Improving Engagement of Concessionaire Employees

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In addition to brands and visual merchandizing, the concessionaire employees' behaviour and functioning at the airports is expected to influence passenger experience. Engaged employees are a boon to any business. This paper aims to develop a model to measure and improve the engagement levels of concessionaire employees at Indira Gandhi International Airport, Delhi. This paper aims to identify the factors that contribute to employee engagement and job satisfaction of concessionaire employees.

The model consisting of measuring criteria of employee engagement constructs has been empirically validated. A structured questionnaire has been developed to collect primary data from 362 employees on a five point Likert scale. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was used to analyze the data and four employee engagement factors were identified. In order to ensure inclusion of each factor to measure employee engagement, they were put to test through confirmatory factor analysis. The model fit to the empirical data was found to be satisfactory. The model can be used by concessionaires to measure their employees' engagement at the outlets. This could help them plan appropriate initiatives to increase employee satisfaction and retention.

Keywords: Employee Engagement, Airport, Concessionaires, CFA, Model Fit.

INTRODUCTION

Employee engagement can be explained as the degree to which an employee feels engaged and involved with his organization and the value it promotes. Kahn (1990) defined Employee Engagement as "the harnessing of organization members' selves to their work roles; in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances". Work engagement relates to an individual's psychological state of mind while at work (Purcell, 2014).

In the recent times employee engagement has drawn significant managerial attention (Crabb, 2011), more so, since engaged employees are found to provide competitive edge to the organization (Towers, 2007).

More recently, Reilly (2014) propounded that "Engaged workers stand apart from their not-engaged and actively disengaged counterparts because of the discretionary effort they consistently bring to their roles. These employees willingly go the extra mile, work with passion, and feel a profound connection with their company. They are the people who will drive innovation and move your business forward".

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The concept of employee engagement was first explained by Kahn (1990) to be a motivational and unique concept. He defined employee engagement as "the harnessing of an employee's full self in terms of physical, cognitive and emotional energies to work role performances" (Kahn, 1990). It is a social or psychological contract between employees and organizations. Later, many scholars contributed to the concept of employee engagement. Kahn's (1990) theory was further expanded by Shuck (2011) who stated that employee engagement may be seen as "an individual employee's cognitive, emotional and behavioural state directed toward desired organizational outcomes".

Harter et al. (2002) defined engagement as "the individual's involvement and satisfaction with as well as enthusiasm for work". Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonz'alez-Rom'a, and Bakker (2002) defined the same as "a positive fulfilling, work related state of mind characterized by vigour, dedication, and absorption". For Saks (2006), employee engagement is "a distinct and unique construct that consists of cognitive, emotional, and behavioural components that are associated with individual role performance".

Also, Hewitt Associates LLC (2004) defined the concept as "the state in which individuals are emotionally and intellectually committed to the organization or group, as measured by three primary behaviours: Say, Stay, Strive".

Gallup researchers added a spiritual element in the Gallup's conventional cognitive and emotional aspects of engagement. They defined employee engagement as "the ability to capture the heads, hearts, and souls of your employees to instill an intrinsic desire and passion for excellence" (Fleming & Asplund, 2007). Development Dimensions International (DDI) (2005) defines Employee Engagement as "the extent to which people value, enjoy and believe in what they do".

The Corporate Leadership Council's outcome focused model, defines engagement as employees' commitment to their organization. According to them, commitment makes employees to work hard and leads to stability (The Corporate Executive Board, 2010).

Employee engagement is the cognitive aspect related to employees' beliefs about the organization, its leaders and working conditions (Bhatnagar, 2007). Employees exert physical energy to accomplish their roles in the organization while their emotional aspect influences their attitude towards the organization and its leaders, which may be positive or negative (Kahn, 1990).

