

CONCEPTUALIZING ANTECEDENTS OF

EMPLOYEE COMMITMENT

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the paper is to understand the antecedents of employee commitment. Extensive review of literature has been done for conceptualization of antecedents of employee engagement. The paper draws attention of the management towards the role of spirituality, motivation, employee engagement on employee commitment. The paper adds to the existing literature on employee engagement which is a matter of great concern in a large number of organizations. It suggests various strategies for enhancing employee commitment which can lead to enhanced performance, employee retention and lower the employee turnover rate.

KEY WORDS: *Employee engagement, spirituality, motivation, commitment*

I. INTRODUCTION

Organizational commitment is the psychological connection of the employee with organization. It is considered as the strength of feeling of responsibility that an employee has towards the goal of the organization and his attachment towards the organization. It helps to create motivation which can assist in their dedication towards the organization. [1] assert that employees develop three types of commitment namely affective, normative, and continuance commitment towards their organizations. Affective commitment propels the employees to get psychologically connected to their organizations as they assonate with the goals of their organizations. Thus, an employee stays in the organizations for a long time when he possesses a high level of affective commitment towards organization. Normative commitment reflects as sense of responsibility towards the organizations. Employees develop normative commitment in their organizations because they consider they need to do so. Continuance commitment refers to the commitment based on employees' recognition of the expenses linked with leaving the organizations. Therefore, employees with strong continuance commitment stay with their organizations mainly to avoid costs of leaving. Different forms of commitment are not mutually exclusive as employees can possess varying degrees of commitment like affective, normative, and continuance commitment. Organizational commitment helps to examine performance on work, and devotion of employees in the organization. Commitment is not only responsible for employee retention [2] but also effects employee performance and efforts [3], [4], [5]. Commitment is positively related to a variety of attractive outcomes including job satisfaction and performance, and to a decline in an employee's intention to leave [6]. Job involvement and commitment are predictors of outcomes.

Considering the great role played by employee commitment in deepening his ties with his job, performance and organization it would be meaningful to understand its various antecedents. Extensive review of literature suggests that hardly any research has been done to understand if motivation, spirituality and engagement have impact on employee commitment. The current study seeks to bridge that gap by proposing a conceptual relationship among the earlier stated variables.

II. WORKPLACE SPIRITUALITY

Spirituality is an important concept for the organization but it is difficult to define. It refers to the three basic aspects of human beings i.e., body, mind, spirit [7]. Many psychologists consider spirituality as an intrinsic property of the human being [8],[9]. It is defined as a relationship with the sacred [10] and with the world [11]. Some view soul or spirit as an explanation of the “employee has important belief or power” [12] and “each person has a source of power” [13]. [14] Suggests that human spirituality provides a chance to connect to a power or a larger source of energy which impacts our ideas. Spirituality relates to the meaningfulness of our lives, our relationships to us, to others and to the natural world [15],[16]. [17], workplace spirituality refers to the deeper values, sense of wholeness and connectedness at work. [18] suggest that workplace spirituality has three core dimensions, namely “meaningful work” (individual level), “sense of community” (group level) and “alliance with the organization’s ethics” and mission (organization level). Meaningful work refers to the employees’ ability to investigate and find deeper meaning and purpose; live their thoughts express their inner life needs and contribute to others at their workplace [19]. Sense of community refers to the communications between employees and their co-workers [19]. The organizational viewpoint of spirituality refers to how employees connect with each other and have some type of relationship between one’s inner self and the inner self of other employee, [20],[21],[22].

III. MOTIVATION

Motivation defines the relationship among drives, needs and incentives [23]. It may be defined as the process that forces a person to attain some goal [24]. According to [25], motivation means to move or push towards satisfaction of a want. Motivation is a force that promotes performance and directs towards accomplishing some definite targets [26]. It helps to encourage high quality work and positively influence people leading to desirable work behaviour. It may be classified into two parts: extrinsic and intrinsic [27], [28]. Intrinsic motivation is developed from the intrinsic value of the work for the individual (for example, its interest value). Arousal, excitement, enjoyment and flow are due to intrinsic motivation [29]. [30] state that intrinsic motivation mainly focuses on the employee task engagement process [28] disagree with this statement and suggest that “intrinsic motivation is completely compatible with certain kinds of result focus” (p.189). Feelings of happiness enhance intrinsic motivation which leads to better performance of employee in an organization [31]. Extrinsic motivation refers to the influence on motivation level of external factors; examples of extrinsic motivation are salary, praise and status.

