	5.180	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Employee Engagement

The results revealed that there is a variance in respondents' response in relation to influence of independent variables upon engagement. The model summary revealed that faculty working in Sindh province reported motivation, job involvement and job characteristics are significantly influencing upon their engagement level. Whereas, faculty working in Punjab reported motivation and job involvement are influencing factors for their job engagement. However, KP faculty reported that only motivation is the influencing factor for their work engagement rest of the factors are not contributing to their engagement level. Faculty working in Baluchistan reported job involvement is the only factor out of five which predicts their work engagement. Hence, the study revealed that due to different geographical dispersion faculty engagement has variation to study predictors; that might be due to the culture and environment of different provinces of Pakistan.

After stepwise regression, Sobel test was applied to analyze the intervening effect of employees' engagement. Out of five variables only three variables are significantly influencing employees' engagement. Thus, the test has been applied to those contributing variables rather to all independent variables. Moreover, engagement has significantly influencing upon discretionary efforts and also intervenes between independent and dependent variables. The results are shown below:

Table 11
Soble Test

Mediation		Input		Test Statistics	SE	sig-value
Employees	a	.417	Sobel test	7.47723068	0.02950	0
Engagement with	b	.529	Aroian test	7.46273029	0.0295529	0
Motivation	Sa	.046	Goodman test	7.49181593	0.0294445	0
	Sb	.040				
Employees	a	.232	Sobel test	4.53965	0.027034	0
Engagement with	b	.529	Aroian test	4.53825	0.027102	0
Job Involvement	Sa	.048	Goodman test	4.55114	0.026966	0
	Sb	.040				

(Table Continued...)

Employees Engagement with Job Characteristics	a	.135	Sobel test	2.50120	0.02855	0
	b	.529	Aroian test	2.49433	0.02863	0
	Sa	.053	Goodman test	2.50812	0.02847	0
	Sb	.040				

Table -11 The results of all three variables have shown that employees' engagement intervenes between motivation, job involvement, job characteristics and discretionary efforts.

Table 12

Hypothesis Results

Study Hypothesis		Result
H1	Job characteristics influences positively upon engagement.	Accepted
H2:	Job Involvement influences positively upon engagement.	Accepted
H3:	Employee motivation influences positively upon employees' engagement.	Accepted
H4:	Organizational support and organizational justice influences positively upon employees' engagement.	Rejected
H5:	Employees' engagement influences positively upon discretionary efforts.	Accepted
H6:	There is significant relationship between job characteristics, job involvement, employee motivation, discretionary efforts. There is a significant relationship between organizational justice organizational support and Employee engagement.	Accepted Rejected
H7:	Employees' engagement has mediating effect upon Antecedents and consequences of engagement.	Accepted For first three antecedents
H8:	There is a significant difference of opinion among faculty members based upon impact of all independent variables upon faculty engagement.	Accepted

Conclusion

The results of statistical analyses reveal that faculty members working in business schools of Pakistan are engaged at their work places. The key antecedents influencing faculty engagement are work motivation, job involvement and job characteristics; these significant factors are promoting personal engagement concept amongst teaching faculty. Furthermore, work engagement has significant influence upon discretionary efforts and is a mediator between predictors and perceived perfor-

mance. Moreover, faculty working in Business Schools of all provinces of Pakistan has dissimilar opinion regarding the sequential contribution and explaining power of all independent variables to work engagement. The study safely concludes that business school faculty working under HEC universities of Pakistan is engaged due to psychological work connectivity. The results emphasize the contribution of cognitive and motivational factors rather than organizational factors upon faculty engagement.

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