Emotional engagement is the willingness of employees to put efforts and utilise their knowledge, skills and personal resources in achieving organizational goals. Employees, at this level, connect with the organization and its goal. They develop a feeling of pride and are excited to be associated with the organization and its objectives. Mani (2011) stated "when employees feel positive emotions toward their work, they find their work to be personally meaningful, consider their workload to be manageable, and have hope about the future of their work". An engaged employee illustrates high focus levels. He makes willing decisions to invest time, shows productivity and aligns his personal goals with that of the organization (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990). Further, an engaged employee puts in extra effort in his work. He works beyond the required minimum, in the form of extra time, brainpower or energy (Devi, 2009).

The employees are considered to be engaged when they invest their cognitive, physical and emotional abilities while performing their tasks, while employees who are disassociated from their job are considered to be disengaged (Kahn, 1990).

Drivers That Lead to Engagement

Gallup Inc. (2006) identified 12 elements of employee engagement – alignment, recognition, role clarity, role fitment, care, co-workers, development, opinions count, materials and equipment, best

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friend, progress discussion and learn and grow. In line with Gallup Inc., Society of Human Resource Management (SHRM) recognized 18 variables of employee engagement including autonomy and independence. C Balakrishnan (2013) confirms that through non-financial drivers, employee engagement and retention can be improved. These drivers may include recognition, communication, work engagement, relationship with manager, role clarity and team work. Mani (2011) predicted four drivers namely empowerment, employee welfare, growth and interpersonal relationship as the critical employee engagement predictors. Engagement was found to be a catalyst for business success.

Seijit (2006) identified the 10 Cs of employee engagement namely clarity, connect, career, convey, contribute, congratulate, control, collaborate, credibility and confidence. Britt et al. (2001) predicted employee involvement and commitment as employee engagement drivers. Robinson, Perryman, & Hayday (2004) defined leadership, total reward, relationship at work, recognition, work life balance and work itself as engagement predictors.

Shuck, Reio and Rocco's (2011) employee engagement conceptual model specifies that job fit, psychological climate and affective commitment variables influence the development of employee engagement.

There is a link between employee engagement and organizational performance. Organizations with a focus on employee development, demonstrate substantial positive impact on productivity, employee satisfaction and financial performance (Kular & Mark, 2008). Revenue-based measures such as sales and profitability are found to be significantly correlated to work-related perceptions of employees (Gelade & Young, 2005). Evidence suggests that business units with collective favourable perceptions of employees perform better.

The present study focused on empowerment, policy and procedure, motivation, communication, job satisfaction, job involvement and relationship at work as engagement drivers which influence employee and organizational performance.

Empowerment

Empowerment is defined as "the degree to which an individual can influence strategic, administrative and operating outcomes at work" (Spreitzer, 1995). Employees are able to perform better when given autonomy in decision making. It is important that employees in decision making positions, who are committed to their role, are provided with the requisite amount of authority in making decisions.

Empowerment translates into the level at which the employees are involved in decision making process which may affect their work and impact the organization. Empowerment improves employees' confidence and ability to complete the task. Leadership style plays a major role in deciding employees' empowerment in decisions. The feeling of empowerment is found to be closely correlated to the authoritarian and transformational style of leadership (Avey, Hughes, Norman & Luthans, 2007). Transformational leadership influences behaviour through inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration. Mohamed, Sulaiman, Mohamad, and Yusuf (2011) explain that transformational leadership relates to empowerment, which is positively and significantly correlated with organizational commitment.

Motivation

Motivation is the state of mind and feelings used to explain behaviour of employees. It drives an employee's actions, desires, and needs.

Organizations adopt various strategies to motivate their employees in order to keep them engaged and improve their performance. Motivation can be intrinsic as well as extrinsic. Both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation lead to employee performance and productivity, which further has a positive impact on organizational performance (Locke, 1969). Intrinsic motivation significantly influences employee performance (Akanbi, 2002; Tahir et al., 2011; Aworemi et. al., 2011).

