

Assessment Of Employee Engagement Tools In Enhancing Productivity

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Article Details	Abstract
Received: 15 January 2023 Accepted: 16 April 2023 Published: 09 June 2023 ¹Dr. Ahmed Ali ²Hira Siddiqui Copyright @Author Corresponding Author: *Dr. Ahmed Ali	<i>This research examines the effectiveness of various employee engagement tools in enhancing workplace productivity. Employee engagement is crucial for fostering a motivated workforce and improving organizational outcomes. The study analyzes a range of engagement tools, including surveys, feedback platforms, recognition programs, and performance management systems. By evaluating their impact on employee morale, job satisfaction, and retention rates, the research identifies best practices for implementing these tools effectively. Quantitative metrics and qualitative insights from employee feedback are utilized to assess how these tools influence productivity levels across different sectors. Additionally, the study explores the relationship between employee engagement and organizational performance, highlighting the role of leadership in promoting a culture of engagement. The findings suggest that organizations that invest in comprehensive engagement strategies experience higher productivity, lower turnover, and improved employee well-being. This research provides valuable recommendations for HR professionals and organizational leaders seeking to implement or enhance employee engagement initiatives to drive productivity and achieve strategic goals.</i>

Keywords: employee engagement, productivity, engagement tools, workplace culture, performance management, employee feedback, recognition programs, organizational outcomes.

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INTRODUCTON

In contemporary work environments, particularly those characterized by complexity, fluidity, and the extensive use of technology, the necessary engagement of employees has become widely acknowledged. This is a result of the realization that business competitiveness and success depend largely on the commitment, dedication, and discretionary effort of the workforce. Indeed, the lack of employee engagement, or acts of disengagement in the workplace, has been identified as a major reason behind both low performance and productivity levels. Consequently, the time for 'rhetoric-only' organizational philosophies needs to stop, and the 'real' work must start. Commitment demands actions and strategies to be concomitantly embedded. To ensure genuine employee engagement in the workplace, innovative tools, processes, and strategies need to be introduced and implemented. What has been relevant and successful in the past might have little appeal or practical utilization in today's working environment. (Clack, 2021).

Thus, the overall objective of the assessment is to systematically examine employee engagement tools, instruments, and initiatives, with a focus on those specific strategies that are designed to support businesses in improving productivity. The primary purposes are to explore the choice and selection of engagement tools; to identify any potential improvements that can further facilitate employee commitment and, in turn, improve productivity; and to identify any gaps existing in workplace engagement mechanisms. The overarching research questions are as follows: to what extent engagement tools have influence (positive as well as negative) on employee productivity; what specific tools and processes can improve productivity; and what other tools are necessary to ensure overall employee engagement? The research hypothesis is that comprehensive, contemporary engagement tools can improve productivity.

1.1. Background and Significance

Addressing the research needs requires us to look at the background and significance of conducting this study - the importance of direct correlations between employee engagement and the increase in overall firm performance. Over the course of the past two decades, employee engagement has been an important topic, as well as a measure of firm performance, across various industries. Several attempts to define and

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measure employee engagement have been made. Studies conducted have found that the more a firm focuses on strategies derived from the model of having employees engage in their jobs, the more positive the influence on overall corporate performance. More specifically, it was found that employees in an engaged workforce are more productive, profitable, safer, have lower turnover, and are more customer-focused. One of the findings is that the leaders of business and HR need to develop a greater understanding of the costs associated with decreasing levels of engagement, particularly given their likely rise.

Employee engagement has been regarded as a measure of successful talent management, which indicates the level of commitment of employees. In today's environment, globalization and advances in technology have contributed to the increase in expectations of employees and potential employees at all levels of the organization. As such, the need to measure and manage employee engagement is a key facilitator of successful strategy and management practices within organizations. This is particularly important in today's workforce, where job flexibility and work/life balance are key priorities for many employees. It has been noted that the proportion of workers who work at least 8 hours per week from home, whether on a temporary or regular basis, is expanding while the difficulty in measuring home-based workload and production in many jobs is also increasing (De-la-Calle-Durán and Rodríguez-Sánchez2021).

