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RESEARCH PAPER

Assessing the Factors influencing Employee Job Engagement in the NGO Sector of Sindh

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ABSTRACT

Employee Engagement is a prominent focus across sectors to understand the various factors that influence employees' motivation and job involvement. Employee engagement means that a worker is fully absorbed in the job, experiencing a sense of energy, passion, and enthusiasm toward job activities. While its significance is well recognized, empirical research on the factors influencing employee engagement in the NGO sector of Sindh, Pakistan, remains scarce. The objective of this research is to investigate the impacts of job rewards, job autonomy, goal setting, career development, and perceived supervisor support on employee job engagement. By addressing this gap, the study seeks to provide actionable insights for enhancing employee engagement practices in this underexplored sector. The data were collected from 145 participants from the NGO Sector of Sindh, Pakistan. The data were analyzed using SPSS Version 27. The results revealed that there is a positive influence of job rewards, job autonomy, goal setting, career development, and perceived supervisor support on employee job engagement. To improve job engagement in the NGO sector, it is essential to strengthen areas such as reward systems, work autonomy, clear objectives, professional growth opportunities, and supportive leadership. By effectively implementing these strategies, organizations can foster a highly engaged, motivated, committed, and productive workforce that is aligned with their objectives, ultimately driving long-term success and growth.

| **KEYWORDS** | Employee Job Engagement (EJE), Job Rewards (JR), Job Autonomy (JA), Goal Setting (GS), Career Development (CD), Perceived Supervisor Support (PSS) |

Introduction

In today's era of high competition, managing employees is an important factor to gain a competitive advantage (Patro, 2019). To gain competitive advantage, every organization focuses on the employees' work engagement (Deepa, 2020). Employee engagement is deemed as an important aspect for organizations and businesses to enhance productivity and profitability (Lacy, P., Gupta, P., & Hayward, 2018). The employee engagement study received significant attention from researchers and practitioners but still there is a need to recognize the important factors that affect an engagement (Macey & Schneider, 2008; Khan, et. al., 2020).

The different organization describes engagement in different ways. These themes contain the satisfaction of employees towards their work, the employer supports, Recognition for one's contributions, the employees' job performance, development

dimensions and commitment with an organization. The process begins with employers' practice of HRM, job and task design. Those employees who are engaged in their job, have a strong desire to be an essential part of an organization, secondly, they advocate and support for the organizations and exert extra efforts and strive for success of an organization (Vance, 2006).

Many organizations are struggling with the development of HRM and employee engagement (Asadullah Syed, 2017). Previous research by Ahmed & Ansari (2020) studied the employee engagement in Pakistani Pharmaceutical sector, in which he researched the relationship between job fit, leadership style, affective commitment, and psychological climate with employee engagement. However, there is a lack of empirical evidence regarding employee engagement in the NGO sector of Sindh, Pakistan. This study seeks to fill this gap by exploring the factors influencing Employee job engagement, such as job reward, job autonomy, goal setting, career development, and perceived supervisor support in the NGO sector of Sindh.

Literature review

Employee Job Engagement (EJE)

Employee engagement is part of HRM, it is a psychological state in which employees are fully involved in their job, and they are committed to their organizational goals (Vance, 2006). The term employee job engagement has been researched and gained immense popularity in recent years; it is a concept of the HRD field.

Kahn (1990) describes personal engagement as the involvement of organizational members' whole selves—physically, cognitively, and emotionally—in their roles, actively connecting with their work. He further defines disengagement as a state in which employees detach themselves from their work roles.

The term engagement is composed of three components: 1) Physical engagement, defined as the degree to which employees are active and physically present in the work. 2) Cognitive engagement, in which employees are attentive and mentally focused on their job tasks. 3) Emotional engagement, in which employees' sense is allied to their job, are passionate about their task and feel a sense of meaning in their work. The engagement of an employee is more than job motivation or satisfaction; it includes a deep personal link to one's work and the organization (Kahn, 1990).

Harter et al. (2002) studied Employee engagement (EE) and satisfaction and their correlation with customer productivity, satisfaction, profit, productivity, retention of employees and employee safety. It was suggested that organizations emphasizing improving EE are likely to see substantial improvement in business outcomes, such as profitability and productivity. It was also highlighted that EE as a predictor of employee retention and job performance, signifying that employees who are engaged are more likely to be attached to the organization and perform at a high level. Moreover, the meta-analysis of Harter's study signifies the importance of creating a healthy work environment that supports EE and satisfaction. By participating in EE initiatives and creativity, organizations can create a more productive workplace while improving the employees' satisfaction and well-being.

