

Unlocking the Power of Engagement: A Comprehensive Review and Future Research Roadmap

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Abstract

Contemporary business backgrounds pose a formidable challenge for organizations to enhance employee engagement and organizational commitment. Our study thoroughly explored employee engagement scholarship on the relationship between employee engagement, organizational commitment, and overall organizational effectiveness. Our objective is to compile and structure previous findings, identify knowledge gaps, and set goals for future research by delving into the nuances of the methodology employed in previous studies and the tools utilized. The systematic review underscores the significant association between employee engagement and organizational effectiveness, explaining their interconnectedness. Our study offers insights for cultivating a more engaged and committed workforce in the competitive business landscape by addressing unanswered questions.

Keywords: Employee engagement, Employee commitment, Organizational effectiveness, Systematic literature review

JEL Classification: D23, L21, M21

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1. Introduction

In the dynamic landscape of contemporary workplaces, the symbiotic relationship between employee engagement and organizational effectiveness has emerged as a critical determinant of sustained success and competitive advantage (Turner, 2019; Hodges, 2018). As organizations grapple with the challenges posed by rapid technological advancements, changing demographics, and global economic shifts, understanding the intricate interplay between engaged employees and overall organizational performance becomes imperative (Burke & Ng, 2006; Osborne & Hammoud, 2017). This paper undertakes a systematic review to synthesize the latest evidence and insights from scholarly research. It sheds light on the multifaceted dimensions of employee engagement and its impact on organizational effectiveness. Employee engagement, defined as individuals' emotional and cognitive commitment towards their work and organization, has garnered significant attention in recent years (Bailey et al., 2017; Kim et al., 2013). Scholars and practitioners recognize its potential to enhance productivity, innovation, and employee well-being, fostering a positive organizational culture (Saks, 2022; Shuck & Reio, 2014; Albrecht et al., 2015). However, the connection between engaged employees and organizational outcomes is complex and nuanced, influenced by various factors such as leadership styles, organizational culture, and the evolving nature of work (Barrick et al., 2015; Maak et al., 2016).

This systematic review aims to consolidate and analyze the latest empirical studies and theoretical frameworks investigating the relationship between employee engagement and organizational effectiveness. In this context, organizational effectiveness encompasses various outcomes, including financial performance, innovation, employee retention, and adaptability to change (Yukl & Lepsinger, 2005; Beuren et al., 2022). By systematically synthesizing the existing literature, this review seeks to identify patterns, gaps, and emerging trends in the field, contributing to a deeper understanding of the mechanisms through which engaged employees contribute to organizational success. Recent research has introduced novel perspectives on employee engagement, exploring its intersection with emerging trends such as remote work, artificial intelligence, and the gig economy (Kuhn et al., 2021; Kraus et al., 2023). Moreover, the ongoing global challenges, including the COVID-19 pandemic, have added layers of complexity to the employee engagement and organizational effectiveness dynamic, necessitating an updated synthesis of the literature to inform current organizational practices (Kniffin et al., 2021; van den Oord et al., 2023).

Tranfield et al. (2003) conclude that a systematic literature review helps maintain diversity in knowledge in the specific domain of academia. In order to add more objectivity to the literature, a systematic literature review is necessary (Paul et al., 2017). Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to fulfil the following Research objectives:

1. RO1. Synthesize and integrate the findings from previous studies on employee engagement
2. RO2. Investigate the drivers and outcomes of employee engagement in the context of organizational effectiveness
3. RO3. Examine the theoretical lenses and methodologies utilized in existing research to measure the impact of employee engagement on organizational effectiveness.
4. RO4. Identify gaps in the current literature on employee engagement and organizational effectiveness and propose future research directions.

This paper follows a systematic literature review to study the existing knowledge about employee engagement and organizational effectiveness. This paper covers the review of peer-

reviewed published studies till November 2022. Moreover, this study draws the possible gaps in the current literature and sets avenues for further research.