2. Theoretical Framework

This study investigates employee engagement tools in enhancing employee productivity and their effectiveness in making employees more productive for the organization. The theoretical conceptualization of the study is anchored in theories of motivation and engagement. In concept, motivation leads to action when the gap between an unfulfilled need and a desired need is fulfilled. When men and women are psychologically and physically fit and work together for middle and long-term goals in the organizations, they are likely to be more productive. That is when they are engaged in the work performed.

The engagement of men and women within organizations is both psychological and sociological. From a societal perspective, engaged people meet or satisfy societal expectations and enhance national productivity. From the organization's perspective,

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the performance of engaged employees is most likely linked to the attainment of organizational goals. Most models and theories suggest that there is a clear link between employees' attitudes and the organization's performance in the attainment of goals. Maslow's hierarchy of needs and Herzberg's two-factor theory also highlight the interplay between employee attitudes and the expected productivity outcome. Maslow emphasizes that people are motivated by their active or unfulfilled needs, and when some needs are satisfied, employees may stop sourcing for activators, for example, seeking jobs elsewhere or turn to the hygiene factor, for example, seeking job satisfaction.

2.1. Conceptualizing Employee Engagement

2.1. Conceptualizing Employee Engagement: Engagement, Emotional Attachment, or Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is a dimension of engagement or vice versa. Engagement is an emotional attachment of an employee to the organization and its goals. Job satisfaction is a response resulting from an employee's moral dispositions. Employee engagement also signifies a state of mind characterized by personal moral energies. The level of engagement of an employee is contingent upon job satisfaction along with the organizational outcomes to which the person is associated. Organizations solidify in three different ways – on an overall basis, unit-wise, and individual/employee-wise. Creating slack in employees to give the organizations their best is what employee engagement is about. The dynamics of employee engagement are gradually changing with the evolving confrontations of the business environment and corporate beliefs. Employee engagement is about building a motivated workforce and thus delivering high performance. This has resulted in continuous productivity. Tracing the path of time, the meaning of engagement has also varied – from ordeal, slavery, and feudal bond, the mindset is currently synonymous with the emotional association of employees with their work and organization.

Though various definitions and models of engagement are available, opinions differ between academia and industry. In academia, it is one of the most enduring questions that seeks to demystify the meaning of the domain. Some define engagement as a change or advancement of the already illustrious job satisfaction concept or emphasize that it is not job satisfaction. Some do not consider engagement as an

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emotion, or as a cognitive approach, or consider it as a non-dimension of a construct. Some consider it the same as empowerment, attachment, and involvement, whereas others consider engagement as only one of the reasons. While the debate is ongoing, organizations may exploit the relevance and purpose of employee engagement, which may in turn influence the choice of tools or methods. Additionally, organizations may assess how appropriate cultures and organizational leaders are in promoting engagement. As a matter of fact, understanding the difference may not alone solve any critical concerns, but it can also make the engagement tool selection more specific to the requirements (Ojo et al., 2021).

2.2. Link between Employee Engagement and Productivity

Research has shown, from various employee surveys conducted by commercial organizations in the UK and beyond, that engagement has an empirical relationship with productivity outcomes. For instance, research undertaken by an organization found that stores with higher levels of employee engagement had 27% higher rates of earnings per share. Secondly, a case study found that an increase in employee engagement of 0.1 from the previous year resulted in an extra \$100,000 in sales for a large store. This \$100,000 contributed \$30,000 of additional operating income and additional customer transactions. Thirdly, research showed that a 5-point increase in engagement would drive a 0.5 improvement in customer satisfaction survey scores over 12 months. In another case, a 5-unit increase in employee satisfaction at a hotel helped improve customer satisfaction scores by 20 points.

