

Employee Engagement: Conceptualisations and work-Related Implications

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المستخلص

تتناول هذه الدراسة بالوصف والتحليل ظاهرة إندماج الموظفين في المنظمات التي يعملون بها. وتشير هذه الظاهرة الى مجموعة من الاتجاهات النفسية الايجابية اتجاه الوظيفة والمنظمة، بالإضافة الى قيام الموظف بعدد من التصرفات المعبرة عن تأدية مهام وظيفته بأفضل شكل ممكن، والقيام بعدد من التصرفات الأخرى الداعمة لبيئة العمل. تهدف الدراسة إلى تحليل الأطر الفكرية والتفسيرات النظرية التي تناولت ظاهرة إندماج الموظفين. كما تهدف إلى عرض وتحليل مقاييس هذه الظاهرة والأبعاد التي يمكن من خلالها قياسها علمياً. كما تهدف إلى إبراز أهم آليات وإستخدامات مفهوم الإندماج من قبل الممارسين للعمل الإداري بالمنظمات. وبتابع المنهج الوصفي التحليلي فإن هذه الدراسة تقوم على التساؤلات التالية: (1) ماهي الأطر الفكرية المفسرة لظاهرة اندماج الموظفين في أعمالهم؟ (2) كيف يمكن قياس مفهوم اندماج الموظفين في العمل؟ (3) ماهي الاستخدامات التي يمكن لمتخذي القرارات تبنيها للاستفادة من مفهوم اندماج الموظفين؟ أظهرت التحليلات والمناقشة لظاهرة اندماج الموظفين عدد من النقاط أهمها: حداثة هذه الظاهرة في أدبيات السلوك التنظيمي وشمولها لعدد من المتغيرات مثل اتجاهات العمل الايجابية - كالرضا والالتزام- وسلوكيات الدور الاضائي. كما بينت الأهمية النظرية والتطبيقية لظاهرة الإندماج، حيث تؤثر بشكل مباشر على الأداء الفردي والمؤسسي للمنظمات. وجود فرص بحثية قيمة للبحاث في مجال السلوك التنظيمي. وأخيراً، توصي الدراسة إلى ضرورة تطوير النظرية حول ظاهرة الإندماج وبالتالي تطوير مقاييس أفضل لقياس تلك الظاهرة.

1. Introduction

Since the development of the human relations movement in mid 1950s and 1960s, research about work attitudes was highly appreciated, and its importance for organizational studies was underlined. However, by reviewing the literature, research has been done on two work-related attitudes; namely, job satisfaction and organisational commitment, has gained lots of support and their effects on work were highly mentioned. Therefore, their antecedents, outcomes and dimensions were extensively studied in organizational research. However, research on work-related attitudes has recently highlighted a more developed view of such attitudes and generated frameworks of a new concept, called employee engagement. Employee engagement is a workplace attitudinal-behavioural concept ensues from the appropriate conditions for members of an organisation to exert their best efforts each day, be committed to the organisation's goals and values, motivated to contribute to organisational effectiveness, with high levels of their own welfare.

Employee engagement is based on various organization-related concepts, such as; mutual commitment, organizational trust, integrity and effective system of communication inside and outside the organization. Research on employee engagement suggests that employee engagement increases the chances of business prosperity, contributing to higher organisational and individual performance, high levels of productivity and more satisfied employees with their well-being at work. Moreover, although research has explained different techniques to measure employee engagement, it has been suggested

that the concept still needs some clarifications. Engagement could be measured, and thus, different levels from poor to great can be deduced, and then managers could control its levels at work through HRM and HRD strategies. Although it is considered as new concept, implications of employee engagement for organizations have been highlighted. For example, research has shown that engagement is related to different work attitudes and behaviours such as; role understanding in relations to organisation purposes, understanding best ways of executing tasks and achieve goals. In addition, engagement is thought to be related to work practices, such as trust, empowerment, getting constructive feedback, gaining skills and work appreciation. Although employee engagement has been generated and studied for many years, it is still unmentioned in the Middle Eastern context. It is also noted that few postgraduate studies has explored this topic in the Arab world. In fact, this what motivated the researcher to investigate this topic, aiming towards offering academics, who have restricted access to research databases, detailed information about a recent and important development of the literature about work-related attitudes and behaviours. Thus, why employee engagement has been chosen for this study? 1- Due to its highlighted effects on organizational and individual performances, as it is thought of as comprehensive modern and have deep theoretical the empirical effects on performance. Whilst, research about engagement have maintained that the United States losses between \$250 and \$300 billion a year because of disengagement behaviours at workplace, the disengaged

employees in German economy approximately cost \$263 billion a year. In addition, the Australian and the Asian economies loss \$4.9 and \$2.5 billion a year respectively (Shull, 2011; Markos and Sridevi, 2010). Thus, allocating research efforts to investigate this concept would participate to avoid such costs and losses. 2- Engagement is a new concept in the literature and research is highly appreciated, and wanted to expand its meanings, facets and outcomes. 3- lack of research in the middle east regarding engagement, as it is expected that this paper will hold huge importance to introduce this concept to the Libyan environment; academics, students and practitioners.

