

Understanding Factors Influencing Faculty Engagement: A Study on Jesuit Higher Education Institutions in Tamil Nadu

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ABSTRACT

All organizations are not just retaining the talents but, finding a way to engaging them, capturing their minds and hearts at each stage of their work lives. A successful organization is built with the efficient employees who will move forward the organization into edge less environment. The present study attempted to capture the existing level of faculty engagement in Jesuit Higher Education Institutions in Tamil Nadu with sample respondents of 401 from nine Jesuit HE institutions. The research design was descriptive in nature and proportionate stratified random sampling was used to collect the primary data through pre-tested questionnaire using five point Likert scale. The researcher used eight dimensions and 23 factors to elicit data from the sample respondents and the data was analysed So as to understand the present level of engagement among the faculty members.

1. INTRODUCTION

What makes one organization to be more flourishing than the others do? Is it their services, strategies, or perhaps technologies? In reality, all those factors contribute to greater performance of employees; one thing that always helps the organizations to be more successful is employee engagement. It is nothing that an emotional commitment of an employee. Employee engagement is one of the slippery concepts that is talked about a lot but is somewhat hard to define. Many academic researchers and numerous professional networking groups defined employee engagement in different ways based on their workforce but still there is no consensus regarding what employee engagement is or how it should be measured? The simple definition for employee engagement is “the degree of emotional commitment that an employee has to their job and organization as a whole”.

BACKGROUND OF THE RESEARCH

In today's contemporary scenario, societies are witnessing unprecedented transformation in global marketplace, with scores-of organizations competing for talent. A successful organization can build up only with its employees' contribution. Contribution of engaged employees is vital for organizational success. Thus, the need for employee engagement rises as a hot button for all sectors including the higher education sectors to retain their human capital for their endurance.

Higher education is the most powerful tool designed for socio-economic mobility and a key tool for the construction of an unbiased and just culture of any nation. It also provides abilities and competencies for economic welfare and reinforces democracy. The higher education sector of a

nation is a powerful tool, which makes the society as a knowledge pedestal civilization. At present, the higher education sector in India is poised to witness major growth in the years to come, as India will have world's largest tertiary- age population and second largest graduate talent pipeline globally by the end of 2020".

Though, there are lots of changes have been taking place, still there are plentiful challenges on disparate counts such as, 'inequitable and low access to higher education, dearth of competent faculty, deficient infrastructure, low competence of teachers and most importantly inadequate research. Thus, the need for highly engaged faculty is considered as important tool for the societal and student development in India

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In the field of Human Resource Management, most of the researches conducted on employee engagement have been concentrated more on corporate sector and only very few researches have been applied the theories and models of engagement in education sector. In India, the research on faculty engagement in higher education sector is considerably low and it is entirely diverse from corporate sector. Previous studies clearly shows that "levels of engagement and its drives vary according to the organization, employee group, the individual and job itself" and also it is a continuous process and cannot be a one- size- fits -all approach. In this regard, this study focuses on assessing the level of Faculty Engagement in Jesuit Higher Education Institutions in Tamil Nadu.

3. NEED FOR THE RESEARCH

The prehistoric India had supported higher learning and had some ancient seats of Higher education in the northern and southern parts of India at the beginning of Christian era. "Those days only about 8% of the relevant age group gained access to higher education and large sections of marginalised groups like women, tribal's or indigenous people, dalits or lower caste groups and minority communities were left out of the system". In such a situation, Jesuit Education Institutions especially Jesuit Higher Education Institutions played a major role in providing quality higher education for all sectors of people in India with well-trained faculty. The Society of Jesus is the only educational institution or organization in India that has been in survival for almost four and a half centuries (450 years).

It is the only educational institution with a strong foundation in Indian history for social development, cultural development, political, education, and so on. This is one of the main reasons that Jesuit Colleges in India are gaining the reputation to be the very best in the land in the past as well as in the present. At present, the Higher Education Institutions in India are at the era of knowledge war. Therefore, the leading Jesuit Higher Education Institutions should reformulate themselves to achieve pre-eminence in education by providing quality education and services to the society. This could be attained only through highly engaged faculty in Jesuit HE Institutions. Thus, this study focuses on Faculty Engagement in Jesuit Higher Education Institutions in Tamil Nadu.