2. Methodology

A systematic literature review is helpful in building the milestone of the work done in developing a new concept or theory and tracking the development of literature on the subject matter over the decades (Keele, 2007). A systematic review fetches the inconsistency of literature on one platform and provides a fruitful comparison. It was found in the literature that systematic review contributes significantly to minimizing bias and framing a reliable ground for decision-making (Moher et al., 2009). The academic community duly recognizes the contribution of literature surveys as there are special issues of journals solely based on systematic reviews. Grant and Booth (2009) identify fourteen types of reviews in their study: systematic maps, qualitative evidence synthesis, meta-analysis, umbrella reviews, critical reviews, literature reviews etc. Given our research objective, we used the literature review method. Grant and Booth (2009) defined a literature review as a "review of published materials that examine recent or current literature. Can cover a wide range of subjects at various levels of completeness and comprehensiveness which may include research findings". Moreover, we used several frameworks, such as TCM (theory, context, and method) is used to report the theoretical landscape (Paul et al., 2020) and ADO (Antecedents, Drivers, and Outcomes) is used to conceptualize the model (Paul and Benito, 2018). Four step PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) protocol, i.e. identification, screening, eligibility and inclusion, developed by Moher et al. (2009) and modified by Matthew et al. (2021) is used to identify the relevant articles in the topic. The process ends with the selection of 46 relevant studies for the reviews. Details of every step in the procedure are as follows:

Identification

At this stage, we defined our research question. The literature is very well developed in the employee engagement context, and research is at a very nascent stage when it comes to measuring its effectiveness for the organization. So before moving further, both the authors critically evaluate the seminal work and, after discussion, finalize the most frequently used nine keywords for employee engagement and ten repeatedly used keywords for organizational effectiveness. The final list of keywords includes "Employee engagement" OR "Work Engagement" OR "Job Satisfaction" "Employee Satisfaction" OR "Organizational Commitment" OR "Job Engagement" OR "Employee Involvement" OR "Employee Well-being" OR "Employee participation" AND "Organizational Effectiveness" OR "organizational performance" OR "organizational productivity" OR "organizational profitability" OR "Organizational Performance" OR "Job Performance" OR "Organizational Development" OR "Organizational Innovation" OR "Quality Improvement" OR "Business Performance". We used the Scopus, EBSCO, and ProQuest databases as it covers more than 25000 journals, including more than 5000 international publishers from diverse academic areas. It is the largest database in comparison to others as it covers more than 70% sources than other databases, which include the web of science. Then we searched the selected keywords under title, abstract and keywords in the database, which shows 7101 documents (Figure 1). Then we further limit the documents to English, Peer-reviewed journal articles, and Business, Management, and social science domain, which gives us a result of 2583 documents. This covers documents from a very long time frame, from 1987 to 2022.

Screening and Eligibility assessment

To improve the quality of our literature review, we consider only those papers which are published in ABDC (Australian Business Dean Council) listed journals. Only these papers are considered, as the ranking was done after a collaborative process in which experts from respective subject areas assess the quality of research on the basis of rigour and its impact. We identify 1268 documents after applying the ABDC list criteria. Given our research objective, both authors review the titles and abstracts of all the 1268 documents as the eligibility assessment test. Both lists were matched, and disputed papers were selected after discussion. At the end of the eligibility assessment process, a total of 51 papers which cover the relationship of employee engagement and organizational effectiveness and how it influences the performance were identified and downloaded for the full-text review.

Inclusion

To ensure no studies were left, we went through the bibliography of the downloaded articles and found three relevant studies per our objective, which were further included for final review. After this process, we have the final list of 54 documents as per our research objective.

