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► To cite this version:

S Gokula Krishnan, J Reeves. A STUDY ON IMPACT OF EMPLOYEE COMMUNICATION ON EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT LEVEL. International Research Journal of Business and Management, 2013, 4, pp.54-64. <hal-04850303>

HAL Id: hal-04850303

<https://hal.science/hal-04850303v1>

Submitted on 6 Jan 2025

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A STUDY ON IMPACT OF EMPLOYEE COMMUNICATION ON EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT LEVEL

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Abstract:

Purpose: The objective of this research study is to study the impact level of employee communication on employee engagement level and its association with employee engagement; and to study relationship between demographic variables, employee communication and employee engagement.

Design/methodology/approach: This study, employed convenience sampling technique i.e. non probability sampling method to select the sample consisted of 163 employees of various star hotels in Coimbatore city. And data were collected using questionnaires and were analyzed using Descriptive Analysis, Correlation Analysis and Simple Regression Analysis.

Results: Correlation analysis revealed that there is a significant relationship between the employee engagement level and employee Communication. Further, simple regression analysis indicated statistically that employee communication has made high impact on employee engagement level with the R square value of 0.709 which close to 1.

Conclusion: The study supports that the employee communication has significant relationship with employee engagement level and it is the predictor of employee engagement level among the star hotel employees in Coimbatore.

Paper Type: Research

Key words: Employee engagement and Employee Communication.

Introduction:

Present situation in the business world organizations are facing the instability in terms of survival and profitability, in this regard organizations are realized and started to look into employees as an asset so that they can utilize their skills, knowledge and abilities to sustain the competitiveness in the industry. According to Gallup Management Journal research done in 2006, only 29% of the U.S. working population is engaged (loyal and productive), 55% are not engaged (just putting in time), and 15% are actively disengaged (unhappy and spreading their discontent) (“Gallup Study”, 2006). However in employee engagement, employee communication plays the most vital role to ensure the good relationship among the working population and also that the consistent and honest communication is an important management tool for employee engagement. Employee communication is defined as the communication transactions between individuals and/or groups at various levels and in different areas of specialization that are intended to design and redesign organizations, to implement design and contribute from day-to-day activities (Frank & Brownell, 1989). In the absence of consistent and honest communication, employees become concerned about the future of the organization and will start thinking about leaving the organization (Durkin, 2007). In addition, Durkin (2007) suggested that organization must establish their purpose



and values, then clearly share them with all employees. Ideally, this should go beyond just making profits. Employees would feel more obliged to make difference and to ensure that they are adding value to others.

The poor communication is perhaps the most common problem among businesses large and small. Most employees, regardless of their position in the organization, will cite communication as an area in their workplace that needs improvement (Prime Resources, Inc 2009). Employee Communication answers these needs by allowing all employees to keep in touch with what is happening in the organization. Employees recognize the communication as an indication of their relative value to the organization. If they are directly and consistently informed about key issues, they in effect are participating in what is happening throughout the company. The payoff is that employees who feel valued are more productive, more likely to take initiative, and are frequently more willing to play a role in innovation. (Lloyd M. Field). This is reason why the researcher has focused to find the out the relationship employee communication with employee engagement and analyzed the impact level by the employee communication on employee engagement.

Research Objectives:

- ✓ To study relationship between demographic variables, employee engagement and employee communication.
- ✓ To examine the association between employee engagement and Employee Communication.
- ✓ To measure the impact of employee communication on employee engagement among the star hotel employees in Coimbatore city.

Research Hypothesis:

H1: There is significant association between the Age group, Gender, Marital Status, Educational Qualification, Experience, Income level, Designation, Department, with Employee Engagement of the firm.

H2: There is significant association between employee engagement and employee communication.

H3: Employee Communication is the predictor of the employee engagement level.

