

Employee Engagement as An Effort to Improve Work Performance: Literature Review

Dian Bagus Mitreka Satata

Master Program of Psychology, Muhammadiyah University of Malang

Correspondent: dbagusms@webmail.umm.ac.id

Submitted : October 1, 2020

Revised : November 5, 2020

Published : January 31, 2021

ABSTRACT

Employee engagement is a physical and psychological condition related to work cognitively, emotionally, and behavior to achieve the goals of the organization. The purpose of writing this review article is to summarize and discuss employee engagement as an effort factor in improving work performance within the organization. The method used is a literature review, which is a literature review search for both international journals and national journals between 2013 – 2020 as many as 15 journal articles from the results of previous research. The results of the literature review show that employee engagement influences individual work performance so that organizational goals can be achieved.

Keywords: employee engagement, work performance, organization

INTRODUCTION

Employee engagement is a widely discussed topic in the fields of organizational development, management, and industrial psychology (Jeung, 2011; Kim, Kolb, & Kim, 2013; Mercurio, 2015) This cannot be separated from the complex management of Human Resources (HR). The changing times require HRD (Human Resource Development) practitioners to be able to contribute innovatively to improve the quality of individual work with various characters (Kim et al, 2017; Sekhar, Patwardhan & Vyas, 2017) such as skills and levels of education in the organization. This is a challenge that employee engagement must be built and maintained so that burnout does not occur (Bakker, Demerouti & Sanz-Vergel, 2014; Hanaken & Schaufeli, 2012).

Some researchers consider employee engagement and work engagement to be key terms in the HRD field (Lee et al., 2016). It is stated that the notions of employee engagement and work engagement are similar because they are interrelated with job demands and work resources (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). However, in general, employee engagement and work engagement do not have significant differences in terms of theoretical and scientific findings (Bakker, Schaufeli, Leiter & Taris, 2008), so that in this article the author uses the term employee engagement to facilitate literacy.

Employee engagement refers to things that are positively effective related to carrying out work that has aspects of vigor, dedication, and absorption (Schaufeli, Bakker, & Salanova, 2006). This sense of engagement is a cognitive, emotional, and behavioral condition of the individual directed towards organizational goals (Farndale & Murrer, 2015; Shuck & Wollard, 2010). Employee engagement is a positive individual attachment, commitment, loyalty to one or one line of work (Xiao & Duan, 2014), or the individual's positive psychological state regarding their work (Saks & Gruman, 2014).

It can be stated that work is a motivational boost to achieve a variety of needs (from the wages) and must be met psychologically and physiologically (Maslow, 1943; McClelland, 1990; Alderfer, 1969). The need is an impetus that will spur change on the cognitive side of the individual so that it will motivate the enthusiasm for work (Mokaya & Kipyegon, 2014). From the encouragement of fulfilling these needs, employee engagement can increase over time, which in turn will affect the quality of individual work (Rich, Lepine & Crawford, 2010).

Work quality is very important in achieving organizational goals so that it can generate employee engagement for each individual (Alqarni, 2016). In the industrial sector, employee engagement has a major effect on the sustainability of the company and leads to better performance changes (Mokaya & Kipyegon, 2014). A person can be professional when they have engaged in their work. The higher the employee engagement, the better the quality of work obtained. Besides, cognitive, emotional, and physical conditions while working also needs to be considered (Khan, 1990).

However, the company “fleas” often occur which results in decreased quality of the organization and hinders the vision and mission. The lack of individuals when they are not satisfied with the job they think fits the criteria is a factor in the number of turnover intentions (Biron & Boon, 2013; Caesen, Stinglhamber & Marmier, 2014). But often HR that is not appropriate in implementing job desc in the organization can affect the level of quality of the individual's performance. Quality human resources have a big impact on organizational goals, so there is a binding agreement that aims to foster organizational commitment (Cesario & Chambel, 2017).