IV. EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

Employee engagement is considered as an employee attachment to the organisation both emotional and intellectual [32], [33], [34] and is demonstrated by the amount of flexible effort exhibited by workers in their jobs [35]. [36] State that employee engagement refers to the enthusiasm for work. An engaged employee gets highly committed to work and attached to companies perspective and cooperates with colleagues to improve

performance in the organization. Employee engagement helps him form a positive connection to his work. Employee engagement can be considered as an indicator of relationship between person and his organization. It is considered to be an effective tool for attainment of competitive advantages. [37] considered the engagement as the “harnessing of organizational members to their work roles, in engagement, people communicate themselves physically, cognitively, and sensitively during role performances”(p.692). Rightly engaged employee are expected to exhibit three psychological engagement conditions they are meaningfulness (work elements), safety (social elements including organisational norms, process and management style) [37]. Engaged employee will say positive things about the organisation to his colleagues and prospective employees of the company; he will be excited and possess a deep aspiration to work in the organisation. Such an employee will be fully devoted to his work leading to business success. To summarise, they do better, put extra efforts put in the job, stay strongly committed to the organization, and are more motivated and confident about their job goals [38], [39], [41], [42]. An engaged employee cooperatively works with colleagues to improve performance in the organization. Hence, every organization needs to build up and promote employee engagement within the organization. Many studies also suggest that the existence of higher levels of employee engagement significantly decreases turnover intent [43], [44]

V. DEVELOPMENT OF A CONCEPTUAL MODEL

5.1 Spirituality And Engagement

Spirituality includes ideas about well-being, moral standards, fairness, and linkages between self, the larger world, other people and the universe. It refers to the purpose, a sense of meaning, and morality in the framework of relationships with person others and reality associated with world [45], [46] It explains the transcending limits of one’s own body and self through extended awareness, closeness with nature, other people and connection with the sacred [47]. Spirituality may help in enhancement of honesty, trust and commitment to work, higher creativity [48]. which ultimately leads to higher organizational performance[49]. Studies have examined outcomes of workplace spirituality on job attitudes and organizational efficiency [18],[50]. Spirituality pushes the employee towards integrity, sense of completeness, connectedness, and meaningfulness and concern for others’ well-being. This may help the employees to develop and maintain emotional and intellectual relationship with the organization. Hence, we may formulate the following a hypothesis:

H1: Higher level of spirituality leads to high level of employee engagement

5.2 Spirituality And Commitment

[18] states that significant work, sense of community and value alignment explains five work attitudes: affective organizational commitment, intentions to go away, job attachment, intrinsic work satisfaction, and

organizational-based self-esteem. Affective and normative commitment will be high when spirituality is high [50], [18], [51]. [52] and [18] suggest that affective and normative commitment would be beneficial for organization. When employees feel that organizations promote their wishes and joy, they tend to respond

positively leading to development of feelings of loyalty, positive attitude towards the organization [53], [54]. Employees take their entire self (physical, spiritual, mental and emotional) to the organization. So, they expect work as a mission which makes them more affective and normatively attached to their organizations which leads to enhance organizational performance [55].

Therefore the hypothesis is as follows-

H2: High level of spirituality leads to high level of affective, continuance and normative commitment

5.3 Spirituality And Motivation

Spirituality is defined as an awareness of a human being or force that transcends the material aspects of life [56]. According to [57], spirituality is a characteristic of healthy people and high performing employees in the organizations. Organizational view of spirituality draws attention towards values. Motivation is normally defined as some inner matter, belief and value. [30] state that intrinsic motivation may be considered as freedom, significance and belief of competence among employee. Feelings of happiness enhance intrinsic motivation which leads to better performance of employee in an organization [31]. People are more inherently encouraged when they observe themselves. If people feel that their life and work fulfil some purpose, they have a tendency to work with more consideration [58]. Encouragement of spirituality in the workplace can lead to increased motivation, performance and organizational commitment

Therefore the hypothesis is as follows-

H3: Employee spirituality is positively related to employee intrinsic motivation.

VI. ENGAGEMENT AND COMMITMENT

Employee engagement is the emotional and rational attachment of employee towards the organisation [59], [32], [34]. Organizational commitment is defined as the force of an employee which helps in forming attachment towards the organization. Developed economies shows affirmative relationship between employee engagement and affective emotional commitment [60], [44]. [61] explored the impact of employee engagement on organizational commitment and suggested that when engagement level increases organizational commitment also increases. This leads to enhanced performance, attendance and job satisfaction and lowered turnover rates [43] state that employee engagement influences organizational commitment Several other studies support positive relationship between affective commitment and employee engagement [43], [44]

Therefore, the hypothesis is as follows-

H4: Employee engagement will be positively related to employee commitment

VI. ENGAGEMENT AND MOTIVATION

[62] suggest that engagement drives when correct people in the correct roles. “Work motivation is a set of energetic forces that originates both within as well as beyond an individual’s being, to initiate work-related behavior, and to determine its form, direction, intensity, and duration [63]. It has also been said that

motivational factors could be a useful tool for employee engagement (Silvera, 2013, p.2). Many studies suggest that need-based motivations are the important input that engage people in various behaviors,

.Therefore the hypothesis is as follows-

H5: higher the level of motivation leads to high level of Employee engagement

VII. MOTIVATION AND COMMITMENT

Motivation was defined as a *set* of energetic force [63] and commitment was described by [60] as a force that binds an individual to a course of action. [56] suggested that motivation is a broader concept than commitment because commitment considered one of energizing forces contributing to motivated (intentional) behaviour. However, binding nature of commitment makes it unique among many forces. Therefore the hypothesis is as follows-

H6: Higher level of motivation leads to higher level of employee commitment

The various hypotheses and the relationship between motivation, spirituality, employee engagement and employee commitment are shown in Figure 1.