Review of literature:

It is clear that engagement begins with the employee being informed of the workings of the organization and the department which is evidenced in the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD), (2006) survey, i.e. The two most crucial supporters of employee engagement are the opportunity to provide upward feedback and to be well-informed about the organization's workings by Basbous, (2011); Holton, (2009); Kang & Hyun, (2012); Ruck & Welch, (2012). Further, Freitag & Picherit-Duthler, (2004), stated that the Effective employee communication helps employees to comprehend their role in the food and beverage department, thus leading to organizational success. Additionally, Gruman & Saks, (2011) added with the view of Stein, (2006) when employees are well-informed and are provided with a clear set of goals, they will be more inclined to make good use of their time, assets, and budgets. Consequently, employees remain on track when it comes to making decisions regarding priorities and they are sure of their actions.



Parsley (2006) revealed that the effective communication as a significant driver of employee engagement. A part of effective communication, enhancing the communication skills of managers and making communication as part of performance against organization goal are also vital. Communication becomes more critical resource under certain and stressful circumstances. Management and along with managers and supervisors should play a role to ensure that employees and their jobs are associated to mission and vision of the concern organization. This will send a message directly or indirectly to the employees to feel that they are chief and being cherished by the organization. Study by Shaffer (2004) found that organization has improved their productivity and safety ratings through engaging employees by means of carefully administering communication to fabricate trust. And also he illustrious that the low recital communication (distributing information) and high recital communication (improving performance). As a result, he bring into being that high performance communication engaged employees in ways that will improve employees' performance through employee engagement.

The significant role of communication is achieving optimum engagement levels has also been highlighted by Watson Wyatt (2008) in his study, analysis of employee engagement and its drivers, the consulting firm underlined communication as holding a key role in affecting the overall engagement level of employees. Communication also makes a positive difference in engagement. According to the report, highly engaged employees receive communication from their supervisors and senior management far more frequently than low engaged employees. Every employee should be kept informed with any changes that can affect their groups and they are not confused or argued any changes happened. Besides that, organizations also have to play role to provide a clear instruction or information to all employees and always make employees know what happen in their organizations.

Measurement:

Employee Engagement was measured using the EE Scale (EES; Gallup, 2011). The original EES is a 5-item scale where participants responded along a 5-point Likert continuum from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Coefficient alpha for the EES in the present study was $\alpha = .822$. Gallup measurement tool for employee engagement:

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 last 7 days, have you received recognition or praise for doing good work?
5. Does your supervisor, or someone at work, seems 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 yours associates (fellow employees) committed to doing quality work?
10. Do you have a best friend at work?
11. In last 6 months, has someone at work talked to you about your progress?
12. In last year, have you had opportunities at work to learn and grow?



Institute for Employment Studies (IES), 2003 measurement tool for Employee Communication:

1. Communication in my company is usually open and forthright.
2. Supervisor does a good job of communicating information to all.
3. I am kept well informed about what the company is doing.
4. I am able to speak up & challenge the way things are done in the company.
5. Management encourages employee suggestions.
6. I often get news often from grapevine

Employee Communication was measured using the Institute for Employment Studies (IES), 2003). The original IES is a 6-item scale where participants responded along a 5-point Likert continuum from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Coefficient alpha for the IES in the present study was $\alpha = .747$.

Methodology:

The population considered for this research consisted of 163 employees who belong to star hotels in Coimbatore city. A questionnaire was adapted from the Gallup Survey and Institute for Employment Studies (IES), as to grade the responses of the employees based on the degree of their agreement. The reliability of the questionnaire was tested using the Cronbach's alpha test and the alpha value was found as .821(>.5), which shows that the instrument is reliable. The number of sampling adequacy has been tested by KMO test and the value was found to be 0.871. Further, the high value obtained in the Bartlett's test and the value of p (0.000 <0.05) indicated that the data is appropriate. Data was collected by questionnaire convenience sampling technique. Quantitative data Gallup Survey and Institute for Employment Studies (IES) analysis has been done with the help of the following statistical tools viz., Descriptive Analysis, Correlation Analysis and Regression Analysis.