Externally, employee engagement can be influenced by several factors, including the provision of appropriate and satisfying wages according to job level (Pang & Lu, 2018). Consistent communication within the organization can increase employee engagement to provide the best performance at work (García-Carbonell et al, 2018). A conducive work environment can provide good performance results for individuals (Lazauskaite-Zabielske, Urbanaviciute & Balsiene, 2018) as well as supportive colleagues in the workplace can increase job satisfaction and work performance (Yousef, 2017).

Meanwhile, internally, employee engagement can be influenced by several factors, including self-efficacy (Sofiah & Kurniawan, 2019). Other findings show that a good quality of work-life increases employee engagement with their work (Alqarni, 2016). Besides, it was found that passion or obsession can also form a sense of engagement in their work (Burke, Astakhova & Hang, 2015; Ho, Wong & Lee, 2011; Purba & Ananta, 2018).

Employee engagement plays an important role in the organization so that it can improve individual performance which in turn can provide job satisfaction (Garg, Dar & Mishra, 2018). Training in service to other individuals is a supporting aspect at the employee engagement level (Johnson, Park & Bartlett, 2018). Various other aspects such as the character of the individual being served determine the level of engaged individuals in the organization (Wang & Chen, 2019).

It has been identified various factors in shaping employee engagement behavior in an organization so that it can run well within the organization and how to improve the work performance of employee engagement that has been formed by individuals. Based on the background stated, the authors are interested in discussing employee engagement as a factor in efforts to improve the quality of performance in organizations.

METHODS

The method used in writing this article is by using the literature review method, which is a search for scientific literature studies, both international journals and national journals, which is done using a database of several scientific publications, namely SAGE Journals, Emerald, and Proquest. The process of collecting articles is carried out by sorting from the literature based on the criteria determined by the author of each journal taken, 15 related journals have been reviewed.

Articles were reviewed between 2013 - 2020 using the keywords employee engagement, work engagement, employee engagement, and work performance and employee engagement outcomes. For each journal that has been selected based on criteria, a conclusion is written that describes an explanation regarding the effect of employee engagement on the quality of individual performance. Before making conclusions, the authors previously identified a journal article in a summary form in the form of a table consisting of the author's name, research methods, samples, instruments, theory, and the results of the discussion.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the results of journal articles that have been collected, then reviewed with the main focus on the effect of employee engagement on work performance, it is analyzed and divided in Table 1 below.

Table 1.

Summarize the results of the journal review

Author (Year)	Method	Sample	Instrument	Theory	Result
Karatepe (2013)	Quantitative	110	Questionnaire	individuals who receive income and socio-emotional from the organization tend to feel obligated to pay the organization through better engagement and performance	Employees who feel engaged in their work will be motivated to provide extra services
Anitha (2014)	Quantitative	383	Questionnaire	engagement can lead to improved performance from various factors.	Employee engagement has a significant effect on employee performance
Gupta, Acharya, & Gupta (2015)	Quantitative	261	Questionnaire	If the employee is not engaged, it will lead to negative and unsatisfactory behavior for customers	Findings about engagement that improves performance in service delivery
Dajani (2015)	Quantitative	245	Questionnaire	Social exchange theory states that individuals will be motivated to engage in their work when it is based on a fair and balanced exchange system	Employee engagement has a significant impact on job performance
Rashid & Azhar (2015)	Qualitative	Manager	Interview	The literature review reveals six	Employee engagement is a