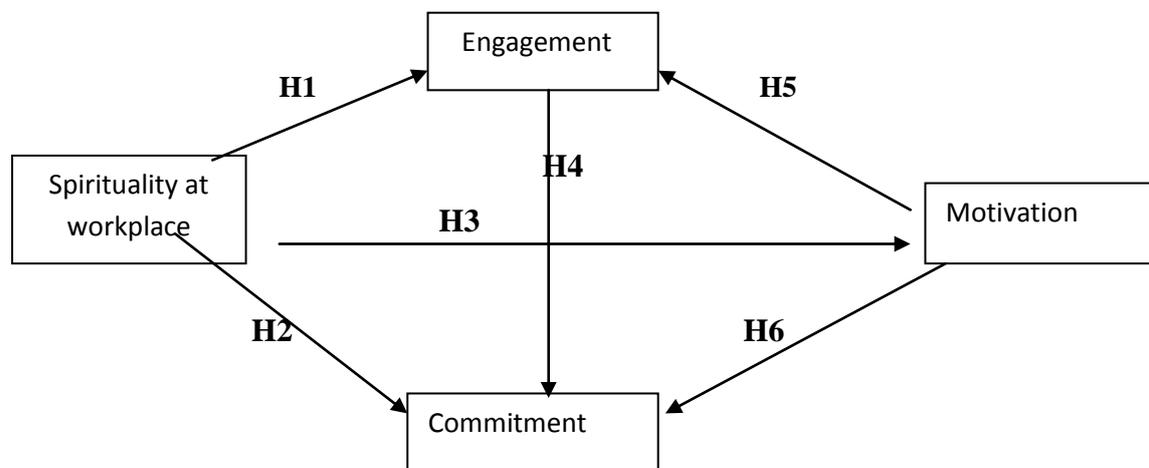


Figure 1: Conceptual model

VIII. IMPLICATIONS

Employees who exhibit high level of commitment to their organizations provide crucial competitive advantages including higher productivity and lower employee turnover [43], [44]. Thus, it is not surprising that organization of all sizes and types have invested substantially in policies and practices that foster commitment in their workforces. Therefore, it is important to understand the antecedents of employee commitment that the organization may work upon the antecedents to increase employee commitment. The present study therefore has drawn attention towards the impact of workplace spirituality, motivation and employee engagement on

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commitment. High level of employee engagement motivation and spirituality at workplace leads to high level of commitment within the organization.

Spirituality includes characteristics such as existentialism, connectedness, authenticity, meaning in life, holism, and self and community as aspects of an individual’s spirituality [64]. This suggests that the employees actively strive for connectedness and authenticity within the work setting. They desire to be considerate and respectful of

both oneself and the broader organisational community and seek to utilise their role within an organisation to create personal meaning and congruency. Organization need to create situation and develop spiritual environment. To create spiritual environment organizations could increase connectedness, transcendent, authenticity and help employees Devine personal meaning etc. More engaged employee are productive and effective [65],[66] .To increase motivation organization could try many things such as increased responsibility, employee recognition and reward good work [67]. Managers should correct employees privately and provide continuous feedback and win their trust [68].

Spirituality and motivation leads to employee engagement. High employee engagement leads to high commitment. Engaged employee fulfils basic job responsibility within time and achieve desired goal. They put extra efforts in the job and do better, stay strongly committed to the organization, and are more motivated and confident about their job goals[69], [39],[41], [42].The existence of higher levels of employee engagement significantly decreases turnover intent [43], [44]. Engaged employees may be more committed towards the staying organization[70] .

Employee engagement process requires continued interactions over time in order to generate obligations and a state of mutual interdependence So we can say that employee engagement is a long-term and an on-going process. Organizational and cultural strategy of engagement states that engagement involves all levels of the organization [35]. It entails a series of actions and steps [34] that require the effort and involvement of organizational members [71]

Highly committed workforce can help companies to build competitive advantage as highly committed employee leads to low employee turnover.

CONCLUSION

Employee engagement, commitment, motivation and spirituality are important constructs for the growth of organizations. The purpose of the study is to draw attention towards engagement, motivation and spirituality as employee commitment. The literature indicates that employee engagement, commitment, motivation, spirituality are closely linked with each other. Commitment of employee towards organization is very important for the growth and competitive advantage. Commitment may be an ongoing process of knowledge, improvement, measurement and action. Committed employees have higher engagement, efficiency, growth and productivity, and lower retention. Conversely, lower commitment cause waste of effort, face increased absenteeism, less productivity and reduced profit margins for the organization.

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