Analysis and Interpretation

Descriptive Analysis:

Table: 1 Descriptive Statistics

Demographic Variables		Respondents	Percentage	Mean	SD.
Age group	20-25 Years	5	3.1	2.5521	.86176
	26-30 years	89	54.6		
	31-35 years	52	31.9		
	36-40 years	8	4.9		
	above 40 years	9	5.5		
Gender	Male	81	49.7	1.5031	0.50153
	Female	82	50.3		
Marital Status	Single	79	48.5	1.5153	0.50130
	Married	84	51.5		
Educational qualification	School	12	7.4	3.4724	1.01418
	Diploma	13	8.0		
	UG	86	23.3		
	PG	38	52.8		
	Others	14	8.6		
Experience	< 5 Years	87	53.4	1.5337	.63130



	5-10 years	66	40.5		
	11-15 years	9	5.5		
	16-20 years	1	0.6		
Income Level	< Rs. 10,000	47	28.8	2.0798	.98746
	Rs.10,001-20,000	76	46.6		
	Rs.20,001-30,000	26	16.0		
	Rs.30,001-40,000	8	4.9		
	> Rs. 40,000	6	3.7		
Designation	Operational Level	123	75.5	1.3067	0.58088
	Supervisor Level	30	18.4		
	Managerial Level	10	6.1		

Inference: Descriptive analysis revealed that the respondents who belongs to age group of 26 – 30 years and followed by 31-35 years are mainly influencing this study with the 54.6 % and 31.9 % respectively. In regard with gender of respondents, both the gender respondents are participated in this study almost equally. So we may state that this study free from gender bias. Further, we may conclude that, this study also free from bias by marital status of the respondents, since married (51.5%) and single (48.5%) respondents are equally surveyed in this study. Among the surveyed respondents 52.8% of employees are educated up to post graduation level; 23.3% of employees who are completed their under graduation. So we may conclude that valid contribution is made against the survey since the 76.1% of the employees are well educated. Around 93.9% of the employees in star hotels in Coimbatore have the total experience up to 10 years. So we may state that respondents have the reasonable experience to provide their opinion about the engagement and employee communication in the organization. The average income level of the employees in the star hotel in Coimbatore city lies between less than Rs. 10,000 and less than Rs.30,000; since 91.4% of the employees income level belongs to these group. Further in this study, employees has been categorized in the survey based on the nature of their job and it revealed that 75.5% employees are operation level employees, 18.4% of employees are supervisor level employees and remaining employees lies in managerial level.

Correlation Analysis:

H1: There is a significant association between the Age group, Gender, Marital Status, Educational Qualification, Experience, Income level, Designation, Department, with Employee Engagement of the firm.

Table: 2 Correlations

	IDV1	IDV2	IDV3	IDV4	IDV5	IDV6	IDV7
Age (IDV1)	1	.010	.538**	.152	.056	.267**	.239**
Gender (IDV2)	.010	1	.141	.027	-.054	-.119	-.194*
Marital Status (IDV3)	.538**	.141	1	.150	-.055	.303**	.238**
Qualificatio	.152	.027	.150	1	-.001	.209**	.130



n (IDV4)	.053	.728	.057		.990	.008	.099
Experience (IDV5)	.056	-.054	-.055	-.001	1	-.098	-.028
	.475	.494	.483	.990		.211	.719
Income Level (IDV6)	.267**	-.119	.303**	.209**	-.098	1	.883**
	.001	.131	.000	.008	.211		.000
Designation (IDV7)	.239**	-.194*	.238**	.130	-.028	.883**	1
	.002	.013	.002	.099	.719	.000	
Employee Engagement	.038	-.092	-.084	-.221**	.088	-.099	-.009
	.627	.244	.288	.005	.262	.209	.912
Correlation	Positive	Negative	Negative	Negative	Positive	Negative	Negative
H0	Accepted	Accepted	Accepted	Rejected	Accepted	Accepted	Accepted

