Measuring Employee Expectation and Engagement

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Abstract

In recent years there has been a great deal of interest in employee expectation and engagement. A number of research studies undertaken in the past few years have claimed that expectation and engagement predicts employee outcomes, organizational success and performance.

To explore the relationship between employee expectations and engagement a survey, based on Gallup's measurement, was conducted among the employees of BPCL Kochi Refinery. There was also an attempt to examine the extent of employee engagement among technical and non-technical categories in the organisation.

Employee engagement and expectations were assessed by twelve questions framed by Gallup. Data was collected from 180 employees selected from a total of 600. All the questions of the measurement tool were placed on a 5 rating likert scale and the empirical findings have been proved through statistical tools such as co-relation, regression and ANOVA.

The study indicates that 'strong feeling of engaged' in the organisation as a whole is positive. However all the measurement tools are not contributing to 'strong feeling of engaged'. The article emphasises the relevance of the need for policy decision on employee engagement in organisations of similar nature.

Much of the early organizational behaviour research has focused on negative concepts and emotions such as job dissatisfaction, alienation, burnout and intent to quit'(Koyuncu M, 2006). Recent efforts to improve organizational behaviour concepts have begun to emphasize positive organizational behaviour concepts and positive emotions' (Cameron, J et.al,2003) such as expectations and engagement

Employee Engagement

Employee engagement is a useful and a composite concept and has come to be recognized as making a significant difference to performance at all levels within the company. However, there has been limited research and as such there has been little in the way of model or theory development. It is important to study engagement because it is linked to positive individual and work related outcome' (Maslach et.al 2001).

Employee engagement has been defined in a number of ways but most often it has been defined as emotional and intellectual commitment to the organization. Brown has closely associated engagement with the existing constructs of job involvement while Fletcher and Williams have associated it with job involvement (Brown, J.K, 1991).

According to Kahn, engagement means to be psychologically present when occupying and performing an organizational role and Saks has defined it as a

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distinct and unique construct that consists of cognitive, emotional and behavioral components that are associated with individual role performance (Kahn, W. A, 1990). Institute of Employment Studies (IES) defines engagement as a positive attitude held by employees towards the organisation and its values. An 'engaged employee' is aware of business context, and works with colleagues to improve performance within the job for the benefit of the organisation. The organisation must work to develop and nurture engagement, which requires a two-way relationship between employer and employee (Robinson, D et.al, 2004).

Employees expect their jobs would be satisfying and meaningful and that their employers would help them grow professionally and develop their true potential Kersten E.L, 2006). Employers, on the other hand, need to understand what drives engagement among their employees in order to ensure business success. Creating an open system, in which employees are kept informed about the company's performance, can effectively increase employee engagement Johnson, M.D et.al 2000.

Employee engagement has little to do with how much an employee is paid or how satisfied an employee is. It is more about how an employee feels and has a lot to do with emotions (Bates, 2004). The display of emotions in organizations has become a topic of interest to organizational scholars during the past several years. Engagement in a role refers to one's psychological presence in or focuses on role activities (Rothbard, N.P, 2001) and may be an important ingredient for effective role performance.
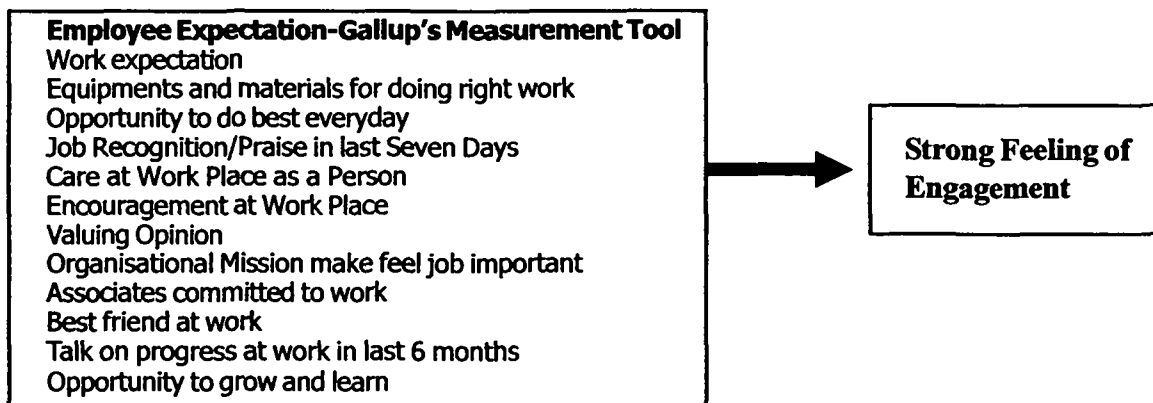
Employee expectation