Research objectives

This research aims to achieve the following objectives:

- A. To understand and explain meanings and theoretical frameworks of employee engagement.
- B. To highlight how to measure the concept of employee engagement
- C. To emphasize and suggest ways of utilizing the concept of employee engagement at workplace.

Research questions

Based on the research objectives highlighted above, this study is designed to answer three research questions, as follows:

- A. What meanings and conceptualizations the literature holds for the concept of employee engagement?
- B. How employee engagement is measured?
- C. What are the consequences of employee engagement for decision-makers at workplace?

Research importance

Building on the discussion of this research, its contribution could be highlighted, using its details for two types of interested people; firstly, the use of the concept for the academic readers of the journal, as the topic of employee engagement is barely discussed among academic staff or postgraduate students in the Libya universities. Thus, this research will provide available details of the concept, its dimensions and measurements, were such details could support and motivated more research about the topic in the Libyan and Middle Eastern context. Secondly, this research will draw empirical conclusions on how to make use of its expected outcomes at workplace. However, this could lead to many different implications for different levels of management at organizations, and, hopefully, towards higher levels of efficiency and effectiveness.

Research methodology

This research is built upon a descriptive analytical approach of the phenomenon of employee engagement. It displays facts and realities of engagement based on deduction logic. This means, data must be related to literature and previous work of other researchers. However, it is believed that such approach could better serve the objectives of this research. Therefore, a descriptive detailed data is displayed and several topics are discussed, analysed and conclusions are drawn in order to end up with clarifications of the concept of engagement.

Conceptualisations of employee engagement

Employee engagement is seen as positive attitudes and behaviours those improve organizational performance, in a manner that they interact together and support one another. It is about employees' feelings of pride and loyalty working for the organisation, being a great advocate of the organisation to its customers, users and partners, exerting more efforts to complete their job duties. Furthermore, engagement is about utilizing staff' opinions and knowledge to develop products, and services produced by their organization. Thus, it is about being innovative at workplace. Employee engagement is a construct that contributes to the effectiveness, efficiency, productivity and growth of the organization. Nevertheless, engagement is seen as organization's actions that are consistent with the organisation's values. Employee engagement is relatively modern concept for HRM. Empirical research highlighted that engagement is a concept that presents a framework that includes the famous constructs of job satisfaction, commitment, motivation and citizenship behaviours (OCBs) due to its validity and ability to describe work more efficiently (Shuck et al., 2011; Armstrong, 2012). As we noticed above, employee engagement comprises three components; work attitudes such as commitment, extra-role behaviours and motivation. It is believed that employee engagement is associated with discretionary behaviours at work. Such behaviours refers to variety of activities and efforts those are voluntary, not rewarded and not job-related behaviours (Eljaaidi, 2013). They include; care, cooperation, innovation and productive behaviours at work. These behaviours have

huge effect on job performance and help with higher organizational performance. However, although these behaviours are difficult to define, monitor and control, there is no way to avoid them at work, as they are connected with social interaction at work (Siddiqi, 2015; Armstrong, 2012).

Research has also maintained that engagement is a two-way mutual process between the employee and the organization. The two-way relationship between organization and employee points out that there are individual and organizational efforts must be exhibited by both sides. Further, engagement is interpreted as individual passion and the willingness to invest oneself and expand one's extra-role effort to improve the effectiveness of the organization. Therefore, engagement is seen as a concept that exceeds a simple satisfaction or a basic loyalty to the employer (Markos and Sridevi, 2010). Even though employee engagement has invited researchers to investigate its nature, its meaning is still academically and practically ambiguous. For example, the term is used in many interpretations to refer to psychological states, traits, and behaviours as well as their drivers and performance related results. Based on the relevant literature, engagement could be interpreted according to different types, namely; (a) psychological state engagement; (b) behavioural engagement; and (c) trait engagement (Macey and Schneider, 2008). Furthermore, research has suggested emerging critical sociological perspectives on engagement instead of the reliance on the common psychological perspectives that currently dominate the field (Bailey et. al. 2015).

Even though, *engagement* has gained considerable popularity in the past 20 years, research concluded that it remains inconsistently interpreted and conceptualized. Moreover, it is suggested that little rigorous academic research, both theoretically and empirically, has been executed. Such knowledge gap has contributed towards difficulties in understanding and developing strategies about engagement at workplace (Shuck and Wollard, 2010).