Author (Year)	Method	Sample	Instrument	Theory	Result
				organizational-level results from employee engagement, namely employee retention, profitability, attendance, customer satisfaction, productivity, and business growth	factor in determining individual performance and supporting the organizational programs that have been designed
Ghuman (2016)	Quantitative	65	Questionnaire	The effect of leadership and job satisfaction is another factor in building individual performance	It has been researched that there is a relationship between employee engagement and employee performance
Cesario & Chambel (2017)	Quantitative	274	Questionnaire	critical attitude antecedents of firm performance highlight the positive relationship between work commitment environment and knowledge sharing culture as strong predictors of individual performance	There is a relationship between the relevance of work engagement to employee performance
Sekhar, Patwardhan, & Vyas (2017)	Quantitative	244	Questionnaire	Individuals who are effectively engaged with the organization have a higher sense of and involvement in organizational activities.	The results showed a relationship between employee engagement and job performance
Ismail, Iqbal & Nasr (2018)	Quantitative	186	Questionnaire	Employee engagement leads to higher job performance by generating positive emotions and increasing motivation to perform job duties and responsibilities	The results showed that employee engagement had a significant positive effect on job performance
Sendawula, et al. (2018)	Quantitative	150	Questionnaire	Employee engagement is a positive attitude that employees have towards the organization and its values	The correlation results indicate that there is a significant positive relationship between employee engagement and employee performance
Kim, Han & Park (2019)	Quantitative	571	Questionnaire	The JD R model assumes that job characteristics can	Work engagement plays an important role concerning job

Author (Year)	Method	Sample	Instrument	Theory	Result
				increase job engagement, which in turn, improves organizational outcomes	performance in addition to that; personal resources, job resources, and turnover intention
Othman & Mahmood (2019)	Quantitative	252	Questionnaire	Social cognitive career theory and social engagement theory	The results showed that high potential employee engagement had a positive and significant effect on individual work performance.
Wang & Chen (2019)	Quantitative	312	Questionnaire	Customer behavior in the workplace affects burnout and turnover intentions	Work engagement has a positive effect on job performance
Ngwenya, & Pelsler (2020)	Quantitative	257	Questionnaire	Individual performance levels depend on how engaged and how satisfied the employees are with their work	Employee engagement has a positive relationship with employee performance
Adrianto & Riyanto (2020)	Quantitative	160	Questionnaire	Employee engagement is a sense of emotional attachment to work and organization	Positive relationship between employee engagement and individual performance

In the results of table 1, it is found that employee engagement affects the individual performance results of various respondents, namely employees. It is stated that the performance results resulting from employee engagement have a positive impact on other individuals. Besides, with the increase in employee engagement, the results of the work that have been done have been very satisfying, in line with Pang and Lu's (2018) theory, an organization will work well because of the high employee engagement that has been formed for each individual (Rashid & Azhar, 2015).

The findings of Gupta, Acharya & Gupta (2014) state that with the formation of high employee engagement, performance will increase, then individuals who work will voluntarily provide more service to their customers. Likewise, the findings by Karatepe (2013) state that employee engagement can improve individual performance, and individuals who feel engaged in their work will be motivated to provide extra services from their main job to customers.

Analysis of the results of table 1, many of the findings state that high employee engagement has a significant impact on individual performance, such as the results of research by Dajani (2015); Sekhar, Patwardhan, & Vyas (2017) and Ismail, Iqbal & Nasr (2018). In line with Bakker et al., (2008), it is said that individuals who feel engaged with work will feel the psychological health impact. However, it needs to be seen again from the various determining factors that can increase the sense of engagement in a job, such as job demands and job resources (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007), so that the quality of work is better and more satisfying (Alqarni, 2016; Cesario & Chambel, 2017; Yeh, 2013).

In the findings of Kim, Han & Park (2019), employee engagement is also able to mediate in the relationship between variables and can reduce the occurrence of turnover intention in individuals in addition to work performance results. From the findings of these findings, it has been proven that high employee engagement can have a good and positive impact on work performance (Adrianto & Riyanto, 2020), this is based on strengthening the previous theory (Demerouti & Cropanzano, 2010).

The findings of Sekhar, Patwardhan & Vyas (2017) that individuals who feel engaged with their work and have a higher sense and involvement in activities in their organization will produce good job performance (Ngwenya, & Pelsler, 2020). This is in line with existing findings that indicate employee engagement, directly and indirectly, affects individual performance (Azizah & Gustomo, 2015).

