

Evaluation Of Performance Management System On Employee Engagement: A Study In Market Research Industry

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ABSTRACT

Aim: The paper examines the relationship between performance management system and employee engagement. It also captures the perception of the employees for the effectiveness of existing performance management system and recommending practices to increase employee engagement levels.

Methodology: The study included 120 employees working at various managerial levels of the three market research organizations (KPO's). All the steps of performance management system i.e. performance planning, performance monitoring, training and development, performance appraisal and compensation management were assessed with a structured questionnaire. Employee engagement was measured with Gallup Q12 questionnaire. Simple random sampling was used.

Findings: The study findings suggest a significant positive association between performance management system and employee engagement. The compensation dimension of performance management system was observed to have considerable influence on employee engagement levels.

Implications: The findings of the present study would provide valuable insight for management to adopt various and effective performance management practices in their workplace.

Originality/value – The study tests the relationship between performance management system and employee engagement in the market research industry. A significant positive relationship between some performance management system dimensions and employee engagement has been established. To the best of the researchers' knowledge, this study is the first of its kind undertaken for this industry.

Limitations: The study was limited to KPO industry only which may limit the generalizability of the results to the other industries. The self-reported measures of the constructs were used which can lead to natural or single-source bias that influences the results

Keywords: Employee engagement, Performance management system, performance appraisal, training and development, compensation management, market research, KPO, Gallup Q12

INTRODUCTION:

Performance management has a significant impact on organisational effectiveness (Cardy, 2004) and therefore it has to be the immediate priority of managers (Lawler, 2008). Studies have shown that organizations today face challenges that require attention to improving performance management (Buchner, 2007). One important way to enhance the employee performance is to focus on nurturing employee engagement.

Performance management is "an integrated process in which managers work with their employees to set expectations, measure and review results, and reward performance, in order to improve employee performance, with the ultimate aim of positively affecting organizational success" (Den Hartog, et al., 2004).

Employee performance is basically outcomes achieved and accomplishments made at work. Over the years, consensus has developed about the minimum elements of an effective performance management system, particularly in three areas: a) Goal setting: the process of establishing objectives to be achieved over a period of time. b) Performance review: the process of assessing

progress toward goals. c) Performance improvement plans: the process of addressing a specific individual performance issue. Performance management stems from control over resources. It creates processes to aid management development and reward.

Employee engagement is an indicator of happiness employees associate with their respective jobs, working environment and efficiency in their performance levels. People is one factor that cannot be duplicated or imitated by the competitors and is considered the most valuable asset if managed and engaged properly. Engaged employees go beyond the call of duty to perform their role efficiently and effectively.

High levels of engagement in domestic and global firms promote retention of talent, foster customer loyalty and improve organizational performance and stakeholder value. A complex concept, engagement is influenced by many factors—from workplace culture, organizational communication and managerial styles to trust and respect, leadership and company reputation. For today's different generations, access to training and career opportunities, work/life balance and empowerment to make decisions are important. Thus, to foster a culture of engagement, HR

leads the way to design, measure and evaluate proactive workplace policies and practices that help attract and retain talent with skills and competencies necessary for growth and sustainability.

The present study contributes to performance management system and engagement literatures in three important ways. First, through the scales of performance management system, we provide an understanding of performance management and its constituent dimensions. Second, we test the relationship between performance management system and engagement. Finally, being embedded in the Indian cultural context, the study adds to the limited set of studies that have assessed engagement and performance management system in KPO industry.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

1.1. Employee Engagement

Kahn (1990) was the first to coin the term engagement as he described how people can “use varying degrees of their selves – physically, cognitively and emotionally in work 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.

According to Gallup (2002) there are three types of people: engaged employees, not engaged employees, and actively disengaged employees. Engaged employees are builders who consistently strive to give excellence within their roles. Not engaged employees focus on the tasks spelled out to them rather than the goals of the organisation. They do what they are told to do. Actively disengaged employees are dangerous individuals who not only do not perform well but also demotivate the performer in the organisation.