Based on the discussion above, employee engagement has been defined as “*a psychological state experienced by employees in relation to their work, together with associated behaviours*” (Kular et. al. 2008, p4). Other definition has been introduced by other researchers defined employee engagement as “*a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterised by vigour, dedication, and absorption*” (Armstrong, 2012, p145)

In addition, engagement has been defined as “*involves a holistic investment of the entire self in terms of cognitive, emotional, and physical energies*” (Rich et.al. 2010, p 97). Additionally, other researchers defined engagement as “*as the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral energy an employee directs toward positive organizational outcomes*” (Alagaraja and Shuck, 2015.p18). However, definitions above can take many forms of action at workplace and then their definitions could take many perspectives.

Job Engagement

Job engagement is used to describe a job –related attitudes and actions those represent appositive, excited, exercise discretionary and motivated to perform in high standards employees. Therefore, getting

a job is the primarily requirement of engagement at work, as without a job, this concept cannot be neither studied nor noticed. Therefore, it is a job-related concept. Research has described an engaged employee as passionate, dedicated to his or her job activities, energetic and committed (Armstrong, 2012). Thus, the concept of engagement is well connected with job involvement, satisfaction and enthusiasm. However, other mainstream conceptualisations of engagement have considered resulted behaviours of such a state, such as; extra-role behaviours. Other behaviours of enthusiasm also have been highlighted. However, all the described the described behaviours resulted from engagement were related to the organizational success. Therefore, the actions taken by employers are vital to the development of engagement at work, as the resulted behaviours engagement must be considered when a contract is to be signed offering the job (Harvard business review, 2013; Macey and Schneider, 2008).

Organizational Engagement

This sub-concept of engagement refers to the attachment to or identification with the organization as one entity. It is about the feelings of employees that they are strongly connected with their organization, and they hold positive attitudes towards its values. By this meaning, one can conclude that organizational engagement is a mutual concept of what has been known as organizational commitment in the literature (Carasco-Saul et.al. 2015; Shuck et al., 2011). To conclude, engagement could be seen from two perspectives; job engagement, when exerting extra-role behaviour is an outcome of

employees' feelings of that their jobs are challenging and rewarding. Organizational engagement, when employees identify with organization's set of values and goals, as well as, being committed to it.

Components of Engagement

Research and practice has suggested three different components of engagement. However, these components highlight the importance and development of this concept as new construct in organizational studies. (1) Work attitudes that refer to a set of strong beliefs of employees regarding their identification with, and involvement in, an organization (Eljaaidi, 2013). (2) Extra-role behaviours refer to the exerted behaviours that go beyond job-related activities, out of rewarding system, and related to effectiveness of the organization. (3) Motivation refers to the internal force, which directs and effects related and continuous set of behaviours. Motivation can be evoked either from the individuals (intrinsic) or from their workplace (extrinsic). However, motivation in this context is deemed intrinsic, that stems from the employee himself/herself. Feeling motivated is believed to reflect individuals' self-value at work and their jobs are important for them (Naujokaitiene et.al. 2015; Balain and Sparrow, 2009). However, these elements of the model have been presented in figure (1).

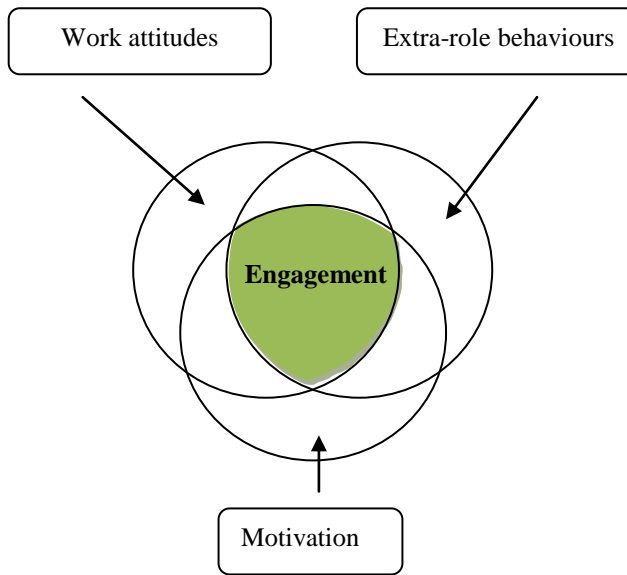


Figure (1) IES model of employee engagement

Facets of Engagement

Engagement has been described to have three facets at workplace, those summarised as follows:

1- *Intellectual engagement* refers to the thinking effort of employees towards their jobs and finding best ways of developing them. Thus, this facet represents an intellectual process regarding the job.