Several aspects such as the nature of the customer can affect the level of employee engagement, if the customer is less cooperative with individuals in the organization, it can cause burnout to turnover intention (Wang & Chen, 2019). The findings of Ismail, Iqbal & Nasr (2018) that positive emotions can foster employee engagement so that it can improve good work performance (Cesario & Chambel, 2017) with good service output, of course (Gupta, Acharya, & Gupta, 2015).

CONCLUSION

From the results of the discussion, it can be concluded that employee engagement influences the quality of individual performance in the organization. This is in line with several literature findings that imply that individual performance is influenced by employee engagement from various internal and external aspects. Thanks to employee engagement, the productivity and job satisfaction produced by individuals in the achievement of company organizations have better quality because individuals feel that they can work consistently, are absorbed in work (absorption), and are more physically and psychologically competitive.

REFERENCES

- Adrianto & Riyanto, S. (2020). The effect of organizational commitment, employee engagement, and organizational citizenship behavior on employee performance at pt. titan infra energy - head office. *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science*. 25 (1) 22 – 31. DOI: 10.9790/0837-2501092231
- Alderfer C. P. (1969). An empirical test of new theory of human need. *Organizational Behavior and Human Performance*. 4 (1) 142 – 175.
- Alqarni, S. A. Y. (2016). Quality of work-life as a predictor of work engagement among the teaching. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*. 6 (8) 118 – 135.
- Anitha, J. (2014). Determinants of employee engagement and their impact on employee performance. *International Journal of Productivity and Performance Management*. 63 (3) 308 – 323. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJPPM-01-2013-0008>
- Azizah, A. & Gustomo, A. (2015). The influence of employee engagement to employee performance at pt Telkom Bandung. *Journal of Business and Management*. 4 (7) 817 – 829.
- Bakker, A. B., & Demerouti, E. (2007). The job demands-resources model: State of the art. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*. 22 (3) 309 – 328. <https://doi.org/10.1108/02683940710733115>

- Bakker, A. B., Schaufeli, W. B., Leiter, M. P., & Taris, T. W. (2008). Work engagement: An emerging concept in occupational health psychology. *Work and Stress*, 22 (3) 187 – 200. doi:10.1080/02678370802393649
- Bakker, A. B., Demerouti, E., & Sanz-Vergel, A. I. (2014). Burnout and work engagement: the JD–R approach. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior*, 1, 389 – 411. DOI: 10.1146/annurev-orgpsych-031413-091235
- Biron, M., & Boon, C. (2013). Performance and turnover intentions: A social exchange perspective. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 28, 511 – 531.
- Burke, R. J., Astakhova, M. N., & Hang, H. (2015). Work Passion Through the Lens of Culture: Harmonious Work Passion, Obsessive Work Passion, and Work Outcomes in Russia and China. *Journal of Business and Psychology*, 30 (3) 457 – 471. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10869-017-9500-2>
- Caesen, G., Stinglhamber, F., & Marmier, V. (2014). The curvilinear effect of work engagement on employees' turnover intentions. *International Journal of Psychology*, 1 – 6. DOI: 10.1002/ijop.12131
- Cesario, F. & Chambel, M. J. (2017). Knowledge and Process Management. *Published online in Wiley Online Library*. DOI: 10.1002/kpm.1542
- Dajani, M. A. Z. (2015). The impact of employee engagement on job performance and organizational commitment in the Egyptian banking sector. *Journal of Business and Management Sciences*, 3 (5) 138 – 147. DOI:10.12691/jbms-3-5-1
- Demerouti, E., and Cropanzano, R. (2010). From thought to action: employee work engagement and job performance, in Bakker, A.B., and Leiter, M.P. (Eds). *Work Engagement: A Handbook of Essential Theory and Research*. Psychology Press. Hove. 147-163.
- Farndale, E., & Murrer, I. (2015). Job resources and employee engagement: a cross-national study. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 30, 610 – 626. doi:10.1108/jmp-09-2013-0318
- García-Carbonell, N., Martín-Alcázar, F., & Sanchez-Gardey, G. (2018). Determinants of building consistent human resources management systems: A focus on internal communication. *International Journal of Manpower*, 39 (3) 354 – 377. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJM-06-2016-0140>
- Garg, K., Dar, I. A. & Mishra, M. (2018). Job satisfaction and work engagement: a study using private sector bank managers. *Advances in Developing Human Resources*, 20 (1) 58 – 71. [tps://doi.org/10.1177/1523422317742987](https://doi.org/10.1177/1523422317742987)
- Ghuman, K. (2016). A prognostic examination of functional and emotional employee engagement drivers and their impact on employee performance. *Business Review*, 5 (2) 78 – 87.
- Gupta, M., Acharya, A. & Gupta, R. (2015). Impact of work engagement on performance Indian higher education system. *Review of European Studies*, 7 (3) 192 – 201. doi:10.5539/res.v7n3p192
- Hakanen, J. J., & Schaufeli, W. B. (2012). Do burnout and work engagement predict depressive symptoms and life satisfaction? A three-wave seven-year prospective study. *Journal of Affective Disorders*, 141, 415 – 424. doi:10.1016/j.jad.2012.02.043
- Ho, V., Wong, S., & Lee, C. H. (2011). A Tale of Passion: Linking Job Passion and Cognitive Engagement to Employee Work Performance. *Management Faculty Publications*, 48, 1 – 41.

