Analysis Of The Different Meaning Of Employee Engagement

The critical analysis of the different meanings of ‘employee engagement and its relationship with other associated concepts like ‘involvement’, ‘participation’ and organizational commitment has been conceived as a psychological or affective state (Commitment, involvement, attachment, etc.) a performance construct (role performance, effort, observable behavior, organizational citizenship behavior) or an attitude and little has been reached as the ‘best-fit definition of engagement Macey and Schneider (2008a).

Academic researchers have defined employee engagement as attitude, employee behavior, and organizational program which reveal strong connections to academic concepts like work engagement, flow, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, organizational citizenship behavior, employee voice, and employee involvement. These concepts have been the subject of academic research for years and all of them have been linked to performance in these studies.

The theory that changes in employee attitudes lead to changes in employee behaviors with implications for task, group, and organizational performance continuing to lie at the heart of considerable amounts of current academic research in organizational behavior, organizational psychology, human resource management, and change management.

The academic research has provided an evidence base that moves beyond simple cross-sectional correlations and demonstrates longitudinal synergistic relationships between engagement and performance.

This paper presents academic research from leading consulting organizations that provide timely cross-organization evidence and client-specific case studies linking engagement to performance. The paper also benefits from the incredibly detailed and diverse case study which brings evidence into sharp relief in the context of the current economic and business environment by illustrating the ways engaged employees to aid their organizations’ efforts to survive and thrive in difficult times.

International survey research (ISR) conducted across a range of countries ISR (2004) concluded that engagement varies across surveyed countries, with developing countries like Brazil scoring higher than many developed nations, like France.

Surveys by Gallup suggested that engagement levels are low in the UK. The engagement has been linked to a notion of ‘flow’ where the worker is totally immersed in an activity and how individuals perceive ‘meaning’ and the emotional drive or ‘passion’ towards a goal or action.

Social exchange theory (SET) describes how engagement may work in teams by working on the notion of obliged reciprocity (trust and loyal commitments). This explains how engagement can be embedded into work teams and how it is a key element to the success of the organization.

The evidence in this paper supports a strong link between employee engagement and

performance across a wide range of sectors and situations. It is drawn from three distinct perspectives: academic publications, research by consultancies, and organizational case studies. Each of these perspectives has its own strengths and weaknesses, but the combined weight of this evidence indicates that managers cannot afford to ignore the links between employee engagement and performance.