4. OBJECTIVES

- To identify the overall faculty engagement level in the Jesuit Higher Education Institutions in Tamil Nadu.
- To study the level of faculty engagement in the Jesuit Higher Education Institutions in terms of dimensions and factors of faculty engagement.
- To assess the association between various dimensions and the level of faculty engagement.
- To suggest suitable measures to improve the level of faculty engagement based on findings of the research.

5. HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY

- There is no significant association between various dimensions and their overall faculty engagement.

6. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE STUDY

ORGANIZATION CULTURE

DIMENSION NUMBER	DIMENSIONS OF FACULTY ENGAGEMENT	FREQUENCY (N = 401)	PERCENT (100%)
D1	ORGANIZATION CULTURE		
	Low	187	46.6
	High	214	53.4
	Mean:51.52/ Median: 52.00/ Standard deviation: 5.846/Min:27/Max:60		
F1	1.1 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES		
	Low	166	41.4
	High	235	58.6
	Mean:21.83/ Median: 22.00/ Standard deviation: 2.697/Min:08/Max:25		
F2	1.2 VALUES AND CULTURE		
	Low	196	48.9
	High	205	51.1
	Mean:20.77/ Median: 21.00/ Standard deviation: 2.907/Min:08/Max:25		
F3	1.3 REPUTATION		
	Low	151	37.7
	High	250	62.3
	Mean:8.92/ Median: 9.00/ Standard deviation: 1.131/Min:04/Max:10		

Source: Primary Data

TABLE NO 1

INFERENCE

Organization Culture (D1) is a dimension that consists of three factors viz Goals and Objectives (F1), Values and Culture (F2), and Reputation (F3). Organizational culture is an important part of organization system that influences employee engagement. When employees feel highly engaged with their work place culture they become connected and collaborated to create better efficiency and positivity about the organization. Positivity about an organization drives a way for positive engagement, develops a better sense about organization structure, and creates a culture that values participation from everyone. Without the proper culture, engagement spiral in organizations will be out of control.

TESTING OF HYPOTHESIS 1

ASSOCIATION BETWEEN ORGANIZATION CULTURE AND OVERALL FACULTY ENGAGEMENT

ORGANIZATION CULTURE	OVERALL FACULTY ENGAGEMENT		STATISTICAL INFERENCE
	N	PERCENT	
Engaged	214	53.4	$\chi^2=114.712$ Df=1 .001<0.05** Significant
Disengaged	87	46.6	

Source: Primary Data

TABLE NO 1

INFERENCE

As the calculated value is less than $p < 0.05$ value, the research hypothesis is accepted and the null hypothesis is rejected. Hence, it may be concluded that there is a significant association between organization culture and overall faculty engagement.

MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

DIMENSION NUMBER	DIMENSION OF FACULTY ENGAGEMENT	FREQUENCY (N=401)	PERCENT (100%)
D2	MANAGEMENT PRACTICES		
	Low	198	49.4
	High	203	50.6
	Mean:47.18/ Median: 48.00/ Standard deviation: 6.900/Min:23/Max:60		
F4	2.1 DECISION MAKING		
	Low	162	40.4
	High	239	59.6
	Mean:11.48/ Median: 12.00/ Standard deviation: 2.351/Min:4/Max:15		
F5	2.2 COMMUNICATION		
	Low	100	24.9
	High	301	75.1

	Mean:7.92/ Median: 8.00/ Standard deviation: 1.605/Min:3/Max:10		
F6	2.3 POLICIES AND PRACTICES		
	Low	170	42.4
	High	231	57.6
	Mean:27.79/ Median: 28.00/ Standard deviation: 4.343/Min:10/Max:35		

Source: Primary Data

TABLE NO 2

INFERENCE

Management Practice (D2) is a dimension comprising of factors namely Decision Making (F4), Communication (F5), and Policies and Practices (F6). Management Practice is one of the important dimensions, which has an effective influence over employee engagement. However, there is no fixed model that shows the significance of management practice because these practices vary as per organization structure and its culture.

