The Employee Engagement's Impact on Productivity and Motivation in the Private higher education Sector in Oman

Hisham AlGhunaimi[1], Said AlGhenaimi[2]

Abstract

Employee engagement in the workplace implies that employees are committed to their respective organizational vision, mission, and goals, thereby becoming more engaged, and motivated to contribute to organizational success. Similarly, engaged professional staff in Oman's higher education sector experience job satisfaction, involvement, commitment, and empowerment, thereby enhancing education quality. Employee engagement has gained significant attention from scholars and practitioners due to its positive impact on personal and organizational well-being. Thus, this study aims to explore the effect of employee engagement on productivity and motivation in Oman's private higher education sector and determine the success factors for organizations in maintaining employee engagement. The literature review reveals that the working environment, leadership style, and creative work approach tend to influence employee engagement in Oman's private higher education sector. Therefore, secondary findings reveal the impact of different motivations and productivity on employee engagement through social exchange theory.

Keywords: *E Employee Engagement Program, Performance, Social Exchange Theory, Education Sector, Training, And Development.*

Introduction

Background of the Study

Employee productivity, motivation, and engagement are critical sources of high-performance in the private higher education sector in Oman. Hence, such motivation, productivity, and engagement are necessary in the workplace and need to be generated by effective leadership with concise and clear managerial concepts. In Oman, the private higher education sector has been expanding at a much faster pace, resulting in a workforce available at much lower wages, which was found to lower employee morale (Idan, 2021). Therefore, different financial incentives such as bonuses, salaries, and intangible and tangible rewards will provide a sustainable spirit to the employees and encourage them to work with high motivation and commitment. Amid environmental uncertainty and the competitive landscape in the private higher education sector, organizations need to realize the importance of the workforce for sustainable corporate growth (Al-Ani, 2017). Thus, it can be said that there is a clear alignment between the organization and the individual workforce. The quality of education is considered a major concern in Oman. In response to such a strategy in Oman's Vision 2020, the Ministry of Education is taking the initiative to improve education standards by all possible means. Hence, different policies have been introduced to improve teaching methods and education practices through improved in-service training courses, which enhance the productivity and motivation of teachers toward their respective professions.

Problem Statement

The private higher education sector in Oman has experienced major changes regarding policy and the environment, which need to be implemented (Osman, 2020). In response to COVID-19, the government-imposed a lockdown, which impacted the education sector. Hence, some changes related to budgets and legislation were implemented to facilitate communication between teachers and students more efficiently. Therefore, it can be said that transformation is quite challenging for HR managers in Oman's private higher

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[1] Lecturer of Accounting & Finance, College of Business Administration, A'Sharqiyah University, Oman, E-mail: hisham9934@gmail.com, https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5494-2242.

[2] Dean of College of Applied and Health Sciences, A'Sharqiyah University, Oman, E-mail: said.alghenaimi@asu.edu.om, https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6117-2645.

education sector. In addition to these challenges, strategic vision and change management are crucial for employee engagement and are weak in the private higher education sector.

On the other hand, a negative working environment that includes poor communication, micromanagement, burnout, and stress can lead to lower employee engagement (Afrahi et al., (2021). According to various reports, only 13% of employees worldwide are considered to be active and engaged at work, while more than twice of employees are currently disengaged due to a toxic and negative working environment. Hence, from the above assertion, it is apparent that the private higher education sector in Oman lacks a positive working environment that encourages high performance. Simultaneously, the private higher education sector also lacks different employee engagement factors such as motivation, satisfaction, and effectiveness, which creates a hindrance in providing quality education to students.

Research Aims and Objectives

The main aim of the study is to get a clear, in-depth understanding of various concepts of employee engagement in the private higher education sector in Oman. The following are the research objectives for this study:

- To understand various concepts of employee engagement in the private higher education sector in Oman.

- To understand the impact of employee engagement on the Productivity and Motivation of employees

Research Questions

- What are the various concepts of employee engagement that the organization needs to consider while maintaining Employee Engagement?

- What is the impact of employee engagement on Productivity and motivation in the private higher education sector in Oman?

Literature Review

Introduction

As indicated by Isson & Harriott (2016), one thing that cannot be easily duplicated is to provide a unique and distinct workforce within organizations. Hence, with the rise of globalization, organizations are investing heavily in their workforce, and the critical concept that has grabbed the attention is "employee engagement". This explains that every business needs to achieve an engaged workforce to sustain itself in the competitive landscape. An engaged and motivated workforce tends to outperform in the competitive market and typically exhibits all the required attributes that employees desire (Tamunomiebi & Onah, 2019). These attributes include self-assured, confident, positive, motivated, enthusiastic, and proactive qualities, which are the antecedents to organizational and personal well-being.

