

Impact of Employee Engagement on Turnover Intention in the Context of Hospitality Industry

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Abstract:

The aim of the current study is to investigate the perception of employees for their work engagement and its role in their turnover intentions, in the hospitality industry in the Northern region of India. The three drivers of employee engagement have been used viz., Cognitive

Engagement, Behavioural Engagement and Emotional engagement to find out their effect on turnover intentions of employees. The hospitality frontline employees are chosen as participants in the study working in different segments in the hospitality industry including hotels/lodging, restaurants, events, and retail. The study suggested that there is significant impact of Employee engagement on the turnover intentions of people at work in the hospitality sector. Also, there is negative impact of Cognitive Engagement, Behavioural Engagement and Emotional on their willingness to shift their jobs. The suggestions and recommendations to reduce turnover intentions and retain the employees are given in the end of the paper.

Key words: Employee Engagement, Turnover Intentions, Hospitality Industry.

Introduction:

Tourism and hospitality industry is gaining global significance in the current times due to job creation as well as social, economic and environmental impacts (Neto, 2003). Manpower has an imperative role in the success of hotels (How) and the cost of human resource development is quite high in the hotel industry (Hrou & Mohamed, 2014). Today, the hospitality practitioners focus on the development and enactment of human resource practices and involvements that effect the working situations of the people at work (Otoo & Mishra, 2018). In another perspective, the researchers argue on the part of employees themselves to cope up with their work surroundings proactively (Bakker, 2017).

In a highly competitive business environment retention of talent and expertise is most important which is possible only through the employee engagement (Glen, 2006). Engaged employees possess high levels of energy, dedication, and absorption (Bakker, 2017). Also, work engaged personnel possess a richness of “resources” which they can utilize in their efforts (Demerouti et al., 2015). They are dedicated towards their work, immersed in their job profiles, and obstinate whenever tested with challenges and hindrances (Arora et al., 2015). Many studies conducted in past has proved that engagement results in crucial organizational results, together with originality and novelty, user satisfaction, favourable financial results, and reduced illness non attendance (Bakker et al., 2014) (Dubey et al., 2021).

Turnover intentions of the employees have been raised as a major issue for the organisations around the globe and has become a critical viewpoint in the hospitality industry (Park & Min, 2020). As higher rate of turnover disrupts the business operations as well as results in higher cost to the recruiters such as training and recruitment cost, personnel replacement cost, the loss of expertise people at work (Lopes Morrison, 2005) (Dewanto & Wardhani, 2018).

Organisations in the hospitality industry has started focussing on reducing the turnover intentions (Abdirad & Krishnan, 2022) and stresses on the development of the employee practices and interventions. One of the reason of increasing turnover is work pressure (Yousaf et al., 2019) which results in lower level of employee engagement at their work.

Review of Literature:

The past studies acknowledge that employee engagement is vital to business success and could be used as a tool to achieve strategic goals. (Shuck and Wollard n.d. 2010) defined employee

engagement as “an individual employee’s cognitive, emotional, and behavioural state directed toward desired organisational outcomes” (p.103). The working environment should be created in such a way that could influence the work conditions that enhance job demands and job resources. In the past literature it has been mentioned that employee engagement is a multi-dimensional concept with rational, affective and behavioural elements. According to the report, “[t]he emotional factors tie to people’s personal satisfaction and sense of inspiration and affirmation they get from their work and from being part of their organization”(Berry & Morris, n.d. 2008) (p. 4).

A study has given the dual perspective of the incorporation of well-being and commitment based engagement of people at work and also termed it as full engagement(Robertson & Cooper, 2010). Another study conducted among the employees of hotels in China it was found that the professional identity is most important for the success of employee engagement at the workplace and it could have negative effect on employee turnover (Wang et al., 2021).

