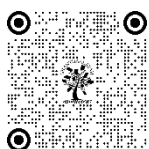


# A STUDY OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AND EMPLOYEE WELL-BEING IN IT MNCS

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## ABSTRACT

The present research study explores the strategic relation between employee engagement and employee well-being in the Information Technology (IT) Multi-National Corporations (MNCs) (GOMATHY, 2022). IT MNCs are well-known for the high-intensity work settings, prolonged work hours, and rapid technological upgradation and advancements (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017a). This is an attempt to understand how engagement influences well-being which is critical for MNCs specifically in Information Technology (IT) Industry struggling to elevate performance and productivity, improve retention, and nurture a cohesive, supportive, and healthy work culture (Bakker et al., 2012). The study synthesizes existing literature, presents case studies from global IT companies, and offers recommendations for improving both engagement and well-being. The findings suggest a positive correlation between employee engagement and well-being, with leadership, work-life balance, and organizational culture being key mediators in this relationship.

In summary, The study examines the co-relation between employee engagement strategies and Employee well-being practices in the IT MNCs to underscore culture, leadership and work-life balance as crucial aspects as an organizational driver for retention, progress, performance, and productivity (Poelmans et al., 2008).

**Keywords:** Employee Engagement, Employee Well-Being, IT Industry, Multi-National Corporation (MNC), Organizational Culture, Leadership, Work-Life Balance. Agility, WHO-5 Well-Being Index, Utrecht Work Engagement Survey (UWES).



## 1. INTRODUCTION

Employee engagement and employee well-being are crucial aspects influencing organizational performance, productivity and success, specifically in the Information Technology (IT) Industry (GOMATHY, 2022). The agile and high-pressure environment bring both positive as well as negative outcomes to the IT organizations such as improvised competitiveness, performance productivity, eventually improved customer satisfaction, and negative outcomes, such as Copy pasting may kill creativity and relevancy, insufficient capability building, diluted focus on performance, short-term bias, eventually resulted in potential loss of key employees, and employee burnout, etc. (Sunil Kumar Suvvari, 2020). While much has been written about employee engagement, the intersection of engagement and well-being has not been sufficiently explored, particularly within the IT industry (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017b; Shuck & Reio, 2014). This paper aims to fill this gap by examining the relationship between these two concepts and exploring how IT companies can leverage this understanding to create healthier and more engaged workplaces.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1. DEFINING EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT**

Employee engagement is a mental and emotional commitment of the employees that reflect in level of enthusiasm in work assigned, commitment to the organization, and motivation to contribute towards success (Kahn, 1990). It is important and critical metric for organizations aiming to reinforce performance, achieve job satisfaction, and improve retention (Saks, 2006). In the IT industry, employees often work in complex and critical organizational roles where engagement is linked not only to job satisfaction but also to productivity and innovation (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004).

Gallup defines employee engagement as the emotional commitment of the organizational employees with organizational goals and achievements. The employee engagement always expressed with the characteristics like work absorption, dedication and vigor (Gallup Workspace, 2020).

The Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) helps to align engagement within organization with positive energy at work, underscoring the significance of employee well-being through the sustainable focus, dedication and enthusiasm (vigor) (W. B. Schaufeli et al., 2019).

The WHO-5 Well-being Index, is a mental well-being assessment tool underlines the impact of the attributes like stress and its management, job and work satisfaction along with work-life balance in-line with employee engagement (Kanungo, 2021).

As per research studies and subsequent findings, the IT MNCs with high pressure job demand and enabled with agile innovation are prevalent. The integration of employee engagement strategies with well-being practices may ensure employee remain inspired, motivated, performing productive and resilient winners for the organization (S Ceccacci, 2019; Shantaram, 2020).

### **2.2. UNDERSTANDING EMPLOYEE WELL-BEING**

Employee well-being is a wider approach that encompasses an individual's physical, mental, and emotional health, and overall satisfaction in life including both personal and professional approaches (Danna & Griffin, 1999). In the professional context, well-being comprises of various important facets like job security, work-life balance, and a healthy and supportive organizational culture (Harter, Schmidt, & Keyes, 2003). IT professionals are always going through the high levels of stress, leading to increased levels of anxiety, depression, and burnout (Sonnentag, 2018). It is the role of the management professionals to strategies the work, organizational manuals, etc. to make organizational culture healthy and cohesive to achieve balance between work engagement and well-being (Alarcon & Edwards, 2011; Attridge, 2009).