Communication

Communication helps employees understand what is expected from them. Employees require clarity in communicating the vision of the organizational leadership and their manager's expectations in order to deliver better (MacLeod & Clarke, 2009). Communication plays an influential role in employee engagement (Pugh and Dietz, 2008; Wiley et al, 2010; Kahn 1992; MacLeod and Clarke, 2009). Communication is split in two branches, internal and external. Internal communication is used to effectively convey organizational values, company vision, policies, practices and business updates to employees and obtain their support in achieving organizational goals. It involves information exchange among organizational leaders, with the objective to convey the values and goals of the organization. Researches strongly support that communication has a positive impact on employee engagement (Hayase, 2009; Kahn, 1992; Welch, 2011). Specifically, open and effective senior management communication is shown to have a positive influence on employee engagement (Bakker et al., 2011).

Thus, the significance of internal communication for ensuring employee engagement is very critical (Bindle & Parker, 2010; Papalexandris & Galanaki, 2009; Bakker et al, 2011, as cited in Welch, 2011).

Welch (2011) worked out empirical model of linkages between engagement and communication. He concluded that communication strategies and tactics affect potential employee engagement. He suggested that communicators should consider the communication needs of employees. He defined organizational engagement as "a dynamic, changeable psychological state which links employees to their organizations, manifest in organisation member role performances expressed physically, cognitively and emotionally, and influenced by organisation-level internal communication".

The internal communication function should strategically support supervisor and organizational communication so as to facilitate interactions between the organization, supervisors, and employees to build a healthy work environment (Karanges, Johnston, Beatson, & Lings, 2015). This research acknowledged the "importance of internal communication in facilitating supervisor-employee relationship as a vehicle to express values and goals, and in turn, pave the way for favourable organization-employee relationships."

Job involvement

Job involvement is the extent to which one is cognitively occupied in one's current job (Paullay, Alliger & Stone-Romero, 1994). It is related to job performance and organizational citizenship behaviour (Diefendorff, Brown, Kamin, & Lord, 2002). Wellins and Concelman (2004) used 'job ownership' as a synonym of 'engagement'. Job involvement is defined as "the degree to which an employee psychologically relates to his or her job and the work performed therein" (Cooper-Hakim & Viswesvaran 2005). May et al. (2004) proposed that job involvement, job satisfaction and job commitment are the outcome of employee engagement.

Job Satisfaction

An engaged workforce is committed, satisfied, motivated and finds meaning at work. It lives with a feeling of pride and connection towards its organization and advocates its overall mission and vision (Clifton, 2002). Employee satisfaction is key to employee engagement. Harter et al. (2002) have compared engagement to involvement and satisfaction. Engaged employees perform extremely well in their job (Abraham, 2012). The employee retention measures improve job satisfaction, loyalty and productivity, which further results into financial benefits, improved work environment and growth opportunities (Hanif, 2013), while a negative relationship exists between job stress and job satisfaction (Iqbal, 2012).

Job satisfaction, an extensively researched construct, is defined as a positive emotional state which results from the appraisal of one's job or its experiences (Locke & Henne, 1986). It is positively related to organizational commitment, organizational citizenship behaviour, job involvement and mental health, while it has a negative relation to pro-union voting, turnover and perceived stress (Kreitner & Kinicki, 2004). Although a weak relationship is established between job satisfaction and performance on an individual level, it is found to be stronger at an aggregate level (Ostroff, 1992).

Relationship at work

May et al. (2004) explain that relations with co-workers and supervisors affect the psychological condition of employees. These psychological conditions include availability, safety and meaningfulness. The research results state that "employee relationship with co-workers and supervisors will increase the psychological meaningfulness and employee engagement in the workplace. The relationship will increase the friendship and sense of belonging that enhances

psychological meaningfulness. Appreciation from co-workers and supervisors will create a feeling of caring and improve the safety of employees in the workplace" (May et al., 2004; Edmondson, 1999; Whitener, Brodt, Korsgaard, & Werner, 1998; Kahn, 1990).