Saks (2006) argues that organisational commitment differs from engagement in that it refers to a person’s attitude and attachment towards their organisation, whilst it could be argued that engagement is not merely an attitude; it is the degree to which an individual is attentive to their work and absorbed in the performance of their role. In addition, while OCB involves voluntary and informal behaviours that can help co-workers and the organisation, the focus of engagement is one’s formal role performance rather than purely extra-role and voluntary behaviour.

Thomas (2007) developed a unidimensional conceptualization of engagement. He argued that although the consequences of engagement (i.e. behaviors) occur in three categories – physical, cognitive, emotional – the state preceding these behaviors is essentially unidimensional.

According to Maslach et al (2008), 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.

Susi & Jawaharrani (2011) examined some of the literature on Employee engagement, explore work-place culture & work-life balance policies & practices followed in industries in order to promote employee engagement in their organizations to increase their employees’ productivity and retain them. They opined that Work-life balance is key driver of employees’ satisfaction.

A major problem with the engagement research is that the concept of employee engagement has been criticized for having substantial overlap with other similar constructs such as job involvement, motivation and commitment. Researchers have, however, argued that engagement is conceptually different from commitment, involvement and motivation (Bhatnagar, 2007; Hallberg and Schaufeli, 2006; Saks, 2006). They argue that each of the concepts has its specific trademark, and displays different associations with health complaints, job and personal characteristics and turnover intentions.

1.2. Performance Management

Performance can be defined as combination of results and behavior which leads to the accomplishment of specific objectives within time and cost constraints. At an organizational level of analysis, the success of an organization can be defined as successful attainment of its stated objectives. The organization that achieving its goal efficiently through effective implementation of suitable strategy is that which plays its role well (Otley, 1999).

According to Weiss and Hartle (1997) performance management from human resources perspective is a process for establishing a shared understanding about what is to be achieved, and how it is to be achieved; an approach to managing people which increases the probability of achieving job-related success.

‘Performance management is not achievable unless there are effective processes of continuous development. This addresses the core competencies of the organisation and the capabilities of individuals and teams. ‘Performance management’ should really be called ‘performance and development management.’ (Armstrong and Baron, 1998)

Flapper, Stoop (1996) pointed out that it is under the purview of performance management to set the shared and agreed objective for the organization and also set the direction of the employees for achieving these objectives.

Storey (2002) describes that performance management system is referred to those various attempts that are designed to ensure that the organization and employees work efficient and effectively. From this definition it is clear that the target to be managed should be range from individual employee to the entire organization. She further explained that the focus is not just on effort and efficiency but with the effectiveness it means that the right things should be achieved.

Amaratunga and Baldry (2002) suggested that function of performance management is that of a tool for an organization and that organizations can use to track progress and direct towards strategic goals and objectives and should focus on whether the organization has met its performance goals and targets. They further explained that there must be a goal achievement analysis that makes clear that whether the organization is performing well or there is need of improvement.

Rudman (2003) is of the notion that performance management system is a method that combines human resource management performance with the objectives of the organization. Its aim is to concentrate on the areas where management and HR performance are combining to manipulate people behaviour to hold up the organization's strategy. He also stressed that the performance management system must fit with the organization's culture. In his viewpoint, Performance management system is a kind of completed and integrated cycle for performance management.

Frankema et al. (2008) explained performance differences of knowledge intensive project teams. Team level data gathered at three measurement moments were used. Antecedents of performance studied were: trust in team members, trust in supervisors, monitoring by team members and monitoring by supervisors. Heedful interrelating, a concept developed by Weick and Roberts (1993) was expected to mediate between trust in team members, monitoring by team members and team performance. Correlation analysis and structural equation modelling were employed to analyse the data. The results show that heedful interrelating of team members, built on a combination of trust and monitoring by team members and trust in supervisors is an important factor in promoting team performance.

1.3. Performance Management And Employee Engagement

Engaged employees are also more likely to display discretionary behaviour. Engagement has been found to be closely linked to feelings and perceptions around being valued and involved, which in turn generates the kinds of discretionary effort that lead to enhanced performance (Konrad, 2006). Such evidence implies that management needs to share control and allow employees to influence important decisions. If they do not, they risk having a workforce, which is not, and cannot be, engaged.