Employee well-being and engagement are well interconnected to drive organizational productivity, performance, and success (W. B. Schaufeli et al., 2019). As per the Gallup employee engagement represents the emotional commitment followed by performance for productivity is employee engagement (Gallup, 2023). Similarly, Gallup research focuses on the employee with high well-being enhances the changes of high engagement (Annamarie Mann, 2018). The well-being also ensures job satisfaction, and reduce negative aspects like absenteeism, turn-over which ultimately contribute in improved performance and productivity (Igu et al., 2023). Whereas, the Gallup focuses and listed various resources, amenities, and facilities to ensure employee well-being with care and control to ensure appropriate execution and outcomes of the same (Gallup, 2021).

Likewise, the WHO-5 Well-being Index considers the mental health and satiability as a critical component of workplace for well-being. The high-score of the said index depicts the positivity within the employees. The index mostly assesses the type of the employee energy and spell that the more energetic, predictive employees experience more. (Burbano, 2016) .

Further Gallup study shows that workplace prioritizing well-being experiences approximately 21 percent higher productivity and reducing negative aspects like absenteeism, negaholism etc. approaches up to 41 percent (Kanungo, 2021). Notwithstanding, employee engagement strategies linked with employee well-being practices like apt recognition, psychological safety and positive professional development etc. These positive aspects contribute to develop a healthy work environment in which employee progress excels (Musser, 2019).

The WHO supported this with the noting that the organizations addressing the employee well-being aptly are successful to develop a holistic environment to outperform other competitors in the market with retention, customer satisfaction through innovative practices and approaches (Ellis Ryann, 2021).

Hence, WHO and Gallup study promotes that the employee well-being is foundational stone to achieve employee engagement to foster organizational success. IN other words, the integration of Gallup's engagement strategies with WHO's holistic approach of well-being framework, organizations can build a resilient, high-performing workforce (Gallup Workspace, 2020; Wiles Jackie, 2019).

### **2.3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS LINKING ENGAGEMENT AND WELL-BEING**

Management scholars and management epitomes have attempted to link employee engagement and well-being through their contributions and theoretical frameworks. Bakker and Demerouti (2007) proposed 'The Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model'. The Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model posits that work resources (e.g., social support, autonomy, congruence, strategic planning, etc.) can alleviate the negative effects of job demands (e.g., extended work hours, KRA ambiguity, burn-out, etc.) on employee well-being. It was observed and noted by various researchers that, in the IT sector, complex and high job-demands often lead to inferior life and deteriorated well-being, and also bring the solution in to the notice as high engagement at mental, emotional and physical levels of the employees. The high engagement inculcated in to the employees and they are more supposed to balance available job resources, such as workplace support and autonomy, which can alleviate stress and enhance well-being (Christian, Garza, & Slaughter, 2011).

The famous PERA Model underscores the positive emotional aspects, quality of work-life, and its connection as a cruck to the well-being, this is a natural process to encourage engagement. The Gallup involvement hierarchy facts that the fundamental well-being is the cornerstone of the engagement and involvement. These models support to strategies various employee engagement interventions like flexible work arrangements, mental and psychological health assistance, and competencies development. This brings positive results for the organization and develops satisfactory feedback loops which reflect that the employee well-being drives the employee engagement, performance, retention, and productivity (Witters Dan; Agrawal Sangeeta, 2015).

The evidences support these frameworks, for example, Schaufeli (2018) and Knight et. al. (2017) exhibits that the investment in employee well-being resulted in to the engagement experienced higher performance and productivity, higher engagement, and satisfactory retention. By integration of these strategic models IT Industry MNCs approaching to build the sustainable work culture where employee well-being and employee engagement mutually strengthen and reinforce one another (Glavas, 2014).

### **2.4. PREVIOUS STUDIES ON EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AND WELL-BEING IN THE IT INDUSTRY**

While studies have investigated employee engagement and well-being separately, few have explored their interconnectedness in the IT sector. Research by Goetz et al. (2015) demonstrated that IT professionals with high engagement levels reported better physical and mental well-being. Similarly, a study by Shuck et al. (2011) found that engaged employees tend to have better job satisfaction, lower stress levels, and improved life satisfaction. Grawitch et al. (2006) suggested that a work environment that fosters engagement can mitigate the negative effects of high job demands, improving employees' overall well-being.