2- *Affective engagement* points to the desirable and positive emotions those employees exhibit in relation to their jobs.

3- *Social engagement* represents various behaviours of employees taking opportunities to discuss and talk about better ways of developing their jobs with others.

Figure (2) facets of engagement

Intellectual	→	Cognitive process: Thinking
Affective	→	Emotional process: feelings
Social	→	Interactional process: discussing

Theoretical considerations

Multi perspectives of engagement demonstrate its mercury nature. This nature has made engagement exposed to different theoretical conceptualization, as many researchers highlighted that the concept is in need for more theoretical investigations. Although, in practical terms, engagement is wrongly seen as strategy, research has confirmed that engagement is a psychological state of individuals; it cannot be seen as strategic tool for the organization. (Armstrong, 2012). Recent research suggest that as long as engagement is seen as cognitive construct, it must be considered as belief not as an attitude. Furthermore, it has been highlighted that in order to make better analysis of the concept, research must distinguish between the nature of engagement as a belief and its emotional causes and behavioural outcomes. (Saks and Gruman, 2014). In theoretical terms, engagement has been interpreted through social exchange theory. This theory focus on the interaction between parties and explain the relationships through the development of trust and loyalty between those parties. Therefore, interaction between employees and their organization would strengthening mutual relationship and make employees more willing to stay at the organization, feeling positive and exerting discretionary behaviours. In this viewpoint, engagement is interpreted

through the process of reciprocity between two parties; the good employer and the employees (Shuck et al., 2011).

Drivers and outcomes of employee engagement

This part of the paper illustrates a relational approach of antecedents and outcomes of engagement, which will open opportunities for empirical research to test relationships between variables.

Drivers of employee engagement

Bailey et. al. (2015) have categorized antecedents of engagement in five groups, namely; psychological states; job design; leadership; organizational and team factors; and organizational interventions. They maintained that engagement is positively associated with individual morale, task performance, extra-role performance and organizational performance, and the evidence was most robust in relation to task performance. However, whilst Macey and Schneider, (2008) has highlighted the effects of job attributes and leadership on state and behavioral engagement, Markos and Sridevi, (2010) affirmed that organizational context such as meaning at work, sense of community, the opportunity to make a contribution and grow forward, strong manager-employee relationship are tested antecedents of engagement at workplace. Furthermore, they shed the light on; empowerment, promote and encourage teamwork and collaboration, help people grow and develop are expected antecedents of engagement. Other research have adopted a manager-employee perspective, maintained that providing support and recognition, senior management's interest in employees' well-being, challenging work

and decision-making authority, communication, feed their views and opinions upwards. Nevertheless, other research have focused on individual characteristics such as personality, attitudes, motivation and self-development. In this meaning engagement is seen as non-financial in their nature (Naujokaitiene et.al. 2015; Markos and Sridevi, 2010; Rich et.al. 2010). Harvard Business Review (2013) highlighted several strategic actions such as; high performance recognition, clear individual understanding of the job contribution to strategy, senior leadership communications of strategy, well visualized business. They maintained that behaviors and actions taken by the top management are vital antecedents of engagement. For instance, assessments and performance reviews aligned with organizational goals, reward system linked to organizational goal achievement, training, and development organized around organization's goals. Based on the interest of research regarding engagement, recent studies have found well-related antecedents of engagement both job and organizational. These could be summarized in table (1):

Table (1) Types and antecedents of engagement

Types of employee engagement	Antecedents of engagement
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Job engagement• Organizational engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enriched and Challenging job (job characteristics)• Quality of employee-organization relationship (perceived organizational support)• Quality of employee-supervisor relationship (perceived supervisor support)• Reward and recognition• Fairness in the processes that allocate resources or resolve disputes (procedural justice)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is considered just or right in the allocation of goods in a society (distributive justice)
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The table above shows different antecedents of job and organizational engagement. It shows that job characteristics, perceived organizational and supervisor support, reward and recognition and both procedural and distributive justice are anticipated motivators of employee engagement at work. Such antecedents may provide the evidence that engagement is a multi-faceted concept (job and organizational) and different perspectives could help with making employees more engaged at work.

To develop a clear category of engagement antecedent Armstrong (2012) summarized them in groups; 1- Leadership that provide clear, solid and transparent structures, which help with making employees want to exert more efforts on their jobs. 2- Management style that holds appreciation for employees, clear job demands, constructive treatment for employees and working on efficiency and effectiveness principles. Such style is thought to lead to higher levels of employee engagement at work. 3- Organizations that appreciate and support employee's voice and make strong effort to listen to them is seen as a driver for employee engagement. When managers give the opportunity to employees to express their ideas about how they do their jobs and participate in decision-making process, and sharing of vital issues for their department, they is fact driving their employees towards employee engagement. 4- When organizations adopt trust,

integrity and values their employees, they drive the staff to exert behaviours of engagement.

