FACTORS INFLUENCING THE EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT IN PRIVATE HOSPITALS

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ABSTRACT
Employee engagement has emerged as an important aspect in the highly dynamic business environment today. India’s healthcare sector is confronted with high employee turnover despite retention measures taken by the HR. Making the employees engaged to the hospital is inevitable to provide patient satisfaction and for the quality health care. Engaged employees go extra mile and put more efforts to provide patient satisfaction and quality service. Since healthcare sector is one of the vast service sector in India, this study focuses on private multi-specialty hospitals in Bangalore. There are enormous opportunities for paramedical staff in India as well as abroad, hence making them engaged to the organization becomes the concern for management. The purpose of this study is to understand the influence of the factors namely; perceived organizational support and perceived supervisor support on employee engagement in private hospitals. It is imperative to engage the talents and keep them for a long tenure with the hospitals, because ultimately it is the engaged employees who provide customer satisfaction and build brand image of the organization. Data was collected from 550 randomly selected paramedical staff employed in 10 private multispecialty hospitals, 50 were unusable and leaving 500 for the analysis. To test hypotheses, Pearson correlation and Multiple regression were applied.

KEY WORDS: Employee engagement, perceived organizational support (POS), perceived supervisor support (PSS).

INTRODUCTION
The concept of employee engagement was developed by Kahn (1990) in his ethnographic work on summer camp employees. He 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”. According to Schaufeli et al, (2002), “employee engagement is a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption”. Where as Chiumento (2004) defined employee engagement as “a positive two way relationship between an employee and their organization”. Engaged employees and organization will go an extra mile for each other and develop an emotional bonding with their organization. For an organization to be effective, employee engagement is the key. It becomes crucial to understand what makes the employee engaged to the organization and build that everlasting commitment to their organization.

The goal of this study is to get an insight about the influence of factors – Perceived organizational support (POS) and perceived supervisor support (PSS) on employee engagement. Paper discusses healthy practices that can be implemented in order to enhance employee engagement in hospitals.

Perceived organizational support (POS) is “the extent to which employees perceive that their contributions are valued by their organization and that the firm cares about their well-being”. POS involves the degree to which the organization is willing to compensate employees for their efforts, provide them with interesting work assignments, and provide adequate working conditions.
Perceived supervisor support (PSS) is the perception of employees that their supervisor values their contribution. Employees expect their supervisors to direct, guide, mentor and support while performing in the organization.

**REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE**

Employee engagement is “an individual’s involvement with, satisfaction with, and enthusiasm for, the work she does” (Robbins, Judge & Vohra, 2013). Highly engaged employees will have a passion towards their work and feel a deep connection to their organization, where as disengaged employees do not put energy or attention to their work. Employee engagement is the level of commitment and involvement an employee has towards their 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. (Sarkar, 2011). Employee engagement was defined by a recent meta-analysis as ‘a heightened emotional and intellectual connection that an employee has for his/her job, organization, manager, or co-workers that, in turn, influences him/her to apply additional discretionary effort to his/her work’ (Gibbons, 2006). According to Simon, (2011) employee engagement is linked to three essential forces in the organization - attrition, productivity and profitability. An engaged employee carry out what is expected of him, by being focused and brings success to the organization. Profitability is the outcome of engaged work force. Employee engagement has been defined as emotional and intellectual commitment to the organization (Baumruk 2004, Richman 2006 and Shaw 2005). It has also been defined as the amount of discretionary effort exhibited by employees in their job (Frank et al 2004). Talent engagement has become a significant tool for employee retention in service sector (Glen, 2006).Study conducted by Bhattacharya and Mukherjee (2009), among IT professionals with an emphasis to rewards as the key to engagement indicated that the IT professionals give much importance to the different reward strategies for their ‘engagement’. Perceptions of employee recognition and employee engagement have a significant impact on overall job satisfaction and intent to leave the organization (Henryhand , 2009).