Overview of Employee Engagement in the Private higher education Sector in Oman

In the private higher education sector in Oman, the concept of employee engagement is extraordinarily complex and critical. Nowadays, the private higher education sector must draw attention to binding together the interests of various diverse groups of stakeholders while meeting the employees', employers`, and students` expectations. Therefore, to sustain in the international competition, it is of utmost importance to deliver a distinct range of services both externally and internally (Paauwe & Boon, 2018). According to Byrne & MacDonagh, (2017), fostering employee engagement helps the education sector to mitigate the challenge related to recruitment raids from overseas institutions. On the contrary, Jha & Kumar (2016)

opined that employee engagement creates a significant impact on the organization as engaged employees are more likely to stay in the organization and perform better, thereby improving the agility of the organization.

Employee Engagement and Social Exchange Theory

King, (2016) developed the social exchange theory to derive different postulates such as sociology, economics, and psychology. According to scholars and researchers, this theory is considered the key theory for employee motivation, productivity, and organizational development. On the contrary, Oparaocha (2016) opined that social exchange theory is a reciprocal process between the institution and individuals. Further, it is the process of exchanging goods, material goods, and non-material goods. Hence, social exchange can encourage employees to behave productively. Similarly, the degree of behavioral change is directly proportional to the perceived benefit, resulting in achieving organizational goals.

Success Factors of Employee Engagement in The Private Higher Education Sector

As indicated by Barak (2016), every employee has their struggle and freedom in every workplace, but they cannot wait to shift to another organization as they are not devoted to their organization. It tends to motivate employees to come on board and proves to be beneficial for the organization in terms of productivity and performance.

Employees Success Area

As indicated by Lemon & Palenchar (2018), money is the ultimate solution to employee engagement and employees fail to feel motivated by their remuneration packages. However, on the other hand, money is not considered to be the actual solution to get employee engagement. Al-Maamari & Mariano (2019), opined that employees tend to feel more engaged when the work is considered constructive and, at the same time, when they feel secure, confident, respected, and treasured. This explains that senior employees try adopting different motivational leadership styles to inspire and motivate employees and help them progress in their careers.

Implementing A Bottom-Up Strategy Style and Working Environment

According to Anthony-McMann et al., (2017), employees are considered the bedrock on which companies are grounded. Therefore, taking regular feedback from the employees can be quite beneficial for the organization to examine their respective sentiments and feelings. This significantly results in enhancing their engagement level.

Exchanging Ideas between Teams with Good Leadership Style

According to Chandani et al., (2016), managers and executives are comparatively more experienced than employees. Therefore, exchanging their experiences with employees positively motivates employees. Thus, communication engagement in the form of meetings and sessions can enhance employee engagement within the workforce.

Creative Work-Approach

Any kind of monotonous mission may lead to disengagement among employees. Therefore, it can be said that employers need to challenge employees with a stimulating workflow. Thus, employees deal with the workflow differently as they utilize novel approaches to achieve their goals.

Impact of Employee Engagement on Employee Motivation

Employee motivation in terms of productivity is typically based on two factors such as intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Singh (2016) opined that motivation plays a significant role in the public or private sector including monetary factors such as salary bonuses, and wages, and non-monetary factors such as working conditions, job security, enrichment, status, and other relevant factors. Hanaysha's (2016) findings suggested that various companies, including the education sector in Oman, indicated that working conditions, good pay, and interesting work are the key factors for high employee motivation, resulting in increased employee efficiency leading to organizational success. However, motivation is sometimes taken for granted by most leaders, making employees show low Productivity due to poor motivation.

On the other hand, Makki and Abid (2017) opined that employees with extrinsic motivation have a considerable influence on job satisfaction. Albrecht, et al., (2018) examined that more than 60% of employees want more kinds of opportunities and strong manager-employee relationships to remain satisfied at work. Thus, from the above assertion, it is apparent that highly engaged employees are extensively motivated, thereby providing enhanced job performance.