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

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

Inference: Employee engagement is negatively correlated ($p = 0.005 = 0.05$) significantly with educational qualification of the employees. Hence, employee engagement is significantly correlated the here we may reject the Null Hypothesis and accept the Alternative Hypothesis. So we may conclude that the “There is a significance relationship between the engagement and educational qualification.” Employee engagement with other demographic variables like age, gender, marital status, experience, income level, designation are not significantly correlated since the p values are 0.627, 0.244, 0.288, 0.262, 0.209 and 0.912 respectively. Here we are accepting the null hypothesis and rejecting the alternate hypothesis. So we may conclude that based on the data among the demographic variables education qualification alone significantly correlated with employee engagement and remaining variables are not significantly correlated.

H2: There is a significant association between employee engagement and employee communication.

Table: 3 Correlations

		Employee Communication	Employee Engagement
Employee Communication	Pearson Correlation	1	.842**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	162.000	1005.650
	Covariance	1.000	6.208
Employee Engagement	Pearson Correlation	.842**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	1005.650	8809.387
	Covariance	6.208	54.379
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			



Inference: Employee communication is highly and positively correlated ($p = 0.000 < 0.01$); significantly with engagement level of the employees. Hence, employee communication is significantly correlated the here we may reject the Null Hypothesis and accept the Alternative Hypothesis. So we may conclude that the “There is a significance relationship between the engagement and employee communication.” The Hypothesis has been provided through the Pearson correlation matrix i.e., “There is a significant relationship between the engagement and employee communication.”

Regression analysis:

H3: Employee Communication is the predictor of the employee engagement level.

Table: 4. Variables Entered/Removed

Model	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Method
1	Employee Communication	.	Enter

a. Dependent Variable: Employee Engagement b. All requested variables entered.

Inference: The regression analysis has been done by using the Enter Method which is one of the methods of regression analysis; whereas the employee communication is the independent variables against dependent variable i.e. employee engagement level.

Table: 5 Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.842 ^a	.709	.707	3.99269	.709	391.604	1	161	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Employee Communication

b. Dependent Variable: Employee Engagement

Inference: The r^2 coefficient of the determination is 0.709; therefore, about 70.9 % of the variance can be predicted by Employee Communication on employee engagement among the star hotel employees in Coimbatore city.

Table: 6 ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	6242.792	1	6242.792	391.604	.000 ^b
Residual	2566.595	161	15.942		
Total	8809.387	162			

a. Dependent Variable: Employee Engagement

b. Predictors: (Constant), Employee Communication

Inference: Here we may reject the Null Hypothesis, since the significant value (p) is less than 0.05 ($p = 0.000 < 0.05$) and F value is 391.604. So we may conclude that the relationship is reliable and can be used to make predictions between employee communication and employee engagement level. At the 0.05 level of significance, there exists enough evidence to



conclude that the drivers of engagement are the predictors useful for predicting employee engagement level; therefore the model is useful.

Table: 7 Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	43.061	.313		137.694	.000
Employee Communication	6.208	.314	.842	19.789	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Employee Engagement

Inference: From the above output, the simple regression equation is:

Employee Engagement(y)

$$= \text{Constant}(\alpha) + b[\text{Employee Communication}(x)]$$

$$y = 43.061 + 6.208x$$

The regression equation appears to be useful for making predictions. On examination of the results of regression done on employee engagement level and it is found that the Employee Communication is significant at 0.05 level ($F = 391.604$, $p = 0.000$) and hence, this variable is predict the dependent variable employee engagement level. Going by the magnitude of the beta coefficient, it is seen that the Employee Communication is the strongest predictor ($p = 0.000$; $\beta = 0.842$) and the direction of the prediction is as expected by the researcher.