TESTING OF HYPOTHESIS 2

ASSOCIATION BETWEEN MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AND OVERALL FACULTY ENGAGEMENT

MANAGEMENT PRACTICES	OVERALL FACULTY ENGAGEMENT		STATISTICAL INFERENCE
	N	PERCENT	
Engaged	203	50.6	X ² =103.054 Df=1 .003<0.05 Significant
Disengaged	198	49.4	

Source: Primary Data

TABLE NO 2

INFERENCE

As the calculated value is less than $p < 0.05$ value, the research hypothesis is accepted and the null hypothesis is rejected. Hence, it could be concluded that there is a significant association between management practices and overall faculty engagement.

PEOPLE

DIMENSION NUMBER	DIMENSION OF FACULTY ENGAGEMENT	FREQUENCY (N=401)	PERCENT (100%)
D3	PEOPLE		
	Low	192	47.9
	High	209	52.1
	Mean:51.78/ Median: 52.00/ Standard deviation: 7.478/Min:18/Max:65		
F7	3.1 SENIOR LEADERSHIP		
	Low	254	63.3

F8	High	147	36.7
	Mean:28.06/ Median: 28.00/ Standard deviation: 4.212/Min:8/Max:35		
	3.2 CO-WORKER		
	Low	151	37.7
F8	High	250	62.3
	Mean:23.69/ Median: 24.00/ Standard deviation: 4.056/Min:10/Max:30		

Source: Primary Data

TABLE NO 3

INFERENCE

This dimension consists of two factors namely Senior leadership (F7), and Co- worker (F8). Facilitating and enabling leadership in work place will increase the level of engagement of the faculty previous researches indicate that employees' relationship with their senior leaders and co-workers affects the commitment of employee's toward the organization and the job. Thus, it eventually affects the level of employee engagement in the organizations.

TESTING OF HYPOTHESIS 3

ASSOCIATION BETWEEN PEOPLE AND OVERALL FACULTY ENGAGEMENT

PEOPLE	OVERALL FACULTY ENGAGEMENT		STATISTICAL INFERENCE
	N	PERCENT	
Engaged	192	47.9	X ² =125.338 Df=1 .000<0.05 Significant
Disengaged	209	52.1	

Source: Primary Data

TABLE NO 3

INFERENCE

As the calculated value is less than $p < 0.05$ value, the research hypothesis is accepted and the null hypothesis is rejected. Hence, it may be concluded that there is a significant association between people and overall faculty engagement.

WORK

DIMENSION NUMBER	DIMENSION OF FACULTY ENGAGEMENT	FREQUENCY (N=401)	PERCENT (100%)
D4	WORK		
	Low	181	45.1
	High	220	54.9
	Mean:41.44/ Median: 41.00/ Standard deviation: 5.321/Min:26/Max:50		
F9	4.1 WORK TASK		
	Low	195	48.6

	High	206	51.4
	Mean:16.95/ Median: 17.00/ Standard deviation: 2.435/Min:9/Max:20		
F10	4.2 WORK PROCESS		
	Low	250	62.3
	High	151	37.7
	Mean:12.28/ Median: 12.00/ Standard deviation: 1.960/Min:5/Max:15		
F11	4.3 EMPOWERMENT		
	Low	215	53.6
	High	186	46.4
	Mean:12.21/ Median: 12.00/ Standard deviation: 2.229/Min:4/Max:15		

Source: Primary Data

TABLE NO 4

INFERENCE

This dimension includes three factors namely Work task (F9), Work process (F10), and Empowerment (F11). Many employee engagement definitions have clearly mentioned that employee's work have an apparent influence on the level of engagement. The work needs to be inspiring and exciting for the employees and at the same time, they should feel that the work is much more important for themselves and for others. They must be proud about their work for the organization and they need to feel that they are making a difference. Above all, they should feel that they have autonomy in their work that leads to self-confidence, respect, feels valued, and opportunity to perform it in better way.