Saks (2006) studied the model of job and organizational engagement by examining its antecedents and outcomes through the lens of social exchange theory. Deepa (2020) studied the impact of organizational justice dimensions on different aspects

of job engagement and found that four dimensions of justice positively influence physical, cognitive, and emotional engagement at work. This study aims to investigate the various factors influencing Employee job engagement (EJE), examining how different variables contribute to the level of engagement within an organization.

Job Rewards (JR)

Job Rewards are the crucial factors in encouraging employee engagement, it helps to motivate the employees to strive for high achievements. By providing fair rewards and recognition, organization encourages employees to be more focused on their work and personal growth (Anitha, 2014). Baqir et al. (2020) conducted research and found that there is positive effect of reward and recognition and supervisor support on employee engagement in banking sector of Pakistan. Furthermore, it is suggested that when employees are rewarded and recognized for their job, receive the support from their supervisors, they are more likely to be engaged in their work. Mesepy (2016) investigated that recognition and reward encourage the employees so that they give their best performances for the betterment of an organization through high involvement and engagement in the job. Saks (2006) observed in their study that when employees obtain any recognition and reward from their organization, they feel proud and, as the results, they perform more through high job engagement.

Job Autonomy (JA)

Job Autonomy means a degree of independence of an employee in making decisions and performing work-related tasks. It is the discretion and freedom of employees in facets of work schedule, work methods and work criteria to perform their job task and responsibilities (Dodd, N. G., & Ganster, 1996; Hackman & Oldham, 1975). Naqvi et al. (2013) conducted the research in fast-food sector of Pakistan and found that job autonomy has a positive relationship with organizational commitment and job satisfaction of employees. Sheemun et al. (2013) conducted the research on Malaysia's private sector, it is found that factors like job autonomy, goal setting, and role benefits significantly impact engagement levels.

Goal Setting (GS)

Goal setting a powerful tool that is used by many organizations to direct employees' energy and efforts and provide a clear path for achievement. When employees have clear, specific, challenging goals that are associated with the objective of organization, it increases the focus and motivation of employees. Goal setting provides an employee with a sense of purpose to strive for, and a feeling of achievement upon completion of the target. The research has been conducted in Pakistani banking sector and findings revealed that goal setting and training can increase the employee job engagement and commitment (Ali et al., 2021).

Career Development (CD)

Bai & Liu (2018) studied the association between career development and employees' work engagement. The data were collected from 207 respondents in South China. The research revealed that employees' career growth and development have a positive influence on employees' work engagement. Semwal, M., & Dhyani (2017) conducted their research on the impact of career development and training on employee engagement. The data were collected from IT companies and found that career development and training play a positive role in employee engagement. Chen, G., &

Klimoski (2007) observed that in this era of high competition, employees need to update themselves in terms of their knowledge, work habits, skills, and organizations to invest in the growth of their human capital. Furthermore, it is also argued that multilevel research is required to understand how learning is affected by the factors at multiple levels of analysis.

Perceived Supervisor Support (PSS)

Supervisor support plays a motivational role for employee job engagement (Baqir et al., 2020). Supervisor support is a vital driving force for employee engagement. Employees are more likely to feel motivated, valued and connected to their job-task and organization. Supervisors can increase employee job engagement through various means: clearly communicating the goals and vision of an organization, encouraging employee's involvement in the process of decision making, providing positive feedback, offering career opportunities for professional growth, and creating a culture in the organization that promotes collaboration, trust, and open communications (Anitha, 2014; Osborne & Hammoud, 2017). Hidayah Ibrahim et al., (2019) worked on the effects of self-efficacy and supervisor support on work engagement and job quitting with the intention of call center employees. In this study it was found self-efficacy mediates the connection between work engagement and supervisor support. Moreover, it was also found that work engagement mediates the effects of self-efficacy and support of supervisors on job quitting intentions. By means of the combination of leadership and employee's engagement, the organization can build highly motivated, high-performing, and energetic personnel, leading to success of an organization.

Hypotheses

H1: Job rewards have a positive association with enhanced employee job engagement.

H2: Job Autonomy has a positive association with enhanced employee job engagement.

H3: Goal Setting has a positive association with enhanced employee job engagement.

H4: Career Development has a positive association with enhanced employee job engagement.