According to Lawler and Worley (2006) for a high-involvement work practice to be effective and for it to have a positive impact on employee engagement, employees must be given power. They argue this will lead to employees having the ability to make decisions that are important to their performance and to the quality of their working lives, thus engaging them in their work. Performance management literature now includes studies focusing on the contribution of employee engagement to employee performance thus emphasising the importance of engagement in the performance management process.

According to Robinson (2006), employee engagement can be achieved through the creation of an organizational environment where positive emotions such as involvement and pride are encouraged, resulting in

improved organizational performance, lower employee turnover and better health.

Employee performance indicates the financial or non-financial outcome of the employee that has a direct link with the performance of the organisation and its success. A number of studies show that an important way to enhance employee performance is to focus on fostering employee engagement. Research (Christian et al., 2011; Fleming and Asplund, 2007; Rich et al., 2010; Richman, 2006; Macey and Schneider, 2008; Holbeche and Springett, 2003; Leiter and Bakker, 2010) also suggests that the presence of high levels of employee engagement enhances job performance, task performance, and organisational citizenship behaviour, productivity, discretionary effort, affective commitment, continuance commitment, levels of psychological climate, and customer service.

According to Holbeche and Springett (2003), people's perceptions of 'meaning' with regard to the workplace are clearly linked to their levels of engagement and, ultimately, their performance. They argue that employees actively seek meaning through their work and, unless organizations try to provide a sense of meaning, employees are likely to quit. The research findings suggest that many people experience a greater search for meaning in the workplace (70 per cent) than in life in general. There are numerous possible reasons for this, for example, it may be because people generally spend longer at work than on other parts of their lives. They argue that high levels of engagement can only be achieved in workplaces where there is a shared sense of destiny and purpose that connects people at an emotional level and raises their personal aspirations.

Gruman and Saks (2011) noted the increased recent emphasis by organisations on utilising their performance management systems to enhance employee effectiveness. They take this approach further by arguing that generating greater employee 'performance increments' may be best achieved by harnessing the performance system to promote higher employee engagement levels. For this purpose, they present a new model of engagement management. The authors argue that performance management and employee engagement are of corresponding importance within what they term the 'engagement management process', which begins with goal setting and the framing of a 'psychological contract' between supervisor and employee. Their model involves both the well-established performance appraisal process as well as engagement appraisal discussions in which supervisors and employees discuss engagement factors such as role expansion, pro-activity, persistence, and adaptability. Goals for engagement are agreed upon and included in an individual's general appraisal as a central element of their Employee Development Agreement (EDA)—a broad assessment measure encompassing both performance and engagement evaluation.

OBJECTIVES

- 1) To study the performance management practices used in the organization.

- 2) To study the impact of performance management on employee engagement.
- 3) To examine the level of employee engagement in the organization.
- 4) To know the perception of the employees for the effectiveness of existing performance management system.
- 5) To recommend performance practices for better Employee Engagement in organization.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1.4. Research Design

This study is descriptive in nature. An attempt to determine the relationship between performance management practices used in the organization with the level of employee engagement in the organization is done. A structured questionnaire was used to measure all the steps of performance management system that include performance planning, performance monitoring, training and development, performance appraisal and compensation management. The Q 12 measured Employee engagement. Renowned research organization Gallup developed Q 12 instrument known as Q 12 Meta Analysis. These are 12 items measuring issues, which are actionable or changeable at the manager level. Qualitative semi-structured interviews were carried out to capture the views of employees.

1.5. Research instrument

The data required for conducting this study will be collected by using self administered

questionnaires. The questionnaire is divided into three parts.

Part I of the questionnaire relates to demographic variables of employees such as designation/level, age, gender and years of experience in the organization.

Part II is the 16 5-point likert scale items that include 12 items given by Gallup (Q 12 Meta Analysis) to measure employee engagement and determining their satisfaction level.

Part III comprises of a 42 item self-structured questionnaire for Performance Management system. The ratings indicated the extent that each of the behaviours was a characteristic of the employee's behaviour.

Statement 1-Statement 8- Performance planning

Statement 9-Statement 13- Performance monitoring

Statement 14-Statement 24- Training & development

Statement 25-Statement 32 – Performance appraisal

Statement 33-Statement 42- Compensation

1.6. Sampling

The criteria for inclusion of employees in the sample was that they must have been through the performance management process at least once. Simple random sampling was used to select the employees from the sampling frame of middle and lower managerial level employees. A sample of 120 respondents working at various managerial levels of the three market research organizations (KPO's) participated in the study (Parexel, WNS, Quantum).