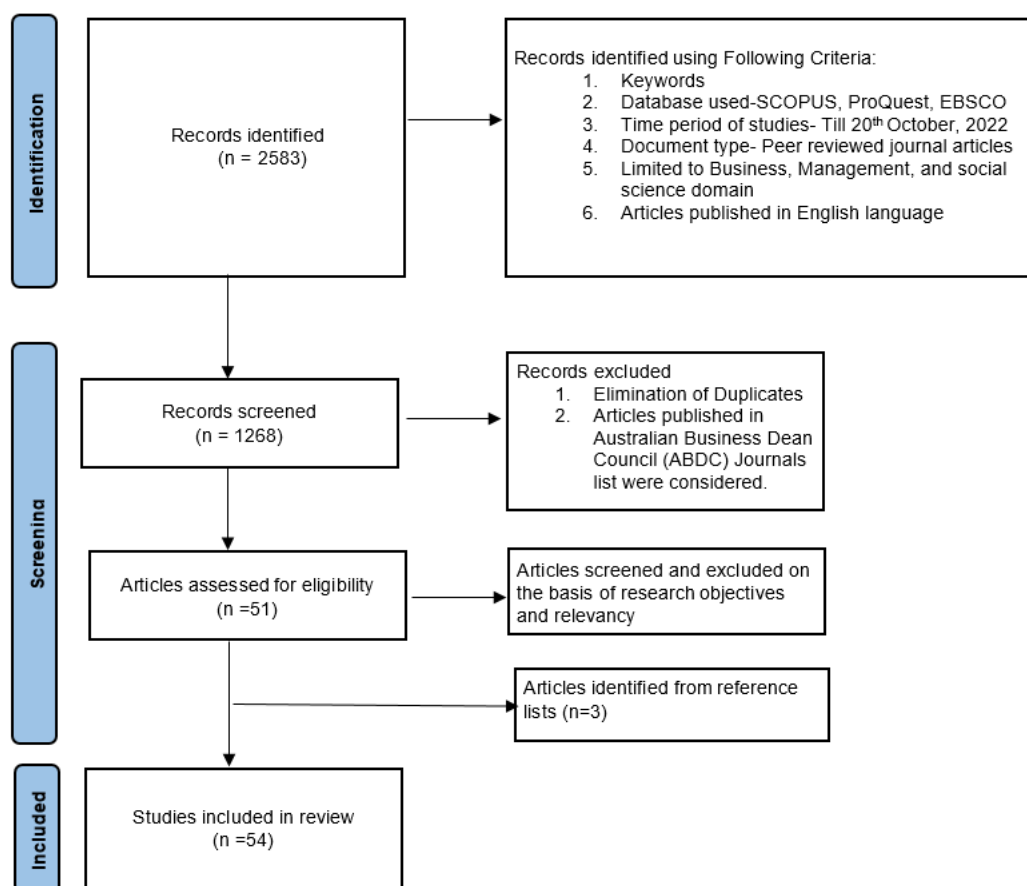


Figure1: PRISMA Framework, adapted from Moher et al. (2009)

3. Results

Descriptive review

Tables 1 & 2 and figure 2 provide an overview of the top documents, countries of publication and years of publication in the domain. Figure 2 shows the year-wise number of papers distributed from 1987 to 2022. There is almost a stagnancy in the number of papers published for four decades from 1987 to 2017. There has been a sharp increase in the number of publications in this domain in the last five years, from 2017 to 2022. Table 1 shows the top 10 authors with Rich B.L., Crawford E.R. having 1838 citations, Christian M.S., Slaughter J.E. having 1434 citations and Decoyiis T.A., Summers T.P. getting 336 citations holding top three slots in the table of top 10 documents. Table 2 shows the top 10 countries where work in the concerned domain. The table shows equal interest in both developed and developing countries. There is a considerably high number of citations of documents worked in China at 3649. The review found eight documents from India getting 186 citations. There is less work in the domain in Canada and Pakistan.