To sum up, research has highlighted that both organizations and jobs are main drivers of engagement. Organizations are required to provide a supportive environment including; knowledge sharing, learning opportunities, maintaining energy and personal initiatives. Furthermore, when organizations allow employees to effectively execute their skills, embrace their personal values and empower them to take decisions, employees will highly be engaged with engagement behaviours and hold engagement-related attitudes. In other words, individuals are engaged when they feel that their jobs are important elements of their beings.

Outcomes of Engagement

Research has identified several outcomes of engagement at work. For instance, exerting extra behaviours, fully believe in the organization's values and vision, determining to develop better workplace, holding comprehensive understanding of the organizational goals and intimate interaction with others (managers, subordinates and co-workers) and deeper commitment from our employees so fewer leave have been identified as outcomes of engagement (Balain and Sparrow, 2009). As we have seen in the discussion above, engagement is linked to various positive attitudes at work such as satisfaction, commitment and identification with the organization. Thus, engagement is well connected with positive behaviours at workplace such as; low turnover, low levels of absenteeism, less accident rates, less conflicts and grievances and high extra-role behaviours (Shuck et al., 2011). On

the other hand, research has highlighted that engagement is connected with individual perceptions such as trust, justice and positive psychological contract (Saks and Gruman, 2014). Others have added that engagement leads to more innovation, desire to stay at the organization and perceptions of well-being at work (Kular et. al. 2008). Furthermore, engagement is seen to have connections with organizational performance, for instance, it has connections with productivity, overall job performance and competitive advantage for organizations. Although, it is argued that engagement has strong relationships with organizational performance and individual well-being, research has also shed the light that the evidence of such relationship is not confirmed yet and more connections have to be tested (Bailey et. al. 2015; Shuck et al., 2011).

Measurements of employee engagement

By reviewing the literature of engagement, it is noticed that there is an over-reliance on quantitative and cross-sectional questionnaires measuring employee engagement (Bailey et. al. 2015). It is also noticed that a number of different dimensions were used to measure employee engagement. Sack and Gruman (2014) have summarized these dimensions according to the use in research of engagement as follows;

- i. Absorption and attention
- ii. Cognitive engagement, emotional engagement and physical engagement.
- iii. Job engagement and organizational engagement.

- iv. Intellectual engagement, affective engagement and social engagement.
- v. Felt engagement, and behavioral engagement.
- vi. Vigor, dedication and absorption.

However, such dimensions reflect the lack of consensus related to the meaning and definition of engagement. Therefore, concerns about measuring employee engagement are highlighted. The most used scale of measuring engagement is the called Utrecht Work Engagement (UWE). This scale includes 17 items distributed around three dimensions, namely; *Vigor*, which reflected in 5 items, *Dedication*, reflected in 6 items and *Absorption* reflected in 6 items. Researchers have tested the validity of the UWES scale in different countries. Whilst they supported a three-factor model corresponding engagement dimensions, they acknowledged high reliability of the measurement (Sack and Gruman, 2014)

On the other hand, Armstrong (2012) has proposed 20-item measurement divided into two parties; namely, *job engagement* and *organizational engagement*. Firstly, job engagement was reflected in six dimensions;

- 1) Job satisfaction
- 2) Job knowledge and development
- 3) Empowerment
- 4) Job facilities
- 5) Manager support
- 6) Reward.

On the other hand, organizational engagement was reflected in seven dimensions:

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- 1) Positive beliefs about the organization
 - 2) Willing to stay at the organization
 - 3) Congruence with organizational values
 - 4) Organization' importance for costumers
 - 5) Management' concern with well-being.
 - 6) Work-life balance
 - 7) Relationships with managers and colleagues

In addition, Shuck and his colleagues (2011) have adopted a model of three dimension of engagement namely; Meaningfulness, safety, and availability. The internal consistency for those dimensions were; meaningfulness 0.93, safety 0.74 and availability 0.75.

1)*Meaningfulness* refers to employee' feelings that his/her work is worthwhile and self-value at work. In this sense, meaningfulness means adding value and significance to an employee' job as well as perceiving their value and significance to their organization.

2)*Safety* points at the ability of an employee to be one's favor self without fearing undesirable results to self-image status or work. An employee's perception of safety comprises fearing emotional and psychological harm from their place of work. Therefore, employees have to trust their organization in manners that grant employees to reflect their own selves.

3)*Availability* includes having the physical, emotional, and psychological resources necessary for doing the work. Availability refers to supplies, sufficient budget, and workers to complete a job.

Moreover, it can be seen as learning and skill development, job fit, and commitment to stay at the workplace.