The good relationship between employee and supervisor influences employees' perception of the workplace. It may create a feeling of psychological safety and enhance their creativity (Edmondson, 1999). A supervisor who encourages a supportive work environment, provides positive and constructive feedback and encourages employees' development will help them build a favourable psychological state and thus increase engagement.

The relationship among co-workers is different from that between a subordinate and his supervisor. Employees' interaction with their supervisors is based on hierarchical status whereas that of co-workers is horizontal, without any formal authority (Basford & Offermann, 2012). Relationship with colleagues is a central part of an employee's work life. Cordial relationship with colleagues develops a sense of belongingness and the feeling of being an important entity for the organization, with a strong social identity.

OBJECTIVES

This research focuses on the employee engagement and job satisfaction of concessionaire employees working at Delhi International Airport (T3 and 1D Terminals). The three objectives of this research were as follows:

1. To identify the factors that contribute to employee engagement of concessionaire employees;

2. To identify the factors that contribute to job satisfaction of concessionaire employees;

3. To study the relationship between employee engagement and job satisfaction of concessionaire employees.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Employee engagement drivers were identified from the review of literature. A structured questionnaire was developed to measure employee engagement and job satisfaction. A 5 point Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree was used.

A purposive sample of 362 employees of various outlets of concessionaires was selected. A similar sample was used to develop a loyalty model (Moolla, 2010). The present study is confined to the concessionaire employees working at Indira Gandhi International Airport, Delhi including both the terminals, Terminal 1D for domestic routes and Terminal 3 for domestic and international routes.

Data Analysis and Findings

The Statistical Package, SPSS along with add-on package AMOS for the Social Sciences, was used for structural equation modeling, confirmatory factor analysis and quantitative analysis.

Reliability Analysis

The Cronbach's Alpha test was used for testing the reliability of the scale. It is a "measure of the internal consistency of the construct indicators, depicting the degree to which they 'indicate' the common latent (unobserved) construct" (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, & Tatham, 2006). The reliability of the questionnaire was found to be 0.877 (>.5), hence, the instrument is reliable for further analysis.

Sampling Adequacy

Factor Analysis was used as a data reduction technique to remove the redundant variables and to reduce the number of significant parameters. The KMO and Bartlett's test was performed to measure

sampling adequacy, which should be greater than 0.5 for a satisfactory analysis. Bartlett's test indicated that the observed correlation matrix is significantly different from the identity matrix. The results show a high KMO value of 0.844 and Bartlett's test value 0.000 (<0.05) indicates that the data is appropriate for factor analysis.

Factor Analysis was performed using the Principal Component Analysis (PCA) method with Varimax Rotation. The result identified 5 factors which explained 66 % of the total variance of employee engagement. The indentified constructs were Empowerment (EMPT), Culture (CULT), Policy and Procedure (PYPE), Motivation (MOTI), and Communication (COMM.). Based on the PCA results, the model has been further developed through various stages.
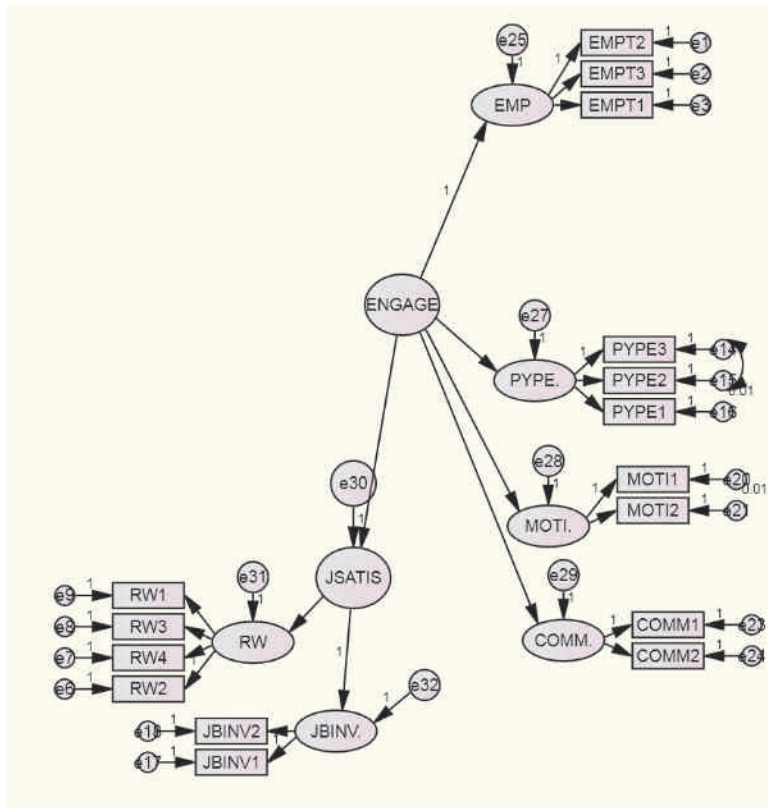
Model Fit Indices