TESTING OF HYPOTHESIS 4

ASSOCIATION BETWEEN WORK AND OVERALL FACULTY ENGAGEMENT

WORK	OVERALL FACULTY ENGAGEMENT		STATISTICAL INFERENCE
	N	PERCENT	
Engaged	181	45.1	X ² =106.674 Df=1 .001<0.05 Significant
Disengaged	220	54.9	

Source: Primary Data

TABLE NO 4

INFERENCE

As the calculated value is less than $p < 0.05$ value, the research hypothesis is accepted and the null hypothesis is rejected. Hence, it may be concluded that there is a significant association between work and overall faculty engagement.

COMMITMENT

DIMENSION NUMBER	DIMENSION OF FACULTY ENGAGEMENT	FREQUENCY (N=401)	PERCENT (100 %)
D5	COMMITMENT		
	Low	185	46.1
	High	216	53.9
	Mean:29.27/ Median: 30.00/ Standard deviation: 4.014/Min:14/Max:35		
F12	5.1 SENSE OF COMMUNITY		
	Low	186	46.4
	High	215	53.6
	Mean:13.06/ Median: 13.00/ Standard deviation: 1.759/Min:6/Max:15		
F13	5.2 PERSONAL ACCOUNTABILITY		
	Low	240	59.9
	High	161	40.1
	Mean:8.21/ Median: 8.00/ Standard deviation: 1.372/Min:3/Max:10		
F14	5.3 ROLE CLARITY		
	Low	116	28.9
	High	285	71.1
	Mean:7.99/ Median: 8.00/ Standard deviation: 1.790/Min:2/Max:10		

Source: Primary Data

TABLE NO 5

INFERENCE

This dimension includes Sense of Community (F12), Personal Accountability (F13), and Role Clarity (F14). Commitment refers to employees' loyalty towards the work and commitment towards the organization. An affectively committed employee will strongly identify the goals of the organization and they will desire to remain a part of the organization. Highly committed employees are ready to overcome the conflicts, attached to the organization, and ready to change themselves to attain the competitive advantage of the organization. As, commitment needs an investment of time as well as physical, mental and emotional energy, organizations of all sizes and types have invested considerably in their policies and practice that foster engagement and commitment of their workforces.

TESTING OF HYPOTHESIS 5

ASSOCIATION BETWEEN COMMITMENT AND OVERALL FACULTY ENGAGEMENT

COMMITMENT	OVERALL FACULTY ENGAGEMENT		STATISTICAL INFERENCE
	N	PERCENT	
Engaged	216	53.9	$\chi^2=119.357$ Df=1 .002<0.05 Significant
Disengaged	185	46.1	

Source: Primary Data

TABLE NO 5

INFERENCE

As the calculated value is less than $p < 0.05$ value, the research hypothesis is accepted and the null hypothesis is rejected. Hence, it may be concluded that there is a significant association between commitment and overall faculty engagement.

PERFORMANCE

DIMENSION NUMBER	DIMENSION OF FACULTY ENGAGEMENT	FREQUENCY (N=401)	PERCENT (100%)
D6	PERFORMANCE		
	Low	210	52.4
	High	191	47.6
	Mean:53.32/ Median: 53.00/ Standard deviation: 6.799/Min:31/Max:65		
F15	6.1 CAREER OPPORTUNITIES		
	Low	196	48.9
	High	205	51.1
	Mean:16.23/ Median: 17.00/ Standard deviation: 3.203/Min:6/Max:20		
F16	6.2 LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT		
	Low	223	55.6
	High	178	44.4
	Mean:21.11/ Median: 21.00/ Standard deviation: 2.770/Min:10/Max:25		
F17	6.3 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT		
	Low	121	30.2
	High	280	69.8
	Mean:15.98/ Median: 16.00/ Standard deviation:2.425/Min:8/Max:20		

Source: Primary Data

TABLE NO 6

INFERENCE

Performance (D6) is another dimension for evaluating the level of employee engagement. It includes Career Opportunities (F15), Learning and Development (F16), and Performance Management (F17). Research conducted by Gallup, Melcrum, and Hewitt significantly proved that there was a cross- validation link between career opportunities, learning and development, and employee engagement levels. Organization that follows unbiased and transparent performance management technique will tend to show high level of employee engagement. Thus, in turn it has positive impact over work place and individual performance.