This viewpoint reflects a holistic approach towards engagement. It does not divide engagement into job/organizational engagement. Practically, this perspective represents an operational tool for measuring engagement at work, due to its small number of dimensions. Moreover, research has found that management practitioners find it challenging to measure employee engagement and draw conclusions of its impact on financial results. Therefore, few numbers of practitioners have practically measure engagement against organizational performance, including customer satisfaction or increased market share. Drawing on this perspective, research found that the most common measurements best-practice companies are using to connect engagement to organizational performance were those that connected customer metrics with engagement metrics. In more depth, a number of best-practice companies found that tools such as service-profit chain could play as a powerful tool linking employee engagement with organizational goals (Harvard Business Review 2013).

Implications of employee engagement

This section of the research shows how engagement is thought to be connected to workplaces, and how management practitioners may use the construct to achieve organizational effectiveness and efficiency. In general, studies have found positive relationship between employee engagement and overall organizational performance, where this

relationship has put more values on the concept of engagement in organizational studies (Markos and Sridevi, 2010)

Based on the details explained in previous sections, engagement could have many positive implications at workplace. Firstly, it could be used to enhance overall individual performance. For example, engagement could be used to makes individuals more satisfied, committed and have high levels of motivation. Therefore, managers must focus on the antecedents of engagement and must built up a strategy that includes developing antecedents of engagement such as, designing proper jobs, providing positive relationships and pursuing fair procedure. Secondly, managers could apply engagement as a strategic intervention to make an important development for the organization (*OD intervention*). This intervention could seek to develop productivity, loyalty and competitive advantage (Siddiqi, 2015). In other words, research has recognized that strategic intervention of engagement can increase innovation and bottom-line performance, reducing costs related to hiring and retention, and helping with competition in competitive talent. Furthermore, management practitioners had positive feelings and attitudes about gaining competitive advantages via implementing metrics and practices those could improve the outcomes of engagement initiatives on inclusive organizational performance. For instance, effective communication channels between managers and employees were implemented, as well as applying a well-connected performance metrics to organizational goals. Further, benchmarking was a common tool used

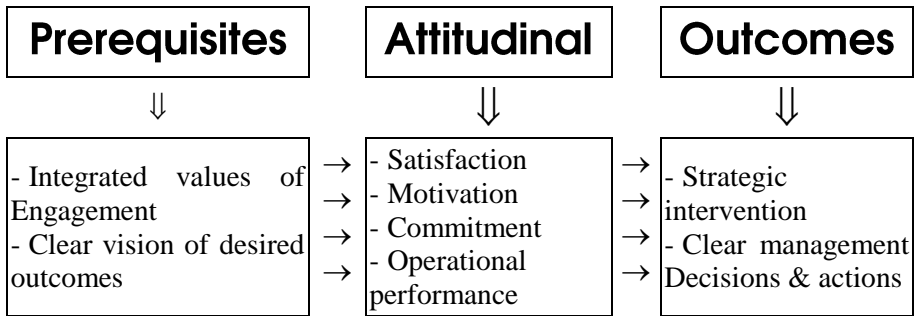
both inside and outside organizations. However, built on the individual perspective, organizations may give employees a fair degree of empowerment and demand high levels of creativity in problem solving initiatives. Experiences also supported the use of effective recognition programs to reward high performance at workplace, as well as adopting autonomy as an effective tool on move decision-making process from top management to lower levels and team works (Harvard Business Review, 2013).

As we have discussed above, employee engagement is a desired and favourable concept for both employers and employees. Thus, the guiding question for this practical part of the study is how can organization develop a solid strategy of engagement at work? To answer this question, we have to highlight that research have not yielded a specific and clear manner to fulfil this purpose (Saks and Gruman, 2014). However, organizations could start working in different ways; (1) dealing with engagement as mutual respect (attitudinal) in the workplace related to what each party should do to treat others. This means, organizations must work on introducing programs to engage its staff, and staff, in turn, must make choice about their level of engagement. (2) Engagement requires information sharing, learning supportive and initiatives encouraging environment (practises). However, such strategy must reflect the unique situations of each organization. The following topics will demonstrate common activities taken by employers to develop a strategy of engagement:

Developing a strategy of organizational engagement

Research has highlighted that organizations could develop a strong actions towards engagement. For example, organizations could adopt programs of effective leadership, positive organizational culture, supporting organizational values, management style that supporting employee well-being. This means, organizations must develop a holistic system of jobs those allow employees to participate to organization effectiveness through using their stock of knowledge and capabilities, such as; employee voice, resources and sufficient information. However, the following figure summarizes main process of the strategy:

Figure (2) Process of Developing Strategy of Engagement



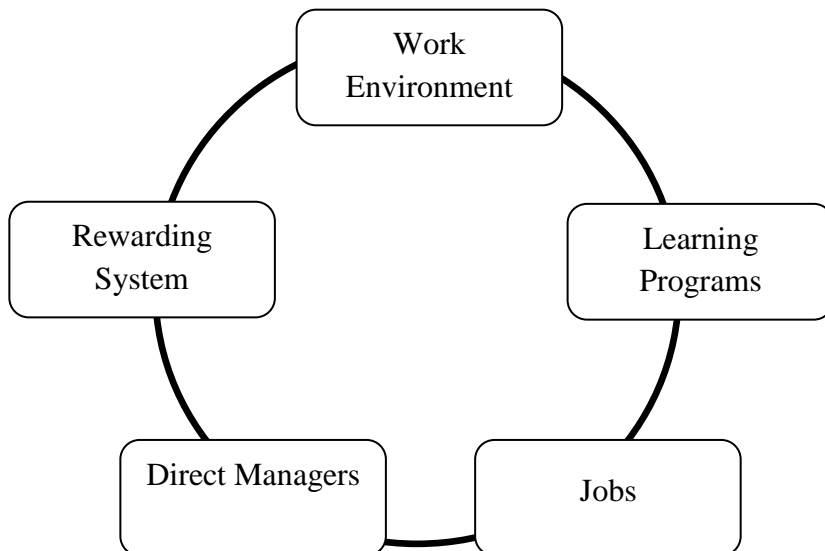
Developing a strategy of organizational engagement requires integrated and shared values of engagement among managers and clear and united vision of desired outcomes of engagement. However, such prerequisites should be linked with positive attitudes, so the outcomes would be clear management intervention and clear decision-making process (Alagaraja and Shuck, 2015). On the other hand,

Armstrong (2012) considered the use of commitment and involvement. It means that each employee will exhibit high involvement with his/her job if he/she are given the opportunity to take decisions to manage their work. This management style refers to several numbers of management techniques; dealing with employees as partners, have voice, effective communication, participation through dialogue between managers and subordinates and knowledge sharing in order to set organization's vision, mission and goals. Thus, it means creating mutual understanding between employees and their organization.

Developing a strategy of job engagement

Research has identified several aspects to set and develop a strategy of job engagement; these are illustrated in the figure (3):

Figure (3) Aspect of Job Engagement Strategy



i. Work Environment

This environment has to reflect a positive, constructive and attitudinal culture. This environment must support employees' interests, emotions and behaviours. It must also, helps with reducing job stress and motivates social interaction among all staff. However, the importance of work environment is seen through focusing on employee's feeling of respect and self-worth (Carasco-Saul et.al. 2015; Balain and Sparrow, 2009).

ii. Learning programs

Recent research in organizational studies has emphasises learning and ends up with the concept of learning organization. Further, research affirms the fact that learning encourages and offering the opportunities for employees to develop their selves and quire high skills and more knowledge. However, learning has two ways at organizations; first, is the knowledge management by the organization, where knowledge is managed the controlled throughout the organization. Second, is the self-development aspect, where individuals seek to develop their selves by their own need and desire. Thus, in order to develop a job engagement, organizations must work on the two ways. They have to support the personal learning planning process as well as developing the performance and talent management practices. It is of vital importance for employees to have encouragement, guidance, to fulfil their career needs (Macey and Schneider, 2008; Carasco-Saul et.al. 2015).

iii. Job design

It is important to consider job engagement, through motivation and commitment, when designing job systems at work. Designing motivating jobs means that jobs must be meaningful, provide opportunities for achievement and self-fulfilment. Moreover, jobs must include several characteristics such as; interaction, autonomy, knowledge and skills and responsibilities in order to be a sources of motivation to the employee. However, developing a strategy of job engagement should work on designing jobs to be; skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, feedback, as such characteristics are proven to influence job motivation, behaviours and attitudes (Alagaraja and Shuck, 2015).

iv. Direct managers

Organizational research has affirmed the vital role of direct managers in effecting a variety of work-related concepts and variables. Thus, this logic is also considered for engagement. When direct and line managers support, recognise and develop their subordinates, higher results of employee engagement is achieved. Furthermore, line managers are expected to exert effective leadership and help with role unambiguity as well as developing skills and knowledge required to fulfil the job duties of their employees. When right performance management systems are compatible with positive behaviours of direct managers such as, support, encouragement, constructive coaching, a solid strategy of engagement could be developed. Overall, direct manager have to work on providing their employees with full guidance of the best ways of doing their jobs, and assisting them with