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) confirmed goodness of model fit, which indicated the relative importance and significance of the factors. CFA was used as a data reduction technique to reduce the number of significant parameters and to remove the redundant variables using the Principal Component Analysis (PCA) method with Varimax Rotation.

The chi-square is identified as classic goodness of fit index and routinely reported in CFA research; other fit indices are considered for evaluation of model fit.

For this study, the goodness of fit (GFI), standardized root mean square residual (SRMR), root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), Tucker-Lewis index (TLI), comparative fit index (CFI) and the Hoeltex index are considered as goodness of fit measures with the given acceptable threshold values (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, & Tatham, 2010; Hu & Bentler, 1999; Arbuckle, 2012; Moolla & Bisschoff, 2013). Each of these fit indices provide some different information about the model fit.

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Figure 1: Structural Model

Two models were tried out. One was a seven-construct model and the other was a six-construct model. The six-construct model depicted in Figure 1 above was found to fit the empirical data better. This model shows that empowerment; policy and procedure; motivation; and communication lead to employee engagement and further engagement leads to employees' job satisfaction which has been measured by relationships at work and job involvement. It has been observed that culture has no impact on the engagement model, possibly because of the controlled and unique working environment within the airport area, as per the guidelines issued by the Ministry of Civil Aviation.

Examining the Model Fit Indices

The calculated value of CMIN/DF = 2.627 was <3, which indicates a good model fit (Field, 2007). The comparative fit index (CFI) value achieved was 0.933, which indicates a very good fit since it is above 0.9 (Konovsky and Pugh, 1994). In exploratory research, a CFI index of 0.80 is considered satisfactory, while 0.75 also is considered a fair fitting model (Du Plessis, 2010; Moolla & Bisschoff, 2013). Hence, this index signifies a very good fit as index value.

The RMSEA is a widely and popularly applied model fit index (Zen, 2007). An RMSEA value lower than 0.05 is considered "acceptable model fit". RMSEA index below 0.080 is considered "adequate model fit" and RMSEA value more than 0.10 is considered "poor fit" (Zen, 20017, Dixon and Dixon, 2010). Therefore, for the current model, with an RMSEA of 0.067, which is below 0.080 and SRMR of 0.055, which is very close to the threshold limit of 0.05 (Schumacker and Lomax, 1996), it was concluded that an adequate model fit exists.

To judge the critical sample size (N) for the model, Hoelter Index is used. A Hoelter's N returns values at the significance level of 0.05 and 0.01 and under 75 Hoelter's value is considered 'unacceptable' or low to accept for a model by chi-square (Newsom, 2005; Arbuckle, 2012). For the current model to measure employee engagement, Hoelter's value of 172 at the 0.05 significance level and 188 at the 0.01 level of significance were achieved; this signifies a very good model fit.