The importance of expectation within the organizational life has been acknowledged and been applied in a variety of areas in the study of organizational activity. The concept of employee expectation plays an important role in most contemporary discussions of organizational life. The employee expectations always link with behaviour and culture of the organisation.

Among researchers there is certain agreement what while people occupy positions in society their behaviour will be more determined by what is expected from that position than by their own personal characteristics (Biddle, B.J, 1979). Likewise, within the organizational field, empirical evidence indicates that organizational behaviour is not only driven by role-formal arrangements, but also by pressures for compliance emanated from role-set expectations (Yaconi L, 2001).

Employers need to understand what drives engagement among their employees in order to ensure business success. According to Clifford, due to changing conditions the relationship between employers and employees is being redefined in a fundamental and permanent way. Carter and McMahan have pointed out that employees need to know what is expected of them and how their future development will occur. In this context it has been suggested by a number of researchers that creating an open system, in which employees are kept informed about the company's performance, can effectively increase employee engagement (Clifford E, 1994).

Employee Expectation and Engagement Model

Employee Expectation-Gallup's Measurement Tool
Work expectation
Equipments and materials for doing right work
Opportunity to do best everyday
Job Recognition/Praise in last Seven Days
Care at Work Place as a Person
Encouragement at Work Place
Valuing Opinion
Organisational Mission make feel job important
Associates committed to work
Best friend at work
Talk on progress at work in last 6 months
Opportunity to grow and learn

→ **Strong Feeling of Engagement**

In recent years there has been a great deal of interest in employee expectation and employee engagement. Both are complementary and supportive to each other and explanations to this are theoretically very sound. However, a practical dimension to prove its link is more or less a complex exercise. As, much of the organisational performance depend on people, the process of measuring employee engagement must be a careful exercise (Hubbard et.al).

Research by various organizations including Gallup, have tried to identify the key employee expectations that form the foundation of strong feelings of engagement. Employee expectation survey received wide attention after employees survey was undertaken by Gallops Reosti, 2003).

Gallup's survey

Gallup conducted many inquiries and interviews to identify the elements of worker engagement. From these researchers pointed that many variables from which twelve key employee expectations were identified which forms the foundation of strong feelings of engagement. Gallop's employee expectation and engagement model is given below (Thakeray, J, 2001). This model is based on the twelve questions framed by Gallup, which links it to strong feeling of engagement.

The model establishes strong relation between employee expectations and strong feeling of engagement. The present study is also focused in this direction. The study applies the above model in one of the prominent public sector units, Cochin Refineries in Kerala and predicts the relationship of employee expectations and engagement.

The main objective of this study is to analyse the relationship between employee expectations and strong feeling of engagement which are based on Gallop's measurement tool. This study further analyses the significance of employee expectations among technical and non-technical categories of employees in the organisation. This will enable a comprehensive analysis on employee expectation at different levels in the organisation. The following hypothesis is framed based on this.

Hypothesis

Ho: Employee expectation is same with respect to both technical and non-technical categories. **Ha:** Employee expectation and engagement is different with respect to both technical and non-technical categories.

Methodology

The study was conducted among the employees of BPCL Kochi Refinery. A sample of 108 employees was selected from a total of 600. This consisting of 18% of the total respondents. The method of selection of sample was based on simple random sampling without replacement. The data was collected with a standard questionnaire consists of 12 questions of employee expectation survey for employee engagement by Gallop's (see appendix). All the questions are placed on a 5 rating likert scale where 5 is given as the highest value and 1 as the lowest. Any score above 3 is considered as favourable and below 3 is unfavourable. Responses are tabulated and interpreted in percentage and validated through correlation and regression model. Likert scale score helped to measure the attitude of the respondents.