1.7. Data collection

The method used for collecting primary data is interview and questionnaire method. The secondary data collected for this study includes text book reviews, journal reviews, internet reviews and dissertation reviews. 30 employees were selected to carry out the pilot study. The research instrument was validated using this data. This helped in the rewording of questions based on the feedback received. Based upon the findings of pilot study, four questions pertaining to the work profile were added to the Q 12 instrument and few questions were removed from every part of performance management questionnaire which the researcher felt was not adding any value and were time consuming for the respondent to answer also. Final data was collected from 120 employees working at various managerial levels in the companies.

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Various statistical analyses like descriptive analysis, correlation and linear regression analysis were performed to arrive at the results. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS Version 20) was used to analyse the data.

The data was converted into standardized scores to make it normally distributed and then applied the tests such as t-test, Anova which have the basic assumption that data should be normally distributed.

Overall profile of the respondents was examined. Descriptive statistics such as means, standard deviations and reliabilities (Cronbach's alphas) for all the variables used in the study were used to describe the demographic profile.

1.8. Profile of Respondents

There were more female respondents than male respondents in this sample. There were 72 males (60%) as compared to 48 females (40%). Majority of the respondents were married (58.3%). Also in the sample, a large proportion of the respondents report that they have obtained a post-graduate degree (76.7%), while the remaining completed graduation (13.3%), few diploma holders (5%) and doctorate holders (5%) were observed in the sample.

1.9. Findings

Cronbach Alpha for the dimensions and overall were also calculated for independent variable Performance Management system as displayed in the table below:

Table 1- Cronbach's Alpha coefficients

N=120	
Question 1- Question 8	.764
Question 9- Question 13	.695

Question 14- Question 24	.632
Question 25- Question 32	.926
Question 33- Question 42	.920
Overall	.842

Cronbach alpha for 16 statements that come under the perview of employee engagement was found to be .739.

Since, according to Nunnally (1978), an alpha coefficient of 0.6 or higher is necessary for an exploratory research or survey to be considered reliable, this questionnaire can be therefore be regarded as reliable.

H01: No difference exists in satisfaction levels towards effectiveness of existing performance management system among married and unmarried employees.

Independent samples t-test was performed for examining the difference among married and unmarried employees

Table 2-

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances				
		F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
PERF_OVER ALL	Equal variances assumed	.050	.823	-.296	118	.768
	Equal variances not assumed			-.293	102.640	.770

for assessing satisfaction towards performance management system.

The Levene's Test For Equality Of Variances runs an F test to determine homogeneity of variance. The significance value of .823 tells that the difference is not significant (it is not $p < 0.05$), therefore equal variances are assumed. It can be concluded that no significant difference exists between the satisfaction towards performance management system among married and unmarried employees. Null hypothesis is accepted at $t(118) = .768, p > 0.05$

H02: No difference exists in employee engagement levels among male and female employees.

Independent samples t-test was performed for examining the difference among male and female employees for levels of employee engagement.

Table 3-

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances				
		F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
EE_SCORE	Equal variances assumed	1.081	.301	-.186	118	.115
	Equal variances not assumed			-.182	99.936	.125

The significance value of .301 tells that the difference is not significant (it is not $p < 0.05$), therefore equal variances are assumed. It can be concluded that no significant difference exists between the employee engagement levels among male and female employees. Null hypothesis is accepted at $t(118) = .115, p > 0.05$.

H03: No difference exists in employee engagement levels among employees with regard to their qualification levels.

One-way Anova was performed to find differences if any, exists among the engagement levels of employees having different qualifications. H_0 is accepted and it is concluded that no mean is significantly different from one another mean $F(3,116) = 2.24, p > 0.05$. Since the differences were not significant, post-hoc test was not required to be performed

Table 4-

ANOVA

EE_SCORE

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	309.095	3	103.032	2.247	.087
Within Groups	5319.496	116	45.858		
Total	5628.592	119			

H₀4: No significant relationship exists between performance management and employee engagement.