Impact of Employee Engagement on Productivity

Engagement is considered a crucial aspect of hard work as it costs alternative staff as compared to maintaining and delivering it. According to Hanaysha (2016), one engaged employee can create a positive impact on organizational Productivity rather than disengaged employees. Moletsane et al., (2019) conducted a meta-analysis and determined a significant difference between business units and engagement with an 18% drop in Productivity between the bottom and top performers. Additionally, according to Memon et al., (2016), there is a 60% drop in quality. Therefore, in the research, 1000% of errors have been noticed among disengaged employees, thereby focusing on the element of low level of employee engagement and its detrimental effect on performance.

Absenteeism

According to Barik & Kochar (2017), high employee engagement not only enhances the efficiency of an employee but also decreases the rate of absenteeism, thereby enhancing Productivity. By looking at the numbers and explanations from various secondary sources, it is evident that employee engagement plays a significant role in determining the actual rates of absenteeism. According to Karatepe & Olugbade (2016), absenteeism is noted to be 37% higher in organizations with a lower 25% in engagement.

Growing Challenges in Maintaining Employee Engagement in Oman and Strategies to Mitigate Such Issues

As per the above explanations, it is quite apparent about the different benefits of engaged employees for organizations. Simultaneously, the HR manager in the education sector finds it difficult to maintain employee engagement. For instance, according to Angrave et al. (2016), understanding and measuring relevant data can be quite complex for HR to implement. Similarly, nowadays, the private higher education sector in Oman tends to process its operation in various digital platforms that are related to employee feedback and people analytics. Therefore, a lack of sufficient data mining and visualization tools can lead to complexity. On the other hand, Okeke & Mtyuda (2017) opined that lack of appreciation can be a major concern for the staff or the employees and cause them to quit their jobs. Similarly, with the sudden increase of the global pandemic, the fear of job insecurity also increased; henceforth, it becomes difficult for the organization to see engagement and implement relevant strategies.

To mitigate such challenges, the academic leader needs to place every staff member in the right role. As per Fitria (2018), it is also important for academic leaders to build trust and accountability, thereby providing them with appropriate training and development programs with relevant resources that can make them feel a proper career progression.

Research Gap

During the investigation process, it has been noted that the journals, articles, or books utilized failed to provide adequate data on the given context and scenario in the Sultanate of Oman. Further, employee engagement in the private higher education sector is neglected in various secondary sources that are available on the Internet. Due to a lack of information regarding the usage of employee engagement in the education sector, translation and interpretation are not demonstrated efficiently.

Summary

This specific section explored different contexts, challenges, different success factors, and concepts of employee engagement in the private higher education sector in Oman. As per the study, employee engagement creates a positive impact on motivation and Productivity that helps the organization achieve its objectives and goals. Thus, the study supports the findings from different scholars suggesting that organizational culture immensely impacts employee engagement. It is the degree of commitment and involvement which improves productivity and performance. Thus, engaged employees tend to increase their sense of responsibility, creating a positive impact on business innovation and goals.

Research Methodology

Research methodology is an important aspect of the study because it directs the way to meet the objectives of the research more strategically. To collect data from reliable sources, interpretivism philosophy is used as it helps to collect in-depth information on the study area. However, in-depth information is collected from Google Scholar because it is more dependable. The appropriate search terms are used thereby deciphering more details of the study area. Hence, to gather in-depth information on this study area, a qualitative study is best suited.

Moreover, Mohajan (2018) states that qualitative research is more subjective and perspective. The research method is best suited for this study because the analysis is not made on generalizations but on the contextual findings of the grounded data. As a qualitative approach is used, exploratory research design is suited because it does not provide any conclusive answers at the end and creates a scope for future research to generate detailed and definitive answers (Snyder, 2019).

Secondary data is collected from peer-reviewed journals, articles, reports, and government records on employee engagement in improving Productivity in the education sector of Oman. The information is dependable and trustworthy because it is collected from authentic sources. The data analysis is done with the help of thematic analysis, which is defined, as portraying the authors' findings on the research objectives so that a differentiated view of each author on the study area is identified clearly (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). Moreover, the collected data is categorized under specific themes for further interpretation.