Both POS and PSS have been the focus of extensive research in the management literature and have been linked to various behaviors such as turnover intentions/ turnover (Rhoades and Eisenberger 2002). POS theory emphasizes the importance of employees supporting the organization and vice versa. For example, an organization supporting employee with proper training and compensation, employee starts to develop a positive attitude and gets involved with their organization. Study results have revealed that POS was related directly to salespersons’ job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and organizational citizenship behavior (Piercy et al. 2006). Employees envision their organization as taking on human-like characteristics in valuing their contributions and well-being is the basic premise of POS (Eisenberger et al., 1986). The research literature indicates that POS is positively related to various outcomes favorable to both the organization and the individuals, such as, conscientiousness in carrying out job responsibilities, organizational commitment and job satisfaction (Jayashree K and Sheela Mary, 2012). Employees who perceive high levels of POS are more likely to reciprocate the organization with positive attitudes such as higher levels of affective commitment and favorable work behaviors such as commitment to organizational goals and exhibit lower intention to leave (Eisenberger, et al., 1986; Eisenberger, et al., 1997).

Though much research has analyzed the influence of POS in organizations, perceived supervisor support (PSS) also has been found to have a significant influence on employees’ attitudes and behavior. PSS, the extent to which the supervisor values the employee’s contributions, has been linked to POS (Eisenberger et al. 2002; Shanock and Eisenberger 2006). Research by various scholars has indicated that the supervisor plays the key role in developing employees’ perceptions of the
organization (Gerstner and Day 1997; Liden et al. 2006). Since supervisors act as agents of the organization, they are presumed to have a responsibility for directing, evaluating, and supporting their subordinates hence subordinates develops the tendency to view their supervisor as a personal extension or personification of the organization (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Eisenberger et al., 2002).

PSS is an important factor that influences employees’ job attitudes and behavior for nonsales employees (Chan 2006; Rhoades and Eisenberger 2002). Among municipal government employees environmental factors such as promotional opportunities pay and benefits satisfaction, performance appraisal satisfaction, training, workload and supervisory relationships are positively related to job satisfaction (Ellickson (2002). Rhoades and Eisenberger (2002) concluded that PSS is an antecedent to POS because supervisors serve as agents of the organization and the treatment that employees receive from the supervisor is a reflection of how they are viewed by the organization.

Hypotheses

In view of the literature reviewed, following hypotheses were proposed:

- **H**₁: POS has a significant relation with employee engagement in private hospitals
- **H**₂: PSS has a significant relation with employee engagement in private hospitals
- **H**₃: POS has a significant influence on employee engagement in private hospitals
- **H**₄: PSS has a significant influence on employee engagement in private hospitals

METHODOLOGY

Procedure, Sample and instrument

Bangalore being the hub of leading private multispecialty hospitals such as Fortis, Columbia Asia, M.S. Ramaiah group of hospitals etc., was chosen as the location of study. Out of 108 private hospitals, 18 multispecialty hospitals were identified for the present study. All these hospitals were approached personally, through emails and phone for participating in the study and consent was received from ten hospitals (HR managers). 550 employees were randomly selected based on the database provided by the HR managers of respective hospitals.

Instrument was developed and modified according to the nature of the study. Reliability test was performed and results are indicated in Table 1. Employee engagement has 11 items and Cronbach's Alpha is 0.834. Factor, POS has 8 items with Cronbach's Alpha 0.887 and factor PSS has 6 items with Cronbach's Alpha 0.937.

**Table 1: The reliability statistics of the instrument**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>Cronbach's Alpha</th>
<th>N of items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employee Engagement</td>
<td>0.834</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Supervisor support</td>
<td>0.937</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Organizational support</td>
<td>0.887</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Data was collected during a time span of January 2014 – March 2014, after receiving consent from the Director of the respective hospitals to administer the survey with their employees. Employees were reassured of the confidentiality of the data obtained. Completed survey was returned in sealed envelopes to assure the validity. Questionnaire was administered to 550 paramedical staff and 500 completely filled responses were received. Sample was comprised of nurses, head nurses, supervisors and technical staff of the selected hospitals. Responses were measured by using a 5-point agreeableness scale in which Strongly agree = 5, Agree = 4, Neither agree nor disagree =3, Disagree = 2 and Strongly disagree = 1.

DATA ANALYSIS

Data was analyzed with SPSS package. The demographics of the respondents are explained in Descriptive statistics. Pearson Correlation was applied to establish the relationship between independent and dependent variables and Multiple Regression was applied to test the influence of independent variables on dependent variable.