H5: Perceived Supervisor Support has a positive association with enhanced employee job engagement.
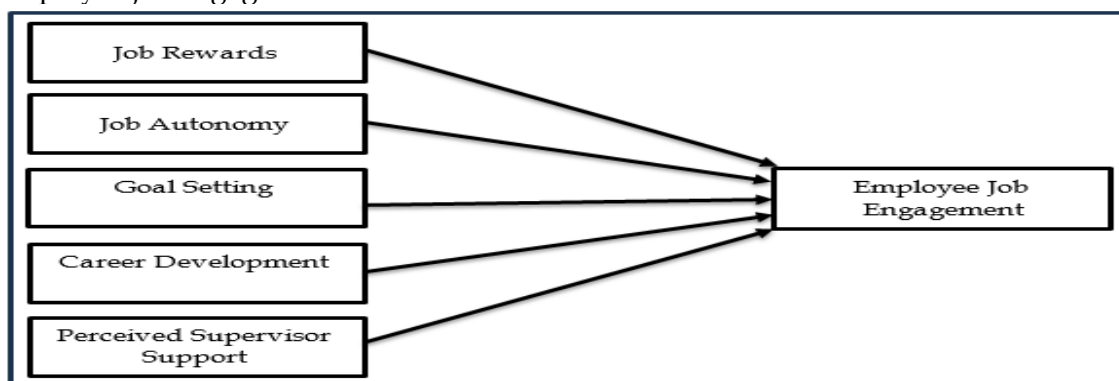

Figure No.1 Conceptual Model

Material and Methods

The research was conducted in the NGO sector of Sindh, Pakistan, with data collected from one hundred forty-five participants through a simple random sampling method. A total of 200 questionnaires were distributed, of which 155 were returned. However, some responses were incomplete, so only 145 fully complete questionnaires were included in the final analysis for this study.

The questionnaire was organized into three sections. The first section focused on measuring employee job engagement, which served as the primary dependent variable in this study. Employee job engagement (EJE) was assessed using a 5-item scale developed by Saks (2006).The second section measured various independent variables: Job Rewards using a 7-item scale (Chaudhry, 2020), Job Autonomy with a 7-item scale, Goal Setting with a 4-item scale (Sheemun et al., 2013), Career Development assessed through a 10-item scale (Yap, 2016), and Perceived Supervisor Support measured with a separate 4-item scale (Saks, 2006). All these variables were evaluated using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The third section collected demographic information, including gender, age, education, and work experience. The data were thoroughly analyzed using SPSS, a powerful statistical software tool widely employed in social science research. This analysis enabled the extraction of meaningful patterns and insights, ensuring the reliability and accuracy of the study's findings.

Results and Discussion

The SPSS 27.0 version was used for the purpose of analyzing the data. With this software, participants' demographic characteristics and reliability analysis were performed. Moreover, the hypotheses were statistically verified and tested by using multiple regression analysis.

Demographic Characteristics

Table 1
Demographic Representation

Demographic variables	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	114	78.6
	Female	31	21.4
	Total	145	100
Age	21-30	13	9.0
	31-40	63	43.4
	41-50	59	40.7
	51-60	10	6.9
	Total	145	100.0
Qualification	Bachelor	54	37.24
	Masters	83	57.24
	M. Phil / Ph.D.	8	5.52
	Total	145	100
Experience	Less than one year	10	6.9
	1-3 years	42	29.0
	4-6 years	62	42.8
	7-10 years	25	17.2
	Greater than 10 years	6	4.1
	Total	145	100

The total number of respondents was 145. Many respondents were 78.6% (n=114) were males and 21.4% (n=31) were females. With regards to age group 9% (n=13) belongs to age category of (21-30) years, 43.4% (n=63) belongs to age category of (31-40) years,

40.7% (n=59) belongs to age category of (41-50) years, and 6.9% (n=10) belongs to age category of (51-60) years. In response to qualifications, it was found that 37.24% (n=54) were bachelor's degree holders, 57.24% (n=83) were master's degree holders while 5.52% (n=8) were M.Phil. / Ph.D. degree holders. However, in the response relates to question relates to Experience it was found that 6.9% (n=10) have less than one year experience, 29.0% (n=42) have (1-3) years' experience, 42.8% (n=62) have (4-6) years' experience, 17.2% (n=25) have (7-10) years' experience, and 4.1% (n=6) have greater 10 years of experiences (See in Table.1).

Reliability Analysis

The researcher evaluated the reliability of questionnaires by using Cronbach's alpha, which calculates the consistency of items representing each variable. Tavakol & Dennick (2011) states that Cronbach's alpha value above 0.70 is considered acceptable.