Result and Findings

Literature Inclusion Table

Publication Reference	Publication Type	Methodology	Key Findings
Al-Maamari & Matriano, (2019)	Journal article, Theoretical	Descriptive research method using interviews and quantitative research through surveys	1) Employee engagement is an integral part of HRM in which the organization needs to enhance employee engagement and job satisfaction, which further improves overall performance.
Anthony-McMann, et al., (2017)	Journal, article	Quantitative study	1) Employee engagement has some positive correlations with employee engagement such as Clarity through communication and feedback.
Chandani et al., (2016)	Journal	Statistical Analysis	1)Different factors, including good leadership style, and friendly culture are important in the workplace to increase organizational performance as it results in high engagement. Employees getting appraised by their superiors is the key driver to employee engagement.
Singh, (2016).	Journal	N/A	1) A positive working environment plays a driving role in engaging individuals in any kind of activity. 2) Motivation is an integral part of employee engagement which reflects on different motivation factors that leaders need to consider.
Makki, & Abid, (2017)	Journal, Research	Correlation Study	1) Motivation is the theoretical construct of employee behavior. These are correlated with task performance, which represents employee engagement level.
Hanaysha, (2016).	Journal, Research	Quantitative approach	1) Work engagement and creative work approach are the major organizational priorities which is reflected through job satisfaction, organizational leaders. 2) Employee productivity is a crucial aspect of the workplace.
Moletsane et al., (2019)	Journal, article, Research	Quantitative Research method	1) Employee engagement is the psychological and physical demonstration of high productivity levels indicating factors that increase Productivity
Barik & Kochar (2017).	Journal, article, A literature review	N/A	1) Various studies have been considered to demonstrate effective leadership, job enrichment, advancement scope, and self-development can provide mental

			satisfaction to employees, resulting in reduced absenteeism rate.

Discussion

The secondary findings determined that Productivity and motivation positively affect employee engagement. It further showed that a creative work approach, job security, good pay, and efficient management, support help improve Productivity and motivation in the private higher education sector. It is found that creating a healthy workplace filled with supportive coworkers helps motivate the employees. Further, it explains that employee motivation is considerably high, and will always reflect on employees` job satisfaction, higher responsibility, and better careers. Employee engagement, Adequate training and development programs, and appropriate resources are considered to play a significant role in improving academic quality. This further helps in providing employees with competent quality, enabling them to easily adapt to the changing trends of the business environment. Thus, improved quality of different lectures by the teaching professionals eventually offers a quality service both academically and non-academically.

Similarly, the easy availability of technological advancements and facilities creates a positive impact on employee engagement. Effective communication, fairness in the procedure, and work based on competencies with highly supportive superiors provide higher engagement levels. Thus, if employee motivation is high with a strong engagement level, their performance improves, enhancing the organizational performance. However, the study also explains that social exchange theory is interrelated with employee engagement which tends to build positive exchanges between organizations and their employees, enhancing employee motivation and productivity. The findings also reveal that unmotivated employees put little effort into tasks, resulting in lower productivity levels. Simultaneously, motivated employees are more likely to finish tasks more enthusiastically with higher productivity levels. Employee motivation is based on two factors, namely, intrinsic, and extrinsic motivation. Thus, employees within organizations are motivated differently. Hence, the motivation level to enhance Productivity depends on the two factors including interesting work, satisfaction, stress, job security, stress, appreciation, and working environment.

Various issues have been determined to maintain employee engagement. To mitigate, considering success factors is important which tends to enhance Productivity by increasing the willingness to collaborate with interest, enthusiasm, loyalty, and confidence, thereby helping them to achieve their personal and organizational goals. Hence, it is understood that for the Omani educational sector, it is important to improve the working environment to enhance employee engagement. Similarly, an efficient leadership style is helpful for employees` value proposition that aids in improving performance in the form of adequate, fair rewards, opportunities for career growth, and complete satisfaction of the employee. It is also necessary for leaders to focus on the above-mentioned factors and execute the employee engagement program properly to gain a competitive advantage and control all problems related to employee disengagement. Thus, employee engagement is based on an individual's cognitive, behavioral, and emotional state, directed toward desired outcomes. Therefore, employee engagement is the alignment of maximum satisfaction with maximum Productivity contributing to organizational success.

Conclusion

The study aims to demonstrate the impact of employee engagement on Productivity and motivation of the private higher education sector in Oman. Thus, the study illustrates an in-depth understanding of different success factors of employee engagement that enhance employee motivation and Productivity in the private higher education sector. Employee engagement within the private higher education sector showed that the success factors enhance employees' productivity. Therefore, satisfied employees with their job tasks and employers are more productive as they are motivated beyond their factors. The findings showed an engaged working environment, proper training and development program, effective leadership style, and creative work approach as the major factors that enhance job satisfaction, thereby increasing employee performance,

Productivity, and organization as a whole. Overall, employee motivation has a positive impact on employee engagement, that directly relates to Productivity. Thus, the private higher education sector of Oman must empower employees by providing effective feedback, rewards, and recognition systems.

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