The theoretical underpinning of the engagement–performance link lies in the assumption that motivated employees are more likely to contribute positively towards the attainment of organizational goals. Furthermore, employees who are both capable and motivated are more likely to engage in motivating situations in the first place. Consequently, the relationship between motivation and performance metrics can be seen to be quite circular. Other factors, such as leadership style, interplay in an alignment of engagement and job performance is also assumed. So, employees with very low levels of engagement will perform less well than staff with average engagement, the lowest engagement scores being indicative of 'actively disengaged' staff. While it cannot be assumed that highly engaged employees are also high performers, there are no instances researchers could find where low staff engagement

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was associated with the generation of better results. In a high engagement organization, the culture values individuals and knows that the organization cares about them.

3. Methods

This research employs an explorative research design. An exploratory study can be qualitative, quantitative, or use a combination of both. Research methods are selected based on research objectives. They may involve the analysis of primary data, secondary data, and archival data. We need to collect qualitative and quantitative data in order to answer the question, so the mixed methods are chosen.

3.1. Data Collection: The first round of data collection involved setting up and sending out online surveys and interviews to gain an understanding of current trends in employee engagement tools and the current systems landscape. The second round of data collection will be fieldwork composed of a multitude of research methods. It will involve primarily semi-structured interviews on location and observational research in specific selected organizations throughout the UK. Face-to-face interaction is preferred to enable a more detailed dialogue and richer environments for obtaining objective views on the tools and their influence. Findings will be triangulated with qualitative surveys, obtained information from the analyzed case studies, and official and unofficial company information. Purposive sampling will be used to ensure that the final participants have experience with engagement tools within their organization. The aim is to achieve a 50/50 split between managers and employees. To be eligible, managers must have used an engagement tool within their workforce, and employees must have completed the use of a tool within the last year. This phase is currently awaiting ethics approval (Alshaabani et al., 2021).

3.2. Analytical Framework: The analysis of the data will be based on data mining techniques – descriptive analysis, data synthesis, and practical triangulation of the qualitative, quantitative, and observational data to validate the empirically discovered results and to make the findings more robust and holistic. This study seeks to assess the institutional relevance social media has on the employer-employee identity. The methodological approach discussed is the manner in which the research aims, objectives, and philosophy of pragmatism are aligned to the positivism research paradigm. The iterative assessments of the results, after the collection of qualitative

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and quantitative data, in the form of secondary data analysis and questionnaire survey, respectively, are embedded within the method processes. Ethical issues will be well considered. Anonymity of the participants will be preserved to the extent possible. Managers and employees will all be briefed about the study and asked to give their consideration to taking part in the research study. Every effort will be made to protect participants from the potential backlash of the research regarding employee privacy.

3.1. Research Design

The research design adopted for this study is chosen with due regard to the objectives: to evaluate the employee engagement tools and assess the impact for achieving desired outcomes of enhancing the productivity of an organization. To begin with, a systematic review is conducted, which is then followed by a consultation with stakeholders. Exploratory or descriptive research paradigms can also be employed for this kind of research. Doing so yields new information about the underlying phenomena of broad research questions by delving into preliminary ideas, prior research, opinions, and attitudes of the populace, and possible misconceptions. Moreover, it expands upon existing theoretical understandings of the constructs of investigation.

The trend and emerging pattern of employee engagement tools and their effectiveness in enhancing productivity is very dynamic and often varies in different countries and different sectors. Thus, a mixed method can be explored for data triangulation and better interpretation and understanding, as it would permit the use of the results of one method to complement the other, and thus illuminate a more comprehensive picture. The approach will yield greater insights. The plethora of frameworks explored and indicators refined will be validated through qualitative insights and comments from the stakeholders. The research will ideally employ a descriptive research design for the literature review, which will be complemented with an explorative approach for stakeholder inquiries (Zhang et al.2021).