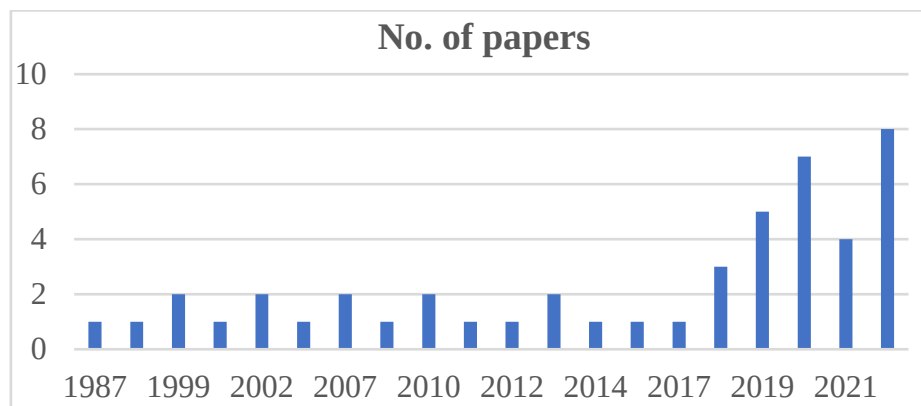


Figure 2: Year-wise distribution of studies

Table 1: Top 10 Documents

Document	Citations
Rich B.L., Crawford E.R.	1838
Christian M.S., Slaughter J.E.	1434
Decotiis T.A., Summers T.P.	336
Yousef D.A.	234
Iverson R.D., Buttigieg D.M.	173
Agarwala T.	168
Benkhoff B.	155
Yousef D.A.	110
Swailles S.	89
Steyrer J., Schiffinger M., Lang R.	60

Table 2: Top 10 Countries

Country	Documents	Citations
India	8	186
United Kingdom	7	353
Australia	6	298
China	5	33
United States	5	3649
United Arab Emirates	4	356
Nigeria	3	69
South Africa	3	31
Canada	2	8
Pakistan	2	14
South Korea	2	39

The word cloud assists in figuring out remarkable topics of employee engagement. After thoughtful and meticulous analysis of the word cloud (see Figure 3), we selectively omitted the most generic words like study, review, though, role, analysis, management and among. The chosen meaningful words for our study through the word cloud analysis were behaviour, evidence, leadership, resources, practices and expatriates, representing either the underlying impact or the study objective. Here the study objective represents leadership behaviour as a critical determinant in influencing employee engagement and commitment in the organization. Management practices of resource conservation reduce family-to-work conflict. The performance of expatriates can be maintained in the organization by enhancing their commitment to the organization.

**Figure 3:** Word cloud generated from the identified literature

Methodological Nuances

In systematic reviews, it is essential to understand the different methodological nuances that impact the findings' validity and reliability. These nuances include, but are not limited to, the research design, data collection methods, sample size and characteristics, and the definition and measurement of the construct under investigation. It is important to note that the definition and measurement of engagement vary significantly among studies. Some researchers define engagement as a multidimensional construct, including affective, behavioural, and cognitive components, while others focus on specific aspects such as job satisfaction or organizational commitment. Therefore, this section summarises the data type, research design, and methodologies used in employee engagement scholarship (figure 4 and table 3).