Table 5-

Correlations

		PERF_OVERALL	EE_SCORE
PERF_OVERALL	Pearson Correlation	1	.613**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	120	120
EE_SCORE	Pearson Correlation	.613**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	120	120

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

A significant correlation was observed in the employee behaviour towards the effect of

performance management system on employee engagement. H₀ is rejected and it is concluded that a significant relationship exists between performance management and employee engagement, p<0.05.

H₀5: There is no significant impact of performance management system on employee engagement among the employees under study.

Simple regressions was used to test the hypothesised relationship between the predictor (PMS) and the criterion (EE). The analysis indicated that there was EE T score and PMS T Score were significantly correlated, R=.734, R-square=.538 and adjusted R-square=.518, F(5,114)=26.57, P<0.05

Table 6-

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.734 ^a	.538	.518	4.77471	1.410

a. Predictors: (Constant), COMPENSATION, PERF_MON, TRAIN_DEV, PERF_APPR, PERF_PLAN

b. Dependent Variable: EE_SCORE

Table 7-

ANOVA^a

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	3029.640	5	605.928	26.578	.000 ^b
Residual	2598.951	114	22.798		
Total	5628.592	119			

Dependent Variable: EE_SCORE

Predictors: (Constant), COMPENSATION, PERF_MON, TRAIN_DEV, PERF_APPR, PERF_PLAN

Table 8-

Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	26.890	4.668		5.760	.000
PERF_PLAN	.721	.161	.462	4.483	.000
PERF_MON	-.786	.225	-.305	-3.487	.001
TRAIN_DEV	.355	.106	.280	3.362	.001
PERF_APPR	.161	.045	.318	3.539	.001
COMPENSATION	-.051	.059	-.063	-.878	.382

a. Dependent Variable: EE_SCORE

The regression model would look like:

$$T_EMPLOYEE\ ENGAGEMENT = 26.89 + .721\ PERF_PLAN - .786\ PERF_MON - .355\ TRAIN_DEV + .161\ PERF_APPR$$

Performance Planning, Training and Development and Performance Appraisal seem to be positive relationship with employee engagement while as Performance Monitoring seems to have negative relationship with employee engagement. Compensation system does not seem to affect engagement levels of employees in market research industry.

1.10. Conclusion

This study emphasises the importance of employee engagement and also identifies various factors that have a significant effect on it. It also shows that there is a strong significant relationship between performance management system and employee engagement. Regression analysis predicts that except Compensation management all other dimensions of performance management i.e. performance planning, performance monitoring, training and development, performance appraisal were significant predictors of employee engagement within the organization. The data analysis reveals that there is no effect of gender and qualification on the levels of engagement of the employees in the organization under study. Also, marital status plays no significant role in the satisfaction levels towards the

existing performance management practices employed by the organization.

The future scope of the study is quite wide from different perspectives. This study can be conducted at various levels of the organisation, say, large scale and MNCs to strengthen the model. In depth analysis on the specific factors identified may be carried out which can give rise to individual effect of each factor on employee engagement. In light of the present research's findings, several implications are considered. From the theoretical perspective, the present research has enriched the literature on the integration of a few distinct bodies of knowledge such as performance management and work engagement. From the organization perspective it provides a valuable insight to adopt various and effective performance management practices in their workplace.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In the organizations selected for the study, the performance management practices were found to be effective and beneficial to individuals as well as organization but it is felt that only performance is assessed not the potential. Potential appraisal should be done to develop latent abilities and to prepare career plans for the individuals. Organizations must try to incorporate potential appraisal methods such as management by objectives and leadership exercises so that identification of employees can be done who can handle higher positions in future.

To increase the employee engagement levels, there should be clear communication between management and employees, the performance must be regularly monitored and assessed so that any modifications in the task planning can be done accordingly. Training programs needed for attaining higher skills should be arranged for the employees and the effectiveness of these programs should be assessed periodically.

The factors such as age, personality, qualification and experience should be kept in mind while allocating responsibility to the employees and if needed job enrichment or redesigning can be done for monotonous tasks that will generate satisfaction among employees regarding performance measurement practices used by the organization.

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