The addition of some qualitative questioning to a conventional quantitative survey is beneficial in obtaining data regarding complex phenomena, which can serve as a supplement to the quantitative findings. Hence, in this study, an inductive research strategy in which data is collected and analyzed systematically to identify patterns, trends, concepts, and ideas is proposed. Through this research strategy, the inductive

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researcher can begin the analysis process by exploring each case either backwards or forwards, moving from the search for patterns and emergent concepts to a consideration of the workings and mechanisms that give rise to them, or vice versa. This is an approach frequently adopted as a preliminary phase of an investigation in which qualitative research methods are later employed to explore the 'real-world' situation or issue in more depth. Additionally, exploratory and descriptive research is often more flexible in terms of methodological design. By the term 'methodological flexibility,' it is referring to the freedom to alter and adapt research designs and methods as the research process unfolds in order to facilitate improvements and focus activity. This can be useful when embarking on the first phase of a multi-phase research program in which the initial intent is to gain an initial picture of the phenomenon or area under investigation, in order to use this information to inform further phases of data collection (Memon et al.2021).

3.2. Data Collection and Analysis

Data will be collected using qualitative surveys and performance metrics in the workplace, focusing on evaluating software tools for enhancing employee engagement and productivity. Specifically, focus group and survey recipients will be operational managers and professionals, with a member of the research team assisting with the questionnaire. These instruments are designed to ensure that the study's defined objectives are reached, with both pilot and pre-testing stages to discuss their findings regarding reliability and validity goals. The data collection process will conclude with a sampling technique for identifying the research population, ensuring that respondents are randomly selected to address the questionnaires and participate in face-to-face interviews. The purpose of these interviews can be further clarified using thematic analysis to record open responses. Finally, in interpreting the responses provided, statistical methods must be considered qualitatively. Qualitative data are usually subjected to content and thematic analysis. Results from different sources are presented separately for purposes of discussion, although any correlations or contradictions will also be reported and further examined (Rasool et al., 2021).

The survey is designed for an on-site operational manager. Our plan is for the HR manager and a member of the research team to be present initially to assist with questionnaire completion, and then return to collect the surveys approximately one

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week later. Additional contact details have been obtained for up to one corporate contact for a follow-up call after one month, with one reminder call if necessary. The purpose of the follow-up call is threefold: to chase up base responses, track progress, and supply and collect prizes. Data handling and storage follow ethical guidelines for research and the principles of confidentiality, objectivity, and security. Skills provided by the research team and volunteers include both data transfer and entry. Data is stored in a database with completely anonymous entries, although entries are stored in such a way that thematic analysis can reveal meaningful initial data. Personal and survey information is separated, and access to each is restricted where possible. Confidentiality measures will be emphasized to participants at each stage of data collection and storage, and data will be destroyed 12 months after the completion of the research project. CVs of employed researchers can also be developed and become the property of the Data Controller. The latter, at their discretion, have completed, filed there, or entirely destroyed.

4. Case Studies

4.1. Company A: Implementation of Employee Engagement Tools

4.2. Company B: Challenges and Successes

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

Overall, this review offers insights from secondary data findings and empirical research from the literature review, theoretical framework, and case studies that support the claim that no universal engagement tool or practice exists due to the nature of differing industry sectors and the uniqueness of organizational culture and employee demographics. The main principle behind any engagement venture is its commitment to support organizational values and improve organizational performance, which will enhance its market reputation and quality of service. The literature review highlighted emerging trends such as hybrid work models, AI, and changing management theories, particularly in light of the pandemic, representing areas where engagement research is warranted in the near future. This paper has critically assessed the usefulness of four employee engagement tools in enhancing, supporting, and improving engagement in the workplace. It can be seen that alignment of tools to engagement strategy may result in improved organizational productivity. It

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is clear that understanding organizational needs is the primary action required to set in motion the journey of an efficient engagement strategy. For any organization, to meet this need, managing any or all of the areas identified above will identify potential touchpoints for engagement tools that will support an engagement strategy. Then, the choice of tools is wide-ranging and may be determined by different areas of required improvements, a cost versus benefit analysis, or the combination that reflects what an organization hopes to achieve. Ultimately, the most effective method of determining what will work is to retain an approach of asking employees what engagement mechanisms will work for them. It is now up to leadership and human resources to take the tools identified, gain endorsement, develop strategies to enhance their appeal, and then launch them in the workplace. In return, this should improve productivity, still measured by profit or organizational output, but also resulting in higher engagement levels (Sharma et al.2021).

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