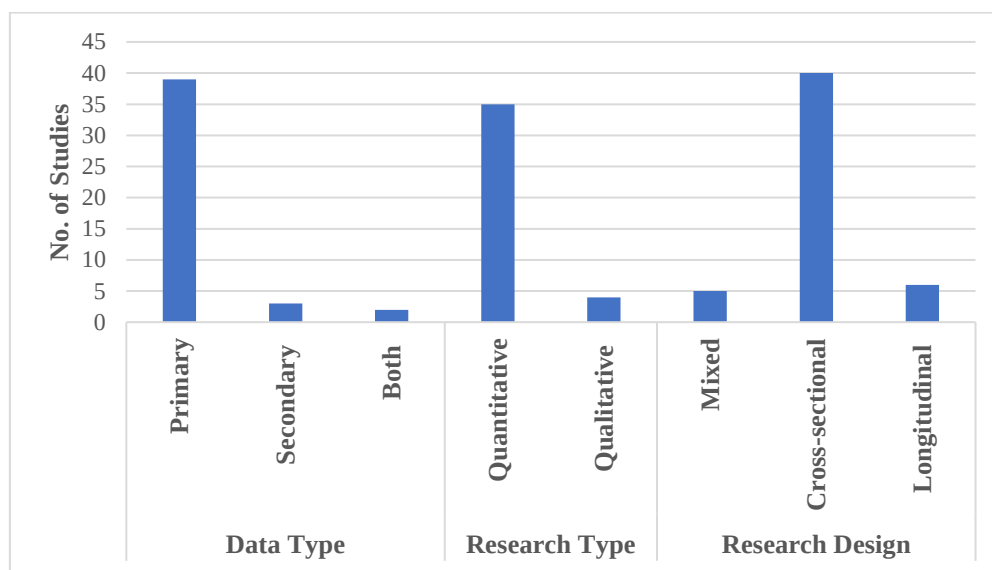


Figure 4: Methodological nuances in literature

Table 3: Statistical techniques identified in literature to quantify the association

Statistical technique	No. of Studies	Reference
Multiple regression	13	(Agarwala, 2003; Christian et al., 2011; Decotiis & Summers, 1987; Iverson & Buttigieg, 1999; Liu et al., 2007; Steyrer et al., 2008)
Structural equation modelling	9	(Asghar et al., 2020; Baird et al., 2019; Baksi Maiti et al., 2020; Gevaert et al., 2022; Goyal & Patwardhan, 2021; Oyewobi et al., 2019; Wijayati et al., 2022)
Factor analysis	8	(Dong & Zhong, 2022; Gevaert et al., 2022; Moletsane et al., 2019; Shrotryia & Dhanda, 2020; Sungu et al., 2020; Torlak et al., 2018)
Correlation	6	(Amah & Ahiauzu, 2013; Hirschi & Spurk, 2021; Johnson et al., 2018; Moletsane et al., 2019; Rich et al., 2010; Yousef, 2000)
Harman's one-factor test	5	((Rose) Liu et al., 2022; Baird et al., 2019; Jha et al., 2019; Steyrer et al., 2008)
Baron and Kenney (1986)	3	(Jha et al., 2019; Torka et al., 2010)
Stepwise regression	3	(Bashir & Long, 2015; Ismail et al., 2019)
Hierarchal regression	2	(Su et al., 2013; Wang et al., 2020)
Polynomial regression	2	(Bouckenoghe et al., 2022; Sungu et al., 2020)
Meta-Analytic Correlation	1	(Christian et al., 2011)

Theoretical models

Furthermore, we analyzed the identified literature and reported the associated theoretical frameworks and models used in employee engagement literature. The most predominantly used theories, models, and frameworks are listed in table 4

Table 4: Theories, model and framework used

Theories, model and framework	Definition	Implications	References
Person organization fit	“How aligned a person's core values, beliefs, ethics, and purpose are to the organization”	person-organization fit enhances employee engagement and organizational effectiveness	Conte & Gintoft (2005); Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, & Johnson (2005)
Kahns' theory	“The degree to shows self-preference in job tasks to promote connections between self and job.”	Employee psychological conditions directly influence the employee's willingness to engage	Kahn (1990)
Vroom's Expectancy theory	“The employee must believe the task is achievable in order for them to put effort into it.”	The intensity of effort put by employees varies according to the level of value placed by them on the results and their	Vroom's (1964, 1995)