Results & Discussion

Majority of the respondents belonged to the age group- below 30 years. 248 (50%) respondents belonged to the age group- between 31- 40 years. 67 (13%) respondents belonged to the age group- between 41-50 years. 12% (60 in count) of the respondents are males and 88% (440 in count) are females. 77% of the respondents are married, 22% are of single status and 1% of the respondent’s marital status belonged to ‘other’ group.

Perception of the respondents with respect to each factors are presented in Table 2. Dependent variable – employee engagement has a mean score 3.56 with standard deviation 0.49 where as independent variable POS received a mean score of 3.45, with standard deviation 0.64. Other independent variable PSS obtained a mean score 3.71 and standard deviation 0.73.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean score</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perceived organizational support</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>3.45</td>
<td>0.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived supervisor support</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>3.71</td>
<td>0.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee engagement</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>0.49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Correlation

To test the hypotheses H1 and H2, Pearson Correlation was employed. Results indicated a positive significant relation between dependent and independent variables chosen for the study. Results are presented in Table 3. Factor POS displayed a positive correlation with Employee engagement, with r = .656, p value =0.000 at 1% level significance where as factor PSS indicated a positive correlation with dependent variable employee engagement , with r = .575 and p value = 0.000. Results supported both the hypotheses H1 and H2.
Table 3 – Correlation results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>Statistics</th>
<th>Employee engagement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>POS</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>.656**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (1-tailed)</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSS</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>.575**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (1-tailed)</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

Multiple regression

In order to establish the influence of independent variables on dependent variable, multiple regression was employed. Results are presented in Table 4. It is understood that, R which is, .835 explains the degree of relation between set of independent variables and dependent variable. R square, in this model is 0.692, which explains the goodness fit of the model. Higher the R square higher the explanatory power of independent variables on dependent variable. Significance of the model is determined by ANOVA test, when sig value is < .05, the model is statistically significant at 5% level. The ANOVA results of the model indicated that the model is statistically significant with p value = 0.00 < 0.05. Thus both the hypotheses, H₃ and H₄ are accepted which implies that POS and PSS have significant influence on Employee engagement.

Table 4 – Regression results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>Independent variables</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>R Square</th>
<th>Adj R Square</th>
<th>Std. Error of the Estimate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employee engagement</td>
<td>POS, PSS</td>
<td>0.832</td>
<td>0.692</td>
<td>0.687</td>
<td>0.271</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Predictors: (Constant), POS and PSS. b. Dependent Variable: Employee engagement

The contribution of each independent variable on dependent variable is determined with help of standardized coefficient beta. Table 5 explains the coefficient summary of the model. Regression coefficient of POS is 0.15 and regression coefficient of PSS is 0.18. The results clearly indicate that both the variables, POS and PSS have significant influence on Employee engagement.

HR managers and management should be concerned about their employee’s contributions and try to understand each employee’s contribution towards the growth of the organization.
Table 5 – Coefficients of the regression model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Unstandardised Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardised Coefficients</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Std. Error</td>
<td>Beta</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>7.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POS</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>2.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSS</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>3.61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Dependent Variable: Employee engagement

SUMMARY AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

The main objective of the study was to understand the influence of factors POS and PSS on employee engagement in selected multispecialty hospitals functioning in Bangalore city. Results are quite positive and indicated significant influence of the above mentioned factors on employee engagement. Based on the results, it can be concluded that on going support should be provided to the employees by the management as well by the supervisors. Both POS and PSS are equally important for the employees in hospitals. They prefer their organization to stand by them in their tough times, provide them adequate resources to perform and provide them appropriate training to perform and to advance in their career as well. It was also observed that employees see their supervisors as the key agents of the organization and expect direction and guidance from their supervisors and expect constructive criticism from their supervisors as well. A proactive and structured approach by the HR managers has been suggested.

Present study was conducted in multi-specialty hospitals in Bangalore city, perception of the employees in others sector can vary. Future studies can be conducted in others sectors such as IT, banking etc to understand the perception of these employees. More factors, organization level as well as individual level, can be included to understand what actually keeps the employees engaged.

References

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