BPCL Kochi Refinery

Cochin Refineries Limited was incorporated, as a Public Limited Company in September 1963 with technical collaboration and financial participation from Philips Petroleum Company of USA. The name of the company was changed to Kochi Refineries Limited (KRL) in May 2000. KRL has a refining capacity of 7.5 million metric tones per annum. It merged with Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) on 1st April 2004. The principal activities of the company are processing, refining and distributing crude oil, petroleum, diesel, turpentine, gas, petroleum gas, aviation fuel, benzene, toluene, petroleum hydrocarbon solvent and other related products (source http://www.kochirefineries.com).

Results

Profile of the employees is given in **table1**. Age-wise distribution shows that upper middle-aged groups (40 & above) dominate in the organisation. Among the total respondents 45.37% belong to the age category of 45 and above. Male members dominate in the organisation (88.89). There are two categories of employees such as technical (58.33%) and non-technical (41.67%).

The attitude of the respondents on each

factors of measurement tool is given in **table 2.** The table shows that the response is not favourable with respect to 'opportunity to do best every day' as its score is below three. In all other cases the responses are positive. If one makes a comparative analysis of score, following measurement tools such as job recognition/praise in last seven days (4.44), care at work place as a person (4.04), encouragement at work place (4.21), organisational mission make feel job important (4.36), associates committed to work (4.06), best friend at work (4.46), opportunity to grow and learn high (4.34) are highly favourable. However, with respect to remaining factors the scores are just above three, which indicates that the attitude is just favourable and not highly favourable. However, this interpretation provides only basic information on the attitude of the employees on the specified tools. The overall score is 3.98. It is important in this context to verify how far these measurement tools are related to 'strong feeling of engagement'. Co-relation matrix is workout to interpret the extent of relationship between these.

Karl Pearson's correlation-co-efficient shows how far the Gallop's measurement tools explain strong feeling of engagement **(table 3).** Tools such as equipments and materials for doing right work, job recognition/praise in last seven days, care at work place as a person, encouragement at work place are significant at 1% level. On the other hand, the factor 'talk on progress at work in the last six months' is significant at 5% level. The relationship is found negative with respect to work expectation, valuing opinion, organisational mission make feel job important, opportunity to grow and learn. With respect to 'associates committed to work and opportunity to do best every day' the relation is positive but not highly significant **(see figure 2).**

Regression model is framed to validate the overall predictability of Gallup's measurement tools. The model predicts how far the tools explain the overall feeling of engagement. Regression is set in the equation, $Y = a + b1x1 + b2x2 + b3x3 + b4x4 + \ldots\ldots bnxn$, where Y=strong feeling of engagement (dependent variable) and x1, X2, X3 are Gallup's 12 measurement tools (independent variables).

Regression analysis shows that R2 value is 63.3, which means that 63.3 % of the variations in

the dependent variable is explained by the equation. The equation explains that the independent variables are good predictors for employee engagement. ANOVA model explains that the equation is significant (p<.05) **(table 4).** Following is the SPSS summary of regression model.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R.Square	Std.Error of the Estimate
1	0.789ᵃ	.636	.590	.6093

a.   Predictors : (Constant), Work Expectations, Job Recognition/Praise in last Seven Days, Opportunity to do best everyday, Opportunity to grow and learn, Valuing opinion, Equipments and materials for doing the right work, Associates committed to work, Best friend at work, Talk about progress at work in last 6 months, Care at work place as a person, Organisational Mission make feel job important, Encouragement at work place.

The level of employee expectations among technical and non-technical categories is tested through ANOVA **(table 5)** (see also the formulated hypothesis). The results shows that p<.50 in all the cases of employee expectation measurement tools. This implied that the hypothesis Ho cannot be rejected. Therefore employee expectation is same with respect to both technical and non-technical categories.

Inferences

The empirical findings throw lights on different dimensions of employee expectation and engagement. The overall attitude of the respondents (likert scale) on employee expectation and engagement on most of the tools are favourable. However the attitude is not positive with respect to 'opportunity to do best every day'. Co-relation matrices highlights that the tools such as equipments and materials for doing right work, job recognition/praise in last seven days, care at work place as a person, encouragement at work place and talk on progress at work in the last six months are predictive variables for employee engagement. Regression model explains that the overall measurement tools are good set of variables. The model is highly significant. Employee expectation is same with both technical and non-technical categories. This implies that policy decisions on 'strong feeling of

engagement' can be addressed commonly in the organisation.