- Ismail, H. N., Iqbal, A., & Nasr, L. (2018). Employee engagement and job performance in Lebanon: the mediating role of creativity. *International Journal of Productivity and Performance Management*. 68 (3) 506 – 523. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJPPM-02-2018-0052>
- Jeung, C. W. (2011). The concept of employee engagement: A comprehensive review from a positive organizational behavior perspective. *Performance Improvement Quarterly*. 24, 4969. doi:10.1002/piq.20110
- Johnson, K. R., Park, S., & Bartlett, K. R. (2018). Perceptions of customer service orientation, training, and employee engagement in Jamaica's hospitality sector. *European Journal of Training and Development*. 42 (3/4) 191 – 209. doi:10.1108/ejtd-11-2017-0094
- Kahn, W. A. (1990). Psychological conditions of personal engagement and disengagement at work. *Academy of Management Journal*. 33 (4) 692 – 724.
- Karatepe, O. M. (2013). High-performance work practices and hotel employee performance: The mediation of work engagement. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*. 32, 132 – 140.
- Kim, W., Kolb, J. A. & Kim, T. (2013). The relationship between work engagement and performance: A review of empirical literature and a proposed research agenda. *Human Resource Development Review*. 12, 248 – 276. DOI: 10.1177/1534484312461635.
- Kim, W., Kim, J., Woo, H., Park, J., Jo, J., Park, S. & Lim, S. Y. (2017). The Relationship Between Work Engagement and Organizational Commitment: Proposing Research Agendas Through a Review of Empirical Literature. *Human Resource Development Review*. 1 – 27. DOI: 10.1177/1534484317725967
- Kim, W., Han, S. J. & Park, J. (2019). Is the role of work engagement essential to employee performance or 'nice to have'? *Sustainability*. 11, 1050. doi:10.3390/su11041050
- Lazauskaite-Zabielske, J., Urbanaviciute, I. & Balsiene, R. R. (2018). From psychosocial working environment to good performance: the role of work engagement. *Baltic Journal of Management*. <https://doi.org/10.1108/BJM-10-2017-0317>
- Lee, Y., Kwon, K., Kim, W., & Cho, D. (2016). Work engagement and career: Proposing research agenda through a review of literature. *Human Resource Development Review*. 15, 29-54. doi:10.1177/153448431662835
- Maslow, A. H. (1943). A theory of human motivation. *Psychological Review*. 50, 370 – 396.
- McClelland, D. C. (1990). *Human motivation*. Cambridge UK. Cambridge University Press.
- Mercurio, Z. A. (2015). Affective commitment as a core essence of organizational commitment: An integrative literature review. *Human Resource Development Review*. 14, 389414. doi:10.1177/1534484315603612
- Mokaya, S. O., & Kipyegon, M. J. (2014). Determinants of Employee Engagement in the Banking Industry in Kenya: Case of Cooperative Bank. *Journal of Human Resources*. 2 (2), 187 – 200.
- Ngwenya, B. & Pelsler, T. (2020). Impact of psychological capital on employee engagement, job satisfaction, and employee performance in the manufacturing sector in Zimbabwe. *SA Journal of Industrial Psychology*. 46 (0) 1 – 12. <https://doi.org/10.4102/sajip.v46i0.1781>
- Othman, S. A. & Mahmood, N. H. N. (2019). Linking employee engagement towards individual work performance through human resource management practice: from high potential employee's perspectives. *Management Science Letters*. 9, 1083 – 1092. DOI: 10.5267/j.msl.2019.3.016
- Saks, A. M., & Gruman, J. A. (2014). What do we really know about employee engagement? *Human Resource Development Quarterly*. 25, 155 – 182. doi:10.1002/hrdq.21187