Various research studies on employee engagement aligned with employee well-being in the IT Industry underscores various crucial aspects influencing competency, performance, productivity and eventually work satisfaction (W. Kim et al., n.d.; Sharma et al., 2021). The pre-work highlighted facets like work-life balance, career succession and growth opportunities, organizational supportive culture are the major drivers of the employee engagement in the organization. When the industry talks about the well-being it is featured with psychological and mental health, flexy-timing and supportive work artifacts, and restricted work autonomy nurtures and fosters employee well-being within the organization brings as best practice to competitive advantage (J. Kim & Jung, 2022).

Employee engagement and well-being in IT multinational corporations have received a lot of attention in recent research. According to the research, numerous critical factors such as leadership style, management support, workplace environment and culture, job design (KRA/KPA), recognition, and work-life balance influence employee engagement

practices in the firm. According to the research, firms that prioritize these criteria have a more engaged workforce, which improves organizational effectiveness (Adrian Putra Ariussanto et al., 2020; Attridge, 2009).

Knight et al. (2017) used thematic analysis to investigate employee engagement behaviors in the context of holistic well-being efforts in the IT Industry. The present theme analysis identified five generic characteristics of well-being: physical, psychological, social, financial, and spiritual. The study also stated that the physical, social, and psychological factors are given significant weight, while the spiritual dimension is ignored. The researchers suggested a balanced approach to well-being as a strategic effort for effective employee engagement.

The facts and studies described above outline the complex relationship between employee engagement and well-being in the IT industry, emphasizing the necessity for comprehensive strategies that address numerous aspects of employee well-being in order to inspire engagement and drive organizational success.

### 3. METHODOLOGY

The Researcher has adopted a mixed-methods approach. The approach is a combined form of the quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews. A survey was distributed to almost 400 employees working in various IT Companies in Pune, Maharashtra, India. The survey aimed to assess and measure levels of employee engagement and employee well-being using Utrecht Work Engagement Survey and WHO-5 Well-Being Index to score employee engagement and well-being respectively. The Researchers also took in-dept discussion with various HR personnels to understand the cruxes of the topic. The HR case studies are being studied for the same from Microsoft, Accenture, and Infosys. These case studies helped to understand the influencing factors to the employee engagement and well-being.

- 1) **Utrecht Work Engagement Survey:** It is a psychological tool and method to assess and measure the employee's level of work engagement. The Utrecht Work Engagement Survey also known as 'UWES' spelled as positive and optimistic mind state towards work featured with strength, commitment, and engagement. It significantly focuses on energizing, commitment, and keenness of the employees towards the job and performance (Burke et al., 2009; W. Schaufeli & Bakker, n.d.).
- 2) **WHO-5 Well-Being Index:** The WHO-5 Well-being Index is a world-wider recognized tool for measuring subjective well-being. It facilitates with five simple, and positive statements that reflect an individual's emotional well-being over the stipulated time i.e. minimum past two weeks. The Index is built upon 6-point Likert Scale with maximum 25 score indicate better well-being. The index served as a fundamental for mapping employee engagement and employee well-being in IT MNCs with apt connection between work-place factors and psychological well-being (Madhavan et al., 2020; Topp et al., 2015).

### 4. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

#### 4.1. QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS

The survey results showed a statistically significant positive correlation between employee engagement and well-being ( $r = 0.65$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Employees who scored higher on engagement metrics also reported higher levels of well-being, including physical health, job satisfaction, and work-life balance.

Furthermore, the analysis revealed that employees who felt their organizations provided ample opportunities for professional development and autonomy in their work showed higher levels of both engagement and well-being. In contrast, employees who reported high stress levels, lack of control, and insufficient social support were more likely to experience burnout and lower well-being.

#### 4.2. QUALITATIVE INSIGHTS

From the interviews, three key themes emerged:

**Leadership and Organizational Culture:** Employees from Accenture emphasized the importance of supportive leadership and transparent communication in fostering both engagement and well-being. Leaders who prioritized employee development and well-being initiatives, such as wellness programs and flexible working hours, created a more engaged and satisfied workforce (Macey & Schneider, 2008; Vohra et al., 2015).



**Work-Life Balance:** Employees from Infosys highlighted the importance of work-life balance in their engagement and overall well-being. Flexible working hours, the option to work from home, and wellness programs were cited as essential for maintaining both engagement and a healthy work-life balance (Shettigar & Shankar, 2020).