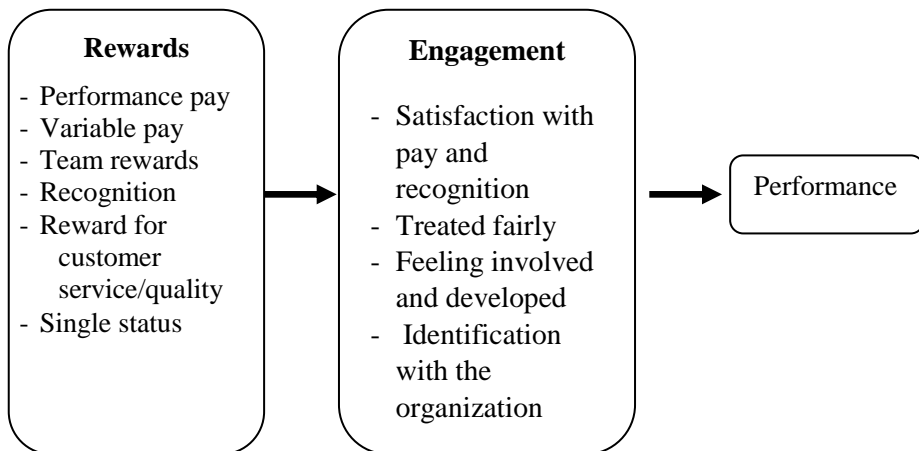
developing the required skills for those jobs (Markos and Sridevi, 2010; Rich et.al. 2010; Shuck et al., 2011).

v. Reward

There has been a prominent role of reward in affecting organizational behaviours at workplace. This role is considered as the first of motivating behaviours and supporting positive attitudes at work. Based on this notion, building employee engagement should start from this point, where research has highlighted that reward practices and processes are important to develop an effective strategy of job engagement. In addition, Armstrong (2012) summarised a model, which explains the relationship between reward and performance through engagement, as figure (4) shows:

As we can see from the figure (4), different types and tools of rewarding system could have different effects on engagement-related

Figure (4) shows relational model of reward, engagement and performance



Source: (Armstrong, 2012)

work attitudes such as satisfaction, fairness and identification, in turns, these work attitudes are confirmed as performance leverages

Although the above discussion could be linked to workplaces at Libyan organizations, both public and private, specifically Libyan organizations could start from designing a strategic intervention through designing and implementing HRM interventions. Managers may focus on antecedents of engagement to improve knowledge, skills, abilities and job responsibilities. In addition, creating and supporting an encouraging psychological environment, and offering opportunities for subordinates to passionately associate with their organization are circumstances that maintain employee engagement. Furthermore, individuals should have opportunities for self-awareness, self-reflection, and real-time feedback. As these work practices are thought to help with higher engagement at work. On the other hand, changing the attitudes of managers is important factor in relation to implementing engagement at workplace. For example, providing training programs for leaders, managers, and supervisors regarding the situations of employee engagement would alter their work attitudes. However, management practices, organizational structure, job-design, and appropriate culture are also seen as implementations for higher engagement at workplace (Siddiqi, 2015).

Conclusion

Based on the discussion above, employee engagement is theorized as a multi-facet construct. It embodies a holistic meaning of three organizational concepts; namely; constructive work attitudes and extra-role behaviours. In this sense, engagement is composed of two

parts; attitudinal part, which refers to perceptions, emotions and positive desires of employees to get engaged with their job duties. While, the behavioural part refers to various different constructive behaviours exhibited at workplace. These behaviours include extra-role behaviour, cooperation, problem solving and exerting efforts to achieve organizational goals. Because engagement is a modern construct, the theory around it still needs more development, and measures of its dimensions requires more studies. This study highlighted the urgent need of developing engagement intervention, as organizations could improve their performance through engagement intervention strategy. Such intervention is thought to bring growth, profitability and reducing operational costs in general. Furthermore, this study has underlined that antecedents and outcomes of engagement have gained considerable amount of research, resulting in many different perspectives and categories, most noticed is individual and organizational antecedents and outcomes. From theoretical and research aspects, this study offer several opportunities for academic staff and researchers in management and organizations to execute extensive examinations of the causality between antecedents of engagement, on one hand, and causality of engagement and its outcomes, on the other hand. For instance, researchers could investigate relationships between fairness, perceived organizational support and job design. Moreover, researchers could investigate the phenomena of engagement in different contexts, cultures and countries. One good topic might be investigating the relationship

between Hofstede's (2001) cultural dimensions of Libyans and tendencies of adopting engagement at workplace, such research might help with developing the theory of engagement in international contexts. However, management practitioners in the Libyan context would highly benefit from different research studies in different industries, as industry-specific research would yield in-depth insights and tools of increasing organizational performance through engagement strategy. One limitation of this study is that it has clarified the construct of engagement through exploratory research not testing its relationships with other variables.

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