		perception of the relationship between the effort exerted and the outcome achieved.	
Proactivity theory	“Behavioural tendency to be relatively unconstrained by situational forces and to affect environmental change.”	Proactivity is strongly associated with motivation and positive outcomes in real-world settings.	Bateman & Crant (1993); Judge & Kammeyer-Mueller (2007)
Generalized self-efficiency theory	“The belief in one's competence to cope with a broad range of stressful or challenging demands.”	The impact of general self-efficacy can be different on understanding, satisfaction, emotion and the process of selection.	Bandura (1986)
Job-demand resources model	Job and personal resources are intertwined, although they can, separately or combined, foretell work engagement.	Job demands directly affects health of employees. When there is high job demand in the organisation in form of extreme workload, there is greater chance of burnout.	Bakker and Leiter (2010)
Social learning theory	“Employees develop their behaviours through social learning by observing and imitating their leaders' behaviours.”	It was used to teach positive behaviours to employees.	Bandura (1977)
Attribution theory	“Individuals' leadership and causal attributions induced by leaders will affect their subsequent responses.”	A proper understanding of the underlying reason for a particular pattern of behaviour of employees can be of some help in getting them know about their behaviour.	Heider (1958)
Implicit leadership theory	“Individuals create cognitive representations of the world and use these preconceived notions to interpret their surroundings and control their behaviours.”	It helps the leader to know which leadership style applies to his subordinates and helps the leader to be supported, respected and valued.	Lord & Maher (1991)
Conservation of resources theory	“A stress theory describes the motivation that drives humans to both maintain their current resources and pursue new resources.”	Proper understanding and application of COR can help to reduce work-to-family conflict.	Hobfoll (2011)

Conceptualization of the model

There have been considerable attempts to establish a relationship between Employee engagement, Employee Commitment and Organisational Effectiveness. As per Rich B.L., and Crawford E.R., employee engagement positively impacts job performance which consequently positively impacts organizational effectiveness. Further, Iverson R.D. and Buttigieg D.M. established through their work how employees' commitment at various levels impacts organizational effectiveness. There have been works on antecedents of employee engagement and employee commitment, which, when managed well, leads to improvement in organizational performance. Benkhoff B., in his paper "Ignoring commitment is costly", with the help of new approaches establish the lacking association between employee commitment and organisational performance and point towards the implications of ill-managed employee commitment on an organization's effectiveness. Therefore in this section, after summarizing all the articles, we categorize the literature into significant dimensions. This content analysis aims to make valid deductions and give a conclusion about the available information through the scientific process. It was found that the literature is mainly focused on the following five dimensions, namely:

- (1) Employee engagement and its impact on job performance ((Rose) Liu et al., 2022; Christian et al., 2011; Rich et al., 2010).
- (2) Employee engagement leads to employee commitment (Albdour and Altarawneh, 2014; Plewa and Quester, 2008).
- (3) Employee Commitment and its impact on organizational performance (Baird et al., 2019; Baksi Maiti et al., 2020; Oyewobi et al., 2019).
- (4) Leadership behaviours and its impact on Employee engagement and Employee commitment (Dong & Zhong, 2022; Huh & Lee, 2022; Torka et al., 2010).
- (5) Improving Employee Engagement and Commitment (Goyal & Patwardhan, 2021; Parkes et al., 2007; Shrotryia & Dhanda, 2020).

Employee-related measures include work empowerment, tenure, professional qualification, and autonomy. Workplace characteristics like enforcement of organizational rules and procedures, provision of adequate facilities, workplace violence and aggression and Leadership traits like transformational leadership, leadership empowerment behaviour etc., act as antecedents. These are the factors on which work can be done to improve employee engagement and commitment. The outcomes of these variables were found to improve organizational effectiveness. Considering the various variables involved and their impact on other constructs, a conceptualized research model by identifying potential antecedents, mediators, drivers, and outcomes has been developed as in figure 5.

Antecedents

It has been identified in most works on organizational effectiveness that employee engagement has an influencing role. Various variables that describe employee engagement have been identified, like the employee's personal characteristics. Some employees are intrinsically motivated and deeply engaged in their job. Others may not be so involved in their job, leading to reduced engagement and, consequently, less effective organization. There are other job-related variables which describe the level of engagement. Employee's vigour, dedication to work, absorption (Schaufeli, 2018), collaboration with colleagues at the workplace and autonomy in decision-making influence employee engagement.

Employee Psychological Process has a significant impact on both employee engagement and, consequently, on organizational effectiveness. Variables like meaningfulness, psychological

ability and psychological ability have been identified to describe employee psychological process.