The above results clearly state that 'strong feeling of engaged' in the organisation (BPCL Kochi Refinery) as a whole is positive. However all the measurement tools are not contributing to 'strong feeling of engaged'. The relationship is negative on work expectation, valuing opinion, organisational mission make feel job important, opportunity to grow and learn (four out of twelve measurement tools). These aspects must be accounted properly to reach the desired status of engagement.

Conclusion

In short, the relationship of employee expectations and engagement emerges as a strong meaningful force in behavioural management science. A supportive system to maintain this would help the organisation to bring attitudinal changes among employees. Future research on these directions can generalise this more comprehensively.

Table 1: Profile of the Respondents

Age	No of Respondents
25-30	7 (6.48%)
31-35	19 (17.59%)
36-40	12 (11.11%)
41-45	21 (19.44%)
45 and above	49 (45.37%)
Gender	
Male	96 (88.89)
Female	12 (11.11)
Department	
Technical	63(58.33)
Non-Technical	45 (41.67)
Service	
0-5	13(12.03)
Less than 15	32 (29.63)
16-25	38 (35.19)
26-35	23 (21.29)
36 and above	2 (1.85)

Table 2: Strong Feeling of Engagement (Likert Scale Measurement)

Employee Expectation-Gallup's Measurement Tool	Likert Score
Work expectation	3.92
Equipments and materials for doing right work	3.79
Opportunity to do best every day	2.95
Job Recognition/Praise in last Seven Days	4.44
Care at Work Place as a Person	4.04
Encouragement at Work Place	4.21
Valuing Opinion	3.46
Organisational Mission make feel job important	4.36
Associates committed to work	4.06
Best friend at work	4.46
Talk on progress at work in last 6 months	3.76
Opportunity to grow and learn	4.34
Total (Average)	3.98

Table 3: Strong Feeling of Engagement

Employee Expectation-Gallup's Measurement Tool	Pearson's Co-relation co-efficient
Work expectation	-.068
Equipments and materials for doing right work	.403**
Opportunity to do best ever day	.161
Job Recognition/Praise in last Seven Days	.488**
Care at Work Place as a Person	.694**
Encouragement at Work Place	.612**
Valuing Opinion	-.040
Organisational Mission make feel job important	-.048
Associates committed to work	.178
Best friend at work	.138
Talk on progress at work in last 6 months	.511*
Opportunity to grow and learn	-.023

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

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2- tailed)

Table 4

ANOVA [b]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	61.725	12	5.144	13.856	.00[a]
	Residual	35.266	95	.371		
	Total	96.991	107			

a. Predictors : (Constant), Work Expectation 1, Job Recognition / Praise in last Seven Days. Opportunity to do best ever day. Oportunity to grow and learn. Valuing opinion, Equipments and materials for doing the right work, Associates committed to work, best friend at work, Talk about progress at work in last 6 months. Care at Work Place as a Person, organisational Mission make feel job important.

b. Dependent Variable Strong Feeling of Engament.

Table 5 : ANOVA

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Best friend at work	Between Groups Within Groups Total	.128 58.724 58.852	1 106 107	.128 .554	.231	.632
Care at work place as a person	Between Groups Within Groups Total	2.049 77.803 73.667	1 106 107	2.049 .734	2.791	.098
Associates committed to work	Between Groups Within Groups Total	.771 72.895 73.667	1 106 107	.771 .688	1.122	.292
Encouragement at work place	Between Groups within Groups Total	.743 89.359 90.102	1 106 107	.743 .843	.882	.350
Equipments and materials for doing the right work	Between Groups Within Groups Total	.306 81.213 81.519	1 106 107	.306 .766	.399	.529
Opportunity to grow and learn	Between Groups Within Groups Total	1.334 77.435 78.769	1 .106 107	1.334 .731	1.826	.180
Organisational Mission make feel job important	Between Groups Within Groups Total	.117 58.800 58.917	1 106 107	.117 .555	.210	.647
Valuing opinion	Between Groups Within Groups Total	.382 78.470 78.852	1 106 107	.382 .740	.516	.474