The various outcomes of research in around the globe, have found that staffs are fronting the lack of employee engagement at their workplace in many sectors. (Alzayed & Murshid, 2017) found that as the level of employee engagement decreases, the workers’ intention to leave the organization also increases (Alzayed & Murshid, 2017). Employee stress was found to be connected to advanced turnover intentions and downgrading performance that eventually have an adverse effect on structural productivity(Jensen et al., 2013). Moreover, a lower level of employee engagement leads to negative employee outcomes such as emotional and physical health issues (Robertson & Cooper, 2010). (Naiemaha et al., 2019) directed a study amid the employees of hospitality industry in Malaysia and the results found that employee engagement has a negative influence on workers’ turnover intention.

Employee well-being is also important for the sustainability of employee engagement in the organizations (Robertson & Cooper, 2010) which in turn result in sustainable benefits at both individual level and organisational level. The employee engagement has proved to be significant to their performance at workplace in terms of the behavioural, cognitive and emotional role of the employees for their work (Bulinska-Stangrecka & Iddagoda, 2020). The three drivers of employee engagement in the global virtual teams are derived from the Job Demands-Resources theory (Shaik & Makhecha, 2019).

(Chandani et al., 2016) highlighted the factor effecting the employee engagement at both micro and macro level. At the micro level they could be the employees’ individual attributes related to the behavioural, cognitive and emotional components of the employee. The behavioural engagement of employee can be described as the ability to adapt in every kind of working conditions proactively with all due efforts and persistence (Bhuvanaiah & Raya, 2014). Such type of behavioural engagement is constituted with the vigour and enthusiasm to tackle all challenges while engaging in the work that can reduce turnover intent (Guest, 2014). Behavioural engagement is proved to be the important component of the employee engagement at work (Bedarkar & Pandita, 2014). Furthermore, the employees with harmonious passion can work more efficiently for the organisation, such kind of involvement of an employee at work is termed as cognitive engagement (Ho et al., 2011). The cognitive engagement of employee is

proved to have positive relation with the work performance and work engagement and increase turnover intention among them (Luthans & Peterson, 2002). The emotional engagement of an employee deals with the emotional consonance/dissonance at work and create willingness among employees to shift from their current job (Shankar & Bhatnagar, 2010). Emotional engagement is found to be significant negative effect on turnover intention of people at work (Erdil & Muceldili, 2014). In many organisations emotional engagement effects intention to leave the current job and move to other workplace (Alias et al., 2018).

Empirical studies reveal that there is a negative relation between the employee engagement and the turnover intent of employees in many organisations (Erdil & Muceldili, 2014). The intention of turnover is originated from the dissatisfaction of people with their job profiles as well as the working conditions (Tetteh et al., 2021). In addition to that lack of employee engagement leads the people to look for new job (Alzayed & Murshid, 2017). Cognitively disengaged people want to move from one place to another to look for new jobs (Azharudeen & Arulrajah, 2018). In hospitality sector organisations, studies have been conducted in various countries to highlight the importance of employee engagement in reducing the turnover intentions of people at work, but there is dearth of studies in Indian context. This study made an attempt to investigate the role of employee engagement in retaining the staff in the hotels of India through understanding the impact of employee engagement on their turnover intentions.

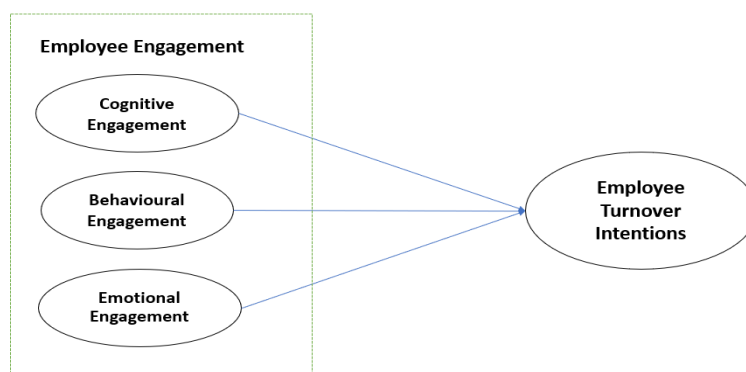
On the basis of the above-mentioned views, the following hypothesis statements are postulated:

H1: Cognitive Engagement of employees has significant positive influence on their Turnover Intentions.