Table 2
Descriptive Statistics & Reliability Analysis

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Employee Job Engagement (EJE)	145	3.7172	.53675	5	.917
Job Rewards (JR)	145	3.6750	.53798	7	.905
Job Autonomy (JA)	145	3.5112	.59685	7	.941
Goal Setting (GS)	145	3.6862	.59642	4	.837
Career Development (CD)	145	3.6276	.55746	10	.938
Perceived Supervisor Support (PSS)	145	3.6810	.57846	4	.860

In table 2, it can be found that all the items of each variable have Cronbach's alpha value is greater than 0.80 that shows a good reliability among the items of each variable.

Hypotheses Testing

For finding the association between dependent and independent variables, Multiple Regression was used.

The results for the hypothesis (H1) indicated a significant relationship between Job Rewards and EJE (β = .211, t = 2.547, p = 0.012) as shown in Tables 3. Therefore, hypothesis H1 was accepted.

The findings for hypothesis (H2) revealed a meaningful relationship between Job Autonomy and EJE with significant values of (β = .221, t = 2.982, p = .003) as shown in Tables 3. Consequently, hypothesis H2 was confirmed.

The analysis for hypothesis (H3) showed a positive association between goal setting and EJE with values of (β = .182, t = 2.537, and p = .012), as presented in Tables 3. The hypothesis H3 was validated.

The evaluation of hypothesis (H4) demonstrated a significant relationship between Career Development and EJE with statistical values of (β = .183, t = 2.499, and p = .014), as shown in Tables 3. Therefore, hypothesis H4 was supported.

The results of hypothesis (H5) demonstrated a significant relationship between PSS and EJE with statistical values of (β = .225, t = 2.735, and p = .007), as shown in Tables 3. Therefore, hypothesis H5 was supported.

Table 3
Regression Results

Variable	Dependent Variables Employee Job Engagement		
	β	*t*-value	*p*-value
Job Rewards (JR)	.211	2.547	.012
Job Autonomy (JA)	.221	2.982	.003
Goal Setting (GS)	.182	2.537	.012
Career Development (CD)	.183	2.499	.014
Perceived Supervisor Support (PSS)	.225	2.735	.007
R^2	**.565**		
Adjusted R^2	**.546**		
F Value	**29.871**		

Conclusion

The present study examined the impact of various job-related factors Job Rewards, Job Autonomy, Goal Setting, Career Development, and Perceived Supervisor Support on Employee Job Engagement (EJE). The findings offer insights into the role these factors play in influencing employee engagement levels, with several implications for theory and practice in organizational behavior and human resource management.

The results show that Job Rewards have a notable positive impact on EJE. This finding aligns with previous studies of (Chaudhry, 2020) signifying that employees who feel adequately rewarded, their job engagement tends to increase. Similarly, Job Autonomy was found to have a positive association with EJE. The results support previous literature of Sheemun et al. (2013). Kidane (2021) elaborated that giving employees control over tasks, decisions and a sense of ownership that could increase the engagement of employees by structuring roles to allow greater autonomy. Likewise, Goal Setting is found positively associated with EJE underscoring the role of clear, achievable goals in boosting motivation and focus, in line with goal-setting theory. Sheemun et al. (2013) supports that goal setting provide the employees the clarity about the purpose and sense of direction that leads to high involvement and engagement of employees. Career Development also showed significant association with EJE, highlighting the importance of growth opportunities in nurturing engagement. Employees are encouraged to take on various tasks, supported by growth and development strategies that help them to see a promising career path within the company. Nasidi et al. (2000) also observed in the research that employees who observe the strong career growth and development prospects are likely to be more engaged in their job. Finally, Perceived Supervisor Support was found to be a strong predictor of EJE. This study supports the previous studies of Holland et al. (2017), as it is found in the research that supportive supervisors significantly influence employee engagement. When employees feel supported by their supervisor, they feel more comfortable at their job, and gives their full potential that leads to high engagement in their job.

The findings emphasize that fair reward, greater autonomy, clear goals, growth opportunities, and supportive leadership are crucial in fostering higher employee involvement and motivation. These insights provide valuable guidance for organizations seeking to improve employee engagement and overall performance. By implementing these strategies, organizations can create a more engaged and productive workforce.

Recommendations

To enhance employee engagement, organizations should focus on key factors such as promoting autonomy, offering equitable rewards, providing well-defined goal-setting processes, facilitating career development, and strengthening support from supervisors. These components are vital for developing a dedicated and high-performing workforce. By addressing these areas, organizations can create a positive work culture where employees feel appreciated and motivated to excel. By prioritizing these strategies, NGOs in Sindh can cultivate a positive and motivating work environment, enhance individual and team performance, and align employee efforts with their organizational missions, ultimately driving long-term success in the sector.

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