Table 5 : ANOVA

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Opportunity to do best every day	Between Groups	40.445	1	40.445	2.602	.110
	Within Groups	1647.879	106	15.546		
	Total	1688.324	107			
Talk about progress at work in last 6 months	Between Groups	.890	1	.890	2.791	.098
	Within Groups	108.851	106	1.027		
	Total	109.741	107			
Job Recognition / Praise in last Seven Days	Between Groups	.343	1	.343	.602	.439
	Within Groups	60.324	106	.569		
	Total	60.667	107			
Work Expectations	Between Groups	6.772E-02	1	.343	.602	.439
	within Groups	57.340	106	.541		
	Total	57.407	107			

Firgure 2: Employee Expectation and Engagement (Scatter Diagram)
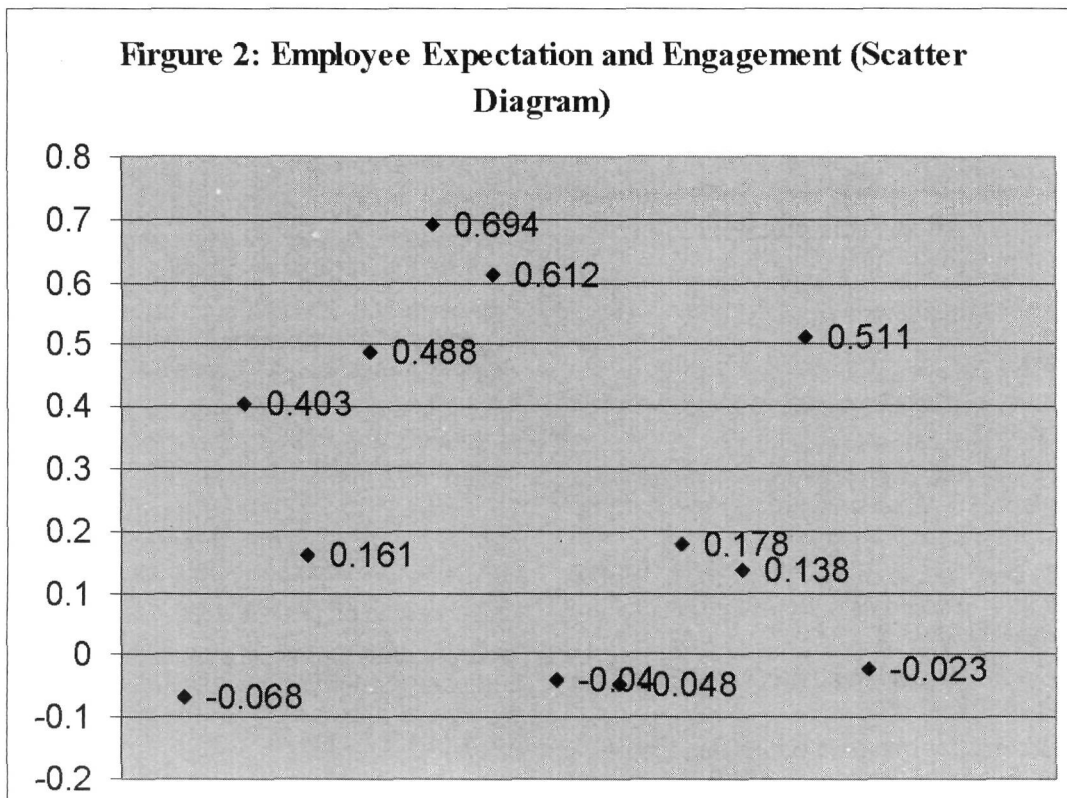
Questionnaire

The following are Gallup's 12 questions :

1. Do you know what is expected of you at work?

2. Do you have the materials and equipment you need to do your work right?

3. At work, do you have the opportunity to do what you do best every day?

4. In the last seven days, have you received recognition or praise for doing good work?

5. Does your supervisor, or someone at work, seem to care about you as a person?

6. Is there someone at work who encourages your development?

7. At work, do your opinions seem to count?

8. Does the mission/purpose of your company make you feel your job is important?

9. Are your associates (fellow employees) committed to doing quality work?

10. Do you have a best friend at work?

11. In the last six months, has someone at work talked to you about your progress?

12. In the last year, have you had opportunities at work to learn and grow?

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