H2: Behavioral Engagement of employees has significant positive influence on their Turnover Intentions.

H3: Emotional Engagement of employees has significant positive influence on their Turnover Intentions.

Conceptual diagram:



Research Methodology

The participants chosen for the study among the frontline employees of hospitality sector of northern region of India. The participants were working in the different segments of the

hospitality industry including hotels/lodging, restaurants, events, and retail; on the basis of simple random sampling. A questionnaire from past literature is adopted to obtain the study's objective and the variables are adapted from the scale of (Meyer & Allen, 1984) and (Kang et al., 2015). The questions are divided into two sections, each with a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5, with 1 representing "Strongly disagree" and 5 representing "Strongly agree". The first section has six questions regarding the population's demographic (age, education, gender and organization) and personal characteristics, while the second section contains questions about independent and dependent variables. Total of 209 employees took part in the study. Multiple Regression analysis technique is used for analyzing the data.

Reliability Analysis: The reliability analysis of the scale has been carried out using Cronbach's alpha value on SPSS (Version 22.0) shown in table 1. The value of Cronbach's alpha for Employee Engagement with 9 items is 0.831 and for Turnover Intentions is 0.879 with 6 items. Which is greater than the threshold value 0.70 (Feldt, 1980) (Rasli et al., 2012).

Table 1 Reliability Check of the variables

| Variables | No. of Items | Cronbach's Alpha |
|------------------------|--------------|------------------|
| Employee Engagement | 9 | 0.831 |
| Cognitive Engagement | 3 | 0.776 |
| Behavioural Engagement | 3 | 0.765 |
| Emotional Engagement | 3 | 0.821 |
| Turnover Intentions | 6 | 0.879 |

Results and Analysis:

The details of demography of the respondents under study are shown in table 2. Out of 209 participants taken as respondents in the study 14 percent employees are of age less than 30 years, 59 percent are under the age category of 31-40 years and rest of the 27 percent employees are between the range of 40-50 years. Among them 22 percent employees are done with high school, 65 percent are done with undergraduate or diploma courses and 65 percent are post-graduates. Out of total participants, 54 percent are males and 48 percent are females. The participants in the sample are the frontline hospitality employees from the Hotels/Lodging, Restaurants, Events and Retail. 23 percent employees are from Hotels/Lodging, 41 percent are from restaurants, 27 percent are from events and 9 percent from the retail segment of hospitality industry.

Table 2 Demographic Details

| Category | | Frequency | Percentage |
|----------|--------------------|-----------|------------|
| Age | Less than 30 years | 29 | 14 |
| | 31 - 40 years | 123 | 59 |
| | 40-50 years | 57 | 27 |
| | High School | 45 | 22 |

| | | | |
|-----------------|-----------------------|-----|-----|
| Education Level | Undergraduate/Diploma | 136 | 65 |
| | Post-graduate | 28 | 13 |
| Gender | Male | 133 | 64 |
| | Female | 76 | 36 |
| Organisation | Hotels/Lodging | 49 | 23 |
| | Restaurants | 85 | 41 |
| | Events | 57 | 27 |
| | Retail | 18 | 9 |
| Total | | 209 | 100 |

Multiple linear regression tests have been used to investigate the role of Cognitive Engagement, Behavioral Engagement, and Emotional Engagement on Turnover Intentions of employees.