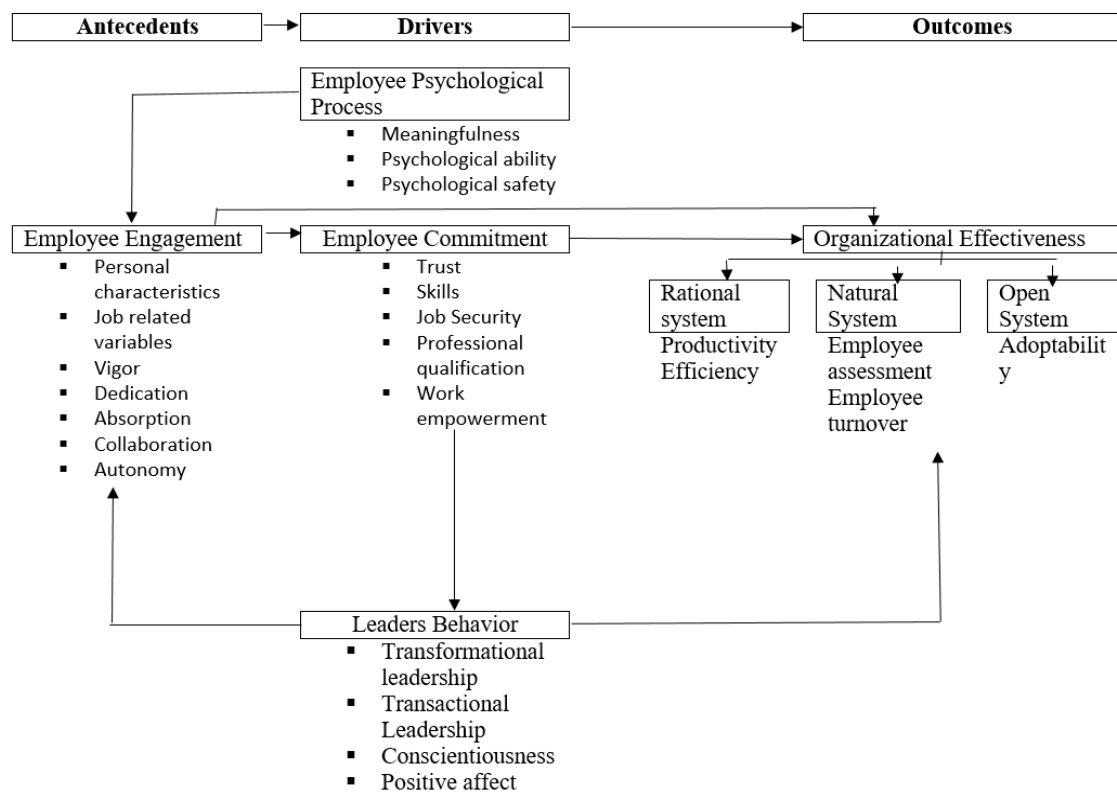


Figure 5: Conceptual framework

Mediating Variable

Employee Commitment has been identified to mediate between employee engagement and organizational effectiveness. It is described through variables like trust in the organization, the employee's skill level, job security, professional qualification of the employee and work empowerment in the organization (Allen and Meyer (1997). Trust in the organization significantly enhances emotional connectivity, reducing the chances of employees leaving the organization. Job security provides stability to the organization's employees, reducing attrition. Highly qualified employees have high job-switching options and low commitment to any particular organization.

Drivers

Some variables have the ability to predict the impact of antecedents on the outcome. In this review, Leadership Behaviour has been identified to have this predicting ability. Leadership behaviour drives both employee engagement and outcomes in terms of organizational effectiveness. Variables like transformational leadership, transactional leadership, conscientiousness and positive affect describe leadership behaviour. Transformational leadership predicts a positive impact on employee engagement (Evelyn & Elegwa, 2015) and organizational effectiveness (Hoxha, 2015).