Relationship of Engagement with Selected Variables

The standardized regression weights facilitate to prove convergent validity through factor loadings and also explain uni-dimensionality of constructs. Standardized estimates permit to assess the comparative offerings of each predictor variable to each outcome variable. The regression weights and sub-factors of the summarized model are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Standardized Regression Weights			
			Estimate
JSATIS	<---	ENGAGE	.946
EMP	<---	ENGAGE	.827
PYPE.	<---	ENGAGE	.569
MOTI.	<---	ENGAGE	.424
COMM.	<---	ENGAGE	.503
RW.	<---	JSATIS	.858
JBINV.	<---	JSATIS	.675

Each standardized regression weight explains the degree of change in the dependent variable for each one unit change in the variable predicting it. From the figures in Table 1 above, it is clear that when engagement goes up by 1, job satisfaction goes up by 0.946, empowerment by .827, policy and procedure by .569, motivation by .424, while communication by .503.

Explained Variance of the Constructs

Table 2: Squared Multiple Correlations:	
Constructs	Estimate
JSATIS	.895
COMM.	.253
MOTI.	.179
JBINV.	.455
PYPE.	.324
RW.	.736
EMP	.683

The model was able to explain, to a fairly high level, the variance in constructs ranging from 89.5 percent of Satisfaction to 17.9% of Motivation as shown in Table 2 above.

DISCUSSION

The research has a unique finding that employee engagement leads to job satisfaction amongst concessionaire employees at Indira Gandhi International Airport, Delhi. Employee engagement comprises empowerment; policy and procedure; motivation; and communication, while job satisfaction comprises relationships at work and job involvement. Harter, Schmidt, and Hayes (2002) explicitly referred to their measure (The Gallup Workplace Audit) as "satisfaction-engagement" and defined engagement as "the individual's involvement and satisfaction with as well as enthusiasm for work". Many researchers (Christian, Garza, & Slaughter, 2011; Macey & Schneider, 2009) considered that there are fundamental differences between employee engagement and job satisfaction whereas Christian et.at (2011), through meta-analysis, argued that satisfaction is comparable because satisfied individuals have positive or negative emotions towards their jobs, while engagement connotes energy and activation. Rich, Lepine, and Crawford (2010) propounded that employee engagement can enhance job performance, task performance and organizational citizenship behaviour.

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This study also found that culture has no influence on engagement. Most of the researchers explain that culture has significant influence on employee engagement (Mani, 2011; Balakrishnan, 2013; and Robinson, 2004). In this case it was found that the airport is a restricted area where only authorized persons can enter and rules, regulations and working conditions are defined by the Ministry of Civil Aviation. The standardized work culture and guidelines are defined for all the concessionaire employees irrespective of their own organizational culture. All the concessionaire employees are working under one roof and their behaviour and actions are controlled by a uniform code of conduct. The work culture is significantly influenced by The International Airport Council and global competition because airport rankings are decided through Airport Service Quality (ASQ) Ratings worldwide. The ASQ ratings evaluate facilities, working conditions, employee behaviour, hygiene and passenger experience at the airports, irrespective of individual brands and concessionaire values. This is the evaluation of not only airport services but also the national image in the international airport community. However, other sectors, mainly retail outlets, malls and hospitality, have developed their unique individual work cultures because they are spread over different locations and do not work in a controlled environment like concessionaires do.

CONCLUSION

In view of all the results, it is concluded that the proposed employee engagement model is good and workable to measure and improve employee engagement. Since it is an exploratory model and not a final and operationalized one, it is not deemed imperative to achieve a good fit in all respects (Bisschoff & Moolla, 2014). In addition, considering GFI, CFI, RMSEA, SRMR and Hoelter index value, it signifies an adequate model fit. It can be concluded that all five factors and two sub factors are important and their measuring criteria pertaining to each factor

are both important and significant (p <= 0.05). This contributes to the model for measuring employee engagement.

LIMITATIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The scope of the study has been limited to Delhi International Airport concessionaire employees. Due to restricted entry into the airport outlets, purposive sampling was carried out. In future, other airports within India may also be studied and employee engagement predictors could be compared with international airports across the globe.

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