TESTING OF HYPOTHESIS 6

ASSOCIATION BETWEEN PERFORMANCE AND OVERALL FACULTY ENGAGEMENT

PERFORMANCE	OVERALL FACULTY ENGAGEMENT		STATISTICAL INFERENCE
	N	PERCENT	
Engaged	191	47.6	$\chi^2=128.227$ Df=1 $.002<0.05$ Significant
Disengaged	210	52.4	

Source: Primary Data

TABLE NO 6

INFERENCE

As the calculated value is less than $p<0.05$ value, the research hypothesis is accepted and the null hypothesis is rejected. Hence, it may be concluded that there is a significant association between performance and overall faculty engagement.

TOTAL REWARD

DIMENSION NUMBER	DIMENSION OF FACULTY ENGAGEMENT	FREQUENCY (N=401)	PERCENT (100%)
D7	TOTAL REWARD		
	Low	206	51.4
	High	195	48.6
	Mean:34.76/ Median: 36.00/ Standard deviation: 7.248/Min:11/Max:45		
F18	7.1 PAY		
	Low	232	57.9
	High	169	42.1
	Mean:11.12/ Median: 12.00/ Standard deviation: 2.806/Min:3/Max:15		
F19	7.2 BENEFIT		
	Low	210	52.4
	High	191	47.8
	Mean:11.01/ Median: 12.00/ Standard deviation: 2.973/Min:3/Max:15		
F20	7.3 RECOGNITION		
	Low	159	39.4
	High	242	60.3
	Mean:11.57/ Median: 12.00/ Standard deviation: 2.584/Min:3/Max:15		

Source: Primary Data

TABLE NO 7

INFERENCE

It includes employee engagement factors namely Pay (F18), Benefit (F19), and Recognition (F20). Organizations having proper reward system have significant impact on employee well-being. Many previous studies in Human Resource and Personnel Management proved that reward system in organization has been associated with positive employee outcomes. A study by Gallup, Tom Rath, and Donald in 2001 revealed that in America 65 percent of people left

their job due to poor appreciation for good work. This makes it clear that organization with good pay, benefit, and recognition will have a high level of employee engagement.

TESTING OF HYPOTHESIS 7

ASSOCIATION BETWEEN TOTAL REWARD AND OVERALL FACULTY ENGAGEMENT

TOTAL REWARD	OVERALL FACULTY ENGAGEMENT		STATISTICAL INFERENCE
	N	PERCENT	
Engaged	195	48.6	$\chi^2=87.538$ Df=1 $.000<0.05$ Significant
Disengaged	206	51.4	

Source: Primary Data

TABLE NO 7

INFERENCE

As the calculated value is less than $p<0.05$ value, the research hypothesis is accepted and the null hypothesis is rejected. Hence, it may be concluded that there is a significant association between total reward and overall faculty engagement.

QUALITY OF WORK LIFE

DIMENSION NUMBER	DIMENSION OF FACULTY ENGAGEMENT	FREQUENCY (N=401)	PERCENT (100 %)
D8	QUALITY OF WORK LIFE		
	Low	189	47.1
	High	212	52.9
	Mean:34.89/ Median: 36.00/ Standard deviation: 5.667/Min:15/Max:45		
F21	8.1 WORK LIFE BALANCE		
	Low	121	30.2
	High	280	69.8
	Mean:7.63/ Median: 8.00/ Standard deviation: 1.837/Min:2/Max:10		
F22	8.2 WORKING ENVIRONMENT		
	Low	182	45.4
	High	219	54.6
	Mean:11.06/ Median: 12.00/ Standard deviation: 2.704/Min:3/Max:15		
F23	8.3 WELFARE		
	Low	232	57.9
	High	169	42.1
	Mean:16.24/ Median: 16.00/ Standard deviation: 2.576/Min:7/Max:20		

Source: Primary Data

TABLE NO 8

INFERENCE

Quality of work life (D8) dimension includes factors namely Work Life Balance (F21), Working Environment (F22), and Welfare (F23). Quality of work life initiative goes to both employees and employers. QWL measures makes employees feel safe, trust, and relatively well

satisfied with the organization. It is also found from previous reviews that the levels of engagement were correlated with the feeling of security while working. Thus, qualities of work life positively care for employee well-being and that would result in positive employee engagement and organization superiority.