Outcome

Outcomes are the consequences of employee engagement and commitment to organizational effectiveness. Though there is no anonymous definition of organizational effectiveness, some theories have been developed and accepted as measurements of organizational effectiveness. In this regard, there are three systems, namely the natural, rational and open (Scott & Davis, 2015). The productivity and efficiency of the organization describe the rational system. A natural system is described by employee assessment and turnover, and an open system by the organization's adaptability in this ever-changing and dynamic business environment.

Future research agenda

Despite the significant contribution, it is observed that most of the research on employee engagement and commitment suffers from the lacunae of the limited scale of data collection, small sample size and single industrial or sector considerations. Future research needs to be conducted to test these results' generalizability and explore the question of managing engagement and commitment in its various components. This will increase the acceptability and applicability of research works in other geographic regions and other sectors of human work. Further, the data on engagement and commitment in most of the research was given by the employees themselves, which could lead to discrimination. Therefore, future research can be done by collecting data from the supervisors or other senior authorities who have details of the employees and can provide unbiased data. This will enhance the credibility of the research.

Human resource management is a very tedious and complex task. In order to get optimal output, management is required to consider the polychronic of employees. In this area, future studies can be done to investigate the moderating impact of polychronic in work-life conflict in consideration with intended performance. This will help the management better manage employee turnover and improve employee engagement and commitment to the organization. Further human factors like ambition have been considered an antecedent in some studies reviewed. For future studies, it seems of rich theoretical and practical implications to identify and understand the factors governing employee ambitions and ways to enhance the same. While analyzing research papers, we came across works on the impact of employee engagement on various motivational theories. Future research can be done to deal with the place of engagement in the field of motivational theories like goal setting or theory of self-regulation. Furthermore, Moderating effect of variables like employee perception, gender, pay scale etc., have been considered, but behavioural factors like trust are still missing. Therefore future studies considering employee trust in the organization can be done. It will add to the available literature on engagement and help increase our understanding of human behaviour in an organizational setup. Moreover, the impact of social factors like co-workers' support and trust can be included as intermediate factors to get more consolidated results on the impact on employee engagement and the consequent impact on organizational effectiveness.

Technology disruptions like artificial intelligence significantly alter the way HR managers function. Efficient use of technology leads to efficient HR practices, resulting in a more engaged and committed workforce. We found very little work on the impact of Artificial intelligence (AI) and related technologies on employee engagement and commitment. Studies can be done to assess the impact of AI and other connected technologies on employee behaviour and overall organizational performance. This can help in better management and future-ready organizational culture.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, the extensive literature review reveals a comprehensive understanding of the intricate relationships among employee engagement, employee commitment, and organizational effectiveness. The research highlights five crucial dimensions: the impact of employee engagement on job performance, the connection between employee engagement and loyalty, the influence of employee commitment on organizational performance, the role of leadership behaviours in shaping engagement and responsibility, and strategies for improving employee engagement and commitment. The conceptual framework establishes a clear roadmap by identifying antecedents, mediating variables, drivers, and outcomes. Employee-related measures, workplace characteristics, and leadership behaviours influence engagement and commitment. Trust, skill level, job security, and work empowerment emerge as critical mediators. Leadership behaviour, primarily transformational leadership, significantly impacts engagement and organizational effectiveness. Ultimately, the outcomes manifest in organizational effectiveness, characterized by productivity, efficiency, employee assessment, turnover, and adaptability. However, the major limitation of our study is the possibility of missing out on the more comprehensive studies, as we use only the Scopus, ProQuest, and Ebsco databases, whereas adding other databases, such as the web of science etc., can further contribute to the results. Secondly, we consider only the peer-reviewed articles published in English and ABDC-listed journals. It can be possible that a more comprehensive paper is present in a less-ranked journal or a non-English language. This synthesis provides valuable insights for practitioners and scholars alike, emphasizing the need for holistic approaches to enhance employee engagement and commitment for sustained organizational success.

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