Then, the fitted regression model was:

$$Y = a + b_1x_1 + b_2x_2 + b_3x_3 + e$$

Y = Turnover Intentions index of employees

Whereas X₁ - Score on Cognitive Engagement

X₂ - Score on Behavioural Engagement

X₃ - Score on Emotional Engagement

b₁, b₂, b₃ and b₄ are the regression coefficients of the independent variables

a - Intercept and

e - Error term

Table 3 Regression model

| Model | R | R-Square | Adjusted R-Square | SE of the Estimate |
|-------|-------------------|----------|-------------------|--------------------|
| 1 | -.63 ^a | .62 | .58 | .29 |

a. Predictors: (Constant), Emotional Engagement, Cognitive Engagement, Behavioural Engagement

ANOVA

| Model | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|-------|------------|----------------|-----|-------------|--------|-------------------|
| 1 | Regression | 63.63 | 3 | 22.54 | 153.72 | .000 ^b |
| | Residual | 82.88 | 205 | .14 | | |
| | Total | 146.51 | 208 | | | |

- a. Dependent Variable: Turnover Intentions of employees
 b. Predictors: (Constant), Cognitive Engagement, Behavioural Engagement, and Emotional Engagement.

Coefficients

| Regression Model | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | T | Sig. |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|--------|------|
| | B | Std. Error | β | | |
| (Constant) | .59 | .168 | | 3.264 | .001 |
| Behavioural Engagement | -.050 | .010 | -.210 | -5.065 | .000 |
| Cognitive Engagement | -.27 | -.027 | -.344 | -9.79 | .000 |
| Emotional Engagement | -.29 | -.031 | -.304 | 7.72 | .000 |

- a. Dependent Variable: Turnover Intentions of employees

Source: Computed from the Primary Data

As shown in the results of regression model, R is -.63 denotes the multiple correlation coefficient with a range lies between -1 and +1. It means Turnover Intentions of employees has a negative relationship with the 'Behavioural Engagement,' 'Emotional Engagement' and 'Cognitive Engagement' dimensions of Employee Engagement. Since the R square value is 0.62, which implies 62 per cent of the variation of existing data in Turnover Intentions (TI) of employees is enhanced by the 'Behavioural Engagement,' 'Emotional Engagement' 'Cognitive Engagement' and 'Stress Control' dimensions of Employee Engagement. Thus, the hypotheses H1, H2 and H3 are rejected, implies that there is negative significant influence of dimensions of TI viz., Cognitive Engagement, Behavioural Engagement and Emotional Engagement on the turnover intentions of employees.

Conclusion:

The findings of the study indicated that Behavioural Engagement ($b=-0.50$) has the most influential negative effect on Turnover Intentions of employees compared to the other dimensions. Emotional Engagement ($b=-0.29$) is the second most influential dimension of EE on Turnover Intentions of employees. Cognitive Engagement dimension of Employee Engagement has the least negative effect ($b=-0.27$) on the turnover intentions of employees. Therefore, the hospitality organisations need to focus on these dimensions to retain employees and reduce their job turnover intentions.

Managerial Implications and Recommendations:

Managers can assign the tasks based on the emotional, cognitive and behavioural capabilities of the employees to reduce the burden of work (Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998)(Jordan, n.d.). Declining performance, a reduced amount of engagement, depressing obligations and role conflicts could be the likely gauges that personnel might be facing some kind of work pressure in the working environment(Firth et al., 2004). The study will provide guidance to the bosses to handle the work engagement level of people (how) because of employee resignations, the cost associated with hiring and training new ones would be higher(Saks, 2006). The concept of establishing the culture of employee encouragement in every field along with the sharing of learning outcomes and most importantly utilizing the past experiences, lessons and learnings can also be implemented in the hospitality industry (Lin & Lee, 2006).

The results of the present study is advantageous for the managers/administrators to train the people at work so that they cannot reflect their disliking for organization and attract towards other job openings. The employee engagement can be improved by providing employees with flexible work schedules for their well-being so that they can perform their assigned duties effectively(Lee & Hong, 2011). It has been observed that if adequate training is provided to the staff in relation to dealing with the challenging work situations could help them to handle them efficiently.

Limitations and future scope:

The present study has emphasized on the effect of employee engagement on turnover intentions of the people working in hospitality industry. Thus, the future studies could be conducted in other industries using the similar variables. Also, the study is confined to the northern region of India so the future study could focus on the other parts of the country. There are some statistical limitations in the study. Thus, in future the study could be extended for structural equation modelling after collecting adequate data.

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