



## EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT: A DRIVER OF ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

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### ABSTRACT

*Employee engagement has emerged as a popular organizational concept in recent years. It is the level of commitment and involvement of an employee towards the organization and its values. An engaged employee is aware of business context, and works with colleagues to improve performance within the job for the benefit of the organization. Employee engagement develops positive attitude among the employees towards the organization. This paper focuses on various factors which lead to employee engagement and what should company do to make the employees engaged. Proper attention on engagement strategies will increase the organizational effectiveness in terms of higher productivity, profits, quality, customer satisfaction, employee retention and increased adaptability.*

### INTRODUCTION

Today, society and business are witnessing unprecedented change in terms of the global nature of work and the diversity of the workforce. Organizations in the world are moving forward into a boundary-less environment. Having the right talent in pivotal roles at the right time is of strategic importance, making a difference to revenues, innovation and organisation effectiveness (Ashton and Morton, 2005). The ability to attract, engage, develop and retain talent will become increasingly important for gaining competitive advantage. Thus, companies are competing for talent people who are having high performance and high competence in workplace (Berger and Berger, 2004). Organisations need employees who are flexible, innovative, willing to contribute and go 'above and beyond the letter' of their formal job descriptions or contracts of employment (Hartley, et al., 1995). In the new economy, competition is global, capital is abundant, ideas are developed quickly and cheaply, and people are willing to change jobs often. The organisations, which are not able to provide a good treatment for their employees, will lose their talented people. In this situation engaged employees may be a key to competitive advantage. Because, engaged employees have high levels of energy, are enthusiastic about their work and they are often fully immersed in their job so that time flies (Macey and Schneider, 2008; May et al., 2004). Organisations that understand the conditions that enhance employee engagement will have accomplished something that competitors will find very difficult to imitate. To the extent that employees are likely to be faced more frequently with unanticipated and ambiguous decision-making situations, organizations must increasingly count on employees to act in ways that are consistent with organizational objectives. In addition, many employees are looking for environments where they can be engaged and feel that they are contributing in a positive way to something larger than themselves.

Employee engagement has emerged as a popular organizational concept in recent years, particularly among practitioner audiences (Saks, 2006; Bakker and Schaufeli, 2008). This is seemingly as attractive for organizations as it is for the professional societies and consulting groups.

The outcomes of employee engagement are advocated to be exactly what most organizations are seeking: employees who are more productive in which they can work over the target within working time, profitable in which they spend the financial usage of company efficiently, safer, healthier, less likely to turnover, less likely to be absent, and more willing to engage in discretionary efforts (Buchanan, 2004; Fleming and Asplund, 2007; Wagner and Harter, 2006). It is not surprising that corporate executives are consistently ranking the development of an engaged workforce as an organizational priority (Ketter, 2008). Further, employee engagement can be a deciding factor for organizational effectiveness. Not only does engagement have the potential to significantly affect employee retention, productivity and loyalty, it is also a key link to customer satisfaction, company reputation and overall stakeholder value. Thus, to gain a competitive edge, organizations are turning to HR to set the agenda for employee engagement and commitment.

### **EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT:**

Literature Review Employee engagement is a complex, broad construct that subsumes many well researched ideas such as commitment, satisfaction, loyalty and extra role behavior. An engaged employee extends themselves to meet the organization's needs, takes initiative, reinforces and supports the organization's culture and values, stays focused and vigilant, and believes he/she can make a difference (Macey, 2006). In practice, organizations typically define engagement as being a part of the organization, having pride and loyalty in the company, being committed, and going "above and beyond the call of duty". Kahn (1990) defined employee engagement as 'the harnessing of organization members' selves to their work roles. In engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances. The cognitive aspect of employee engagement concerns employees' beliefs about the organisation, its leaders and working conditions. The emotional aspect concerns how employees feel about each of those three factors and whether they have positive or negative attitudes toward the organisation and its leaders. The physical aspect of employee engagement concerns the physical energies exerted by individuals to accomplish their roles. Thus, according to Kahn (1990), engagement means to be psychologically as well as physically present when occupying and performing an organisational role. Engaged employees work with passion and feel a profound connection to their company. They drive innovation and move the organization forward (Gallup, 2004). In contrast to this, not-engaged employees are sleepwalking through their workday, putting time—but not energy or passion—into their work. They don't have productive relationships with their managers or with their co-workers. Actively disengaged employees aren't just unhappy at work; they are busy acting out their unhappiness. Every day, these workers undermine what their engaged co-workers accomplish. Most often employee engagement has been defined as emotional and intellectual commitment to the organisation (Baumruk, 2004; Richman, 2006; and Shaw, 2005) or the amount of discretionary effort exhibited by employees in their job (Frank et al. 2004). Development Dimensions International (DDI, 2005) defined engagement "The extent to which people value, enjoy, and believe in what they do". It also states that its measure is like employee satisfaction and loyalty. A leader, according to DDI, must do five things to create a highly engaged workforce. They are: align

efforts with strategy; empower people; promote and encourage teamwork and collaboration; help people grow and develop; and provide support and recognition where appropriate. Robinson et al. (2004) defined engagement similar to the established constructs such as 'organisational commitment' and 'organisational citizenship behaviour' (OCB). It is a positive attitude held by the employee towards the organization and its values. An engaged employee is aware of the business context and works with colleagues to improve performance within the job for the benefit of the organization. According to Maslach et al. (2001), six areas of work-life lead to either burnout or engagement: workload, control, rewards and recognition, community and social support, perceived fairness and values. They argue that job engagement is associated with a sustainable workload, feelings of choice and control, appropriate recognition and reward, a supportive work community, fairness and justice and meaningful and valued work. Like burnout, engagement is expected to mediate the link between these six work-life factors and various work outcomes. Corporate Leadership Council (2004) defined employee engagement as "the extent to which employees commit to something or someone in their organization, how hard they work and how long they stay as a result of that commitment". It is a desirable condition, where an organization connotes involvement, commitment, passion, enthusiasm, focused effort, and energy among employees. So it has both attitudinal and behavioral components (Erickson, 2005). Engagement is the measure of an employee's emotional and intellectual commitment to their organization and its success.

It is an outcome of employees' organizational experiences that are characterized by behaviors that are grouped in to three categories: say, stay and strive (Hewitt, 2005). For Seijts and Crim (2006), employee engagement means a person who is fully involved in, and enthusiastic about, his or her work. Engaged employees care about the future of the company and are willing to invest the discretionary effort to see that the organization succeeds. Brown (2006) viewed engagement as a progressive combination of satisfaction, motivation, commitment and advocacy resulting from employees' movement up the engagement pyramid. Employee engagement can be considered as cognitive, emotional and behavioral.

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European Journal of Business and Management [www.iiste.org](http://www.iiste.org) ISSN 2222-1905 (Paper) ISSN 2222-2839 (Online) Vol 3, No.8, 2011 59 | P a g e

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