- Schaufeli, W. B., Bakker, A. B., & Salanova, M. (2006). The measurement of work engagement with a short questionnaire: A cross-national study. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*. 66, 701 – 716. doi:10.1177/0013164405282471
- Sekhar, C., Patwardhan, M., & Vyas, V. (2017). Linking work engagement to job performance through flexible human resource management. *Advances in Developing Human*. 1 – 16. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1523422317743250>.
- Sendawula, K., Kiwuli, S. N., Bananuka, J. & Muganga, G. N. (2018). Training, employee engagement, and employee performance: Evidence from Uganda's health sector. *Cogent Business & Management*. 5, 1 – 12. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311975.2018.1470891>
- Shuck, B., & Wollard, K. (2010). Employee engagement and HRD: A seminal review of the foundations. *Human Resource Development Review*. 9, 89 – 110. doi:10.1177/1534484309353560
- Sofiah, D & Kurniawan, G. Hubungan *self-efficacy* dengan *work engagement* pada karyawan. *Jurnal Fenomena*. 28 (1) 54 – 61. DOI: 10.30996/fn.v28i1.2641.
- Stimpson, P., & Smith, A. (2011). *Business and Management for the IB Diploma*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Pang, K., & Lu, C.S. (2018). Organizational motivation, employee job satisfaction, and organizational performance: An empirical study of container shipping companies in Taiwan. *Maritime Business Review*. 3 (1) 36 – 52.
- Purba, S. D., & Ananta, A. N. D. (2018). The effects of work passion, work engagement, and job satisfaction on turnover intention of the millennial generation. *Jurnal Manajemen dan Pemasaran*. 11 (2) 263 – 274. Doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.25105/jmpj.v11i2.2954>
- Rashid, S. & Azhar, M. A. (2015). Employee engagement: a qualitative research on critical factors within Malaysia's SME businesses. *First Asia Pacific Conference on Contemporary Research*. 54 – 65.
- Rich, B. L., Lepine, J. A., & Crawford, E. R. (2010). Job engagement: Antecedents and effects on job performance. *Academy of Management Journal*. 53, 617 – 635. doi:10.5465/AMJ.2010.51468988
- Wang, C. & Chen, H. (2019). Relationship among workplace incivility, work engagement, and job performance. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism*. DOI 10.1108/JHTI-09-2019-0105
- Xiao, M. L., & Duan, L. (2014). Job engagement of employees in state-owned enterprises: Construct clarification and scale development. *Organizational management*. 1, 35 – 41. <http://dx.doi.org/10.16471/j.cnki.11-2822/c.2014.01.017>
- Yeh, C. M. (2013). Tourism involvement, work engagement, and job satisfaction among frontline hotel employees. *Annals of Tourism Research*. 42, 214-239. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2013.02.002>
- Yousef, D. A. (2017). Organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and attitudes toward organizational change: a study in the local government. *International Journal of Public Administration*. 40 (1) 77 – 88. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01900692.2015.1072217>