Research Results & Discussions:

Descriptive analysis revealed that the respondents who belongs to age group of 26 – 30 years and followed by 31-35 years are mainly influencing this study with the 54.6 % and 31.9 % respectively. In regard with gender of respondents, both the gender respondents are participated in this study almost equally. So we may state that this study free from gender bias. Further, we may conclude that, this study also free from bias by marital status of the respondents, since married (51.5%) and single (48.5%) respondents are equally surveyed in this study. Among the surveyed respondents 52.8% of employees are educated up to post graduation level; 23.3% of employees who are completed their under graduation. So we may conclude that valid contribution is made against the survey since the 76.1% of the employees are well educated. Around 93.9% of the employees in star hotels in Coimbatore have the total experience up to 10 years. So we may state that respondents have the reasonable experience to provide their opinion about the engagement and employee communication in the organization. The average income level of the employees in the star hotel in Coimbatore city lies between less than Rs. 10,000 and less than Rs.30,000; since 91.4% of the employees income level belongs to these group. Further in this study, employees has been categorized in the survey based on the nature of their job and it revealed that 75.5% employees are operation level employees, 18.4% of employees are supervisor level employees and remaining employees lies in managerial level.

Among the demographic variables education qualification alone significantly correlated with employee engagement and remaining variables are not significantly correlated. So the future studies can be focus on the relationship between employee



engagement and other demographic variables like age group, gender, income level, marital status, designation and etc.

Correlation analysis has revealed that the Employee communication is highly and positively correlated ($p = 0.000 < 0.01$); significantly with engagement level of the employees. Hence, employee communication is significantly correlated the here we may reject the Null Hypothesis and accept the Alternative Hypothesis. This analysis may provide enough statistical evidence to prove the H2.

Further to support the H3 regression analysis also revealed that the employee engagement can be predicted correctly by employee communication since the r^2 coefficient of the determination is 0.709; therefore, about 70.9% of the variance can be predicted correctly by the employee communication on employee engagement among the star hotel employees in Coimbatore city. At the 0.05 level of significance, there exists enough evidence to conclude that the employee communication predictor is useful for predicting employee engagement; Going by the magnitude of the beta coefficient, it is seen that the Employee Communication is the strongest predictor ($p = 0.000$; $\beta = 0.842$).

Implications:

The most general communication problem in organizations is basically a failure to communicate at all. Many employees tend to judge that they are intentionally being "kept in the dark" when they aren't informed about something in the workplace that affects them. In fact, however, the cause of the failure to communicate is usually a mistake on the part of management. The first step in achieving good employee communication, then, is committing the organization to making an effort to communicate with employees. Effective communication is a proactive, not reactive, process. (Prime Resources, Inc 2009)

In order to ensure the successful employee communication, the top management has to initiate a positive lead, line managers and supervisors are responsible for passing on information in both directions as well as acting on appropriate items and issuing instructions along with union officials. When they communicate, it should provide enough opportunity to two way process which includes upward and downward communication. Further Managers need to communicate information to employees about the contractual terms and conditions of employment, the job and its performance, the organization's performance, progress and prospects and changes to any of the above issues. (ACAS, 2013) Additionally, Lisa McQuerrey (Demand Media), recommended some ways to increase the employee communication by following mentioned activities in the firm on regular basis. They are 1) Holding Regular Staff Meetings, 2) Conduct One-on-One Meetings; 3) Have an Open-Door Policy. 4) Issue a Regular Update Memo and 5) put it in Writing.

So the organizations and top level management people and middle level managerial category employees have a standardized strategies and benchmarks to improve the internal communication especially on upward and downward communication, then only the organization can ensure good relationship among the employees and increased employee participation level in the work culture which will leads to high employee engagement level.



Conclusion:

Organizations are slowly realizing that the employees are the most vital assets for them, they need be very focused and being attentive to ensure that the employee communication should be increased, so that they able to attain their goals with maximum utilization of human resources. These above will leads to high productivity level and organizations can be survived and can taste the profitability. **Thus, this study supports and revealed that the employee communication has significant relationship with the employee engagement level and also it's predicting the employee engagement level in the organizations. So the organizations and top management has pay attention on the strategies and tactics and should ensure that it should be improved in near future which will leads to high employee engagement level in their concern organizations.**

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