**Job Resources and Support:** At Microsoft, employees noted that having access to adequate resources, clear goals, and emotional support from colleagues and supervisors contributed to both higher engagement levels and better overall well-being. When employees felt that their well-being was prioritized, they were more likely to remain engaged in their work (Janovac et al., 2021).

## 5. DISCUSSION

The results of this study confirm the significant relationship between employee engagement and well-being in the IT industry. Engaged employees tend to have better physical and mental health, lower stress levels, and higher job satisfaction. The findings suggest that organizations can enhance employee well-being by promoting engagement through initiatives that support autonomy, professional growth, and work-life balance (Burke et al., 2009; Meyers et al., 2020).

Furthermore, the study underscores the importance of organizational culture and leadership in shaping both engagement and well-being. Companies that prioritize these factors are more likely to see positive outcomes in both employee performance and retention. For instance, Accenture's focus on leadership development and wellness initiatives has resulted in higher engagement scores and lower turnover rates compared to competitors (Vohra et al., 2015).

## 6. CASE BASED ILLUSTRATIONS

### 6.1. CASE STUDY: ACCENTURE'S EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AND WELL-BEING INITIATIVES

Accenture has implemented several employee engagement programs aimed at improving well-being. These include flexible working options, comprehensive health and wellness benefits, and initiatives like "MyLearning" for continuous skill development. The company's leadership plays a crucial role in maintaining an environment where employees feel valued, resulting in a direct impact on both engagement and well-being (Accenture, 2020).

### 6.2. CASE STUDY: MICROSOFT'S FOCUS ON MENTAL HEALTH AND ENGAGEMENT

Microsoft's approach to employee engagement includes an emphasis on mental health support. The company offers resources like counseling, stress management workshops, and flexible hours. These initiatives have led to higher engagement scores and improved overall well-being for employees (Microsoft, 2019).

## 7. CONCLUSIONS

This study reveals that employee engagement and employee well-being are positively related in the IT industry. Companies that invest in employee engagement through leadership, professional development, and work-life balance initiatives are more likely to foster a culture of well-being, which in turn boosts productivity, job satisfaction, and retention. The findings underscore the need for IT companies to adopt a holistic approach to managing employee engagement and well-being, creating an environment that nurtures both aspects for sustained organizational success.

## 8. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1) Foster Autonomy and Professional Growth:** IT industry is ever evolving. Every day there are new challenges and contingencies. Hence, IT environment needs and expects the new skill set and competencies within its employees to confront new challenges. Therefore, IT MNCs should offer more opportunities for employees to take on new challenges and expand their skill sets (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000).
- 2) Develop Holistic Well-being Programs:** The said research recommends to address all dimensions of well-being as physical, psychological, social, financial and spiritual appropriately. It is strategic to outline various initiatives like fitness, mindfulness sessions, financial planning orientations, and goal-driven team activities (Kanungo, 2021)

- 3) **Promote Work-Life Balance:** Various initiatives like flexy-time harmonized with remote work options. The amalgamation of initiatives with technology to unlock the protentional of the collaboration. This may avoid overburdening employees and administration with apt communication time-to-time (Grande, 2021).
- 4) **Leadership Support:** As the mangers are the connecting interface, it is necessary to train them with emotional intelligence, active listening, empathetic aspects. It is also crucial that the mangers transformed into the leaders encourage to recognize and address the individual needs and expectations of the team members (Attridge, 2009; Vohra et al., 2015).
- 5) **Leverage Technology for Engagement:** Use technology enabled solutions to get real-time inputs on employee well-being and engagement initiatives. It may help to enable employees with individualized recommendations based on the insights drawn from the data and subsequent analysis. This enables to transform organization in learning organization and promote continual improvement (Biswas-Diener et al., 2016).
- 6) **Strategic approach to Rewards and recognition:** It is important to recognize the achievements and contributions of the employees. The recognition may be celebrating achievements and contributions in peer recognition platforms, awards, financial incentives. The strategic approach fosters a sense of appreciation and strengthen the employee psychological contract with the organization (Madhani, 2020).
- 7) **Collaborate ESG Values:** ESG stands for Environment, Social, and Governance. The ESG values help organization to motivate employees to be the part of sustainable and ethical activities, and boosting purpose-driven engagement (Singhania & Saini, 2022).
- 8) **Feedback and improvement strategies:** It is the role of management to create a comprehensive feedback mechanism to assess and evaluate the competency of engagement and well-being endeavors. The feedback mechanism supports to gain insights for continuous improvement in organizational policies, procedures and practices (DeShon et al., 2004).

## CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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