TESTING OF HYPOTHESIS 8

ASSOCIATION BETWEEN QUALITY OF WORK LIFE AND OVERALL FACULTY ENGAGEMENT

QUALITY OF WORK LIFE	OVERALL FACULTY ENGAGEMENT		STATISTICAL INFERENCE
	N	PERCENT	
Engaged	212	52.9	$\chi^2=92.588$ Df=1 .001<0.05 Significant
Disengaged	189	47.1	

Source: Primary Data

TABLE NO 8

INFERENCE

As the calculated value is less than $p < 0.05$ value, the research hypothesis is accepted and the null hypothesis is rejected. Hence, it may be concluded that there is a significant association between quality of work life and overall faculty engagement.

FACULTY ENGAGEMENT INDEX (FEI)

This section presents the calculation and analysis of FEI for each dimension and overall faculty engagement. It is calculated as by using the formula below.

FACULTY ENGAGEMENT INDEX (FEI)

$$FEI = \frac{\sum FEI}{N}$$

$\sum FEI$ = Sum of faculty engagement index
N = Total number of dimensions

CALCULATION OF INDEX FOR EACH DIMENSION

$$\frac{\bar{X}}{n}$$

$\bar{X}$ = Mean
n = Number of items in each dimension

CALCULATION OF $\bar{X}$

$$\bar{X} = \frac{\sum X_i N_i}{SR}$$

$\sum X_i$ = Number of respondents for the particular level of engagement

N_i = Numerical value for the level of engagement

(Strongly Disagree = 1, Disagree = 2, Neutral = 3, Agree = 4, Strongly Agree = 5)

SR = Total number of sample respondents

RANK ORDER OF DIMENSIONS BASED ON FEI

S.NO	DIMENSIONS	FEI	RANK
1	Organization Culture (D1)	4.29	1
2	Commitment (D5)	4.18	2
3	Work (D4)	4.14	3
4	Performance (D6)	4.10	4
5	People (D3)	3.98	5
6	Management Practices (D2)	3.93	6
7	Quality of Work Life (D8)	3.88	7
8	Total Reward (D7)	3.86	8

Source: Primary Data

TABLE NO 9

7. FINDINGS

It is clear from the above analysis that the highest scoring dimension is organization culture, which scores 4.29 out of maximum possible score of 5. It goes without saying that the Jesuit Higher Education Institutions set goals and objectives very clearly, which is disseminated to all the faculty members. They have very high reputation and these colleges are known for their values. This factor is the main strength of Jesuit HE Institutions. The dimension Commitment ranks second with a score of 4.18 followed by the dimension Work that has an FEI of 4.14.

If four is taken as a dividing line on the scale, there are four dimensions that have scored more than 4 and there are an equal number of dimensions with a score of less than 4. The dimension Total Reward has the lowest FEI of 3.86 occupying the last rank. So the Total Reward is one of the dimensions which needs to be paid attention to, along with other low scoring dimensions.

8. CONCLUSION

A successful organization is built with the efficient employees who will move forward the organization into edge less environment. The important factor that paves a way to attain this pre-eminence is “employee engagement”. Employee engagement is more than satisfaction and

beyond commitment and it is the emotional bond between the employer and employee. In today's technology driven globe the destiny of a nation is depending upon higher education sector, which is the stepping-stone for all cultural, societal, economic, and technological development. Thus, the need for transformation in higher education sector becomes inevitable factor for all the nations to attain its development. The transformation in HE is possible only through faculty engagement, because engaged faculty are the road to recover the institutions from all its difficulties, and they tend to show their commitment towards accomplishing the institution's goals and objectives.

9. REFERENCES

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