

Competing through employee engagement: a proposed framework

Competing
through
employee
engagement

831

Nada Al Mehrzi and Sanjay Kumar Singh

College of Business Administration, Abu Dhabi University, Abu Dhabi, UAE

Received 14 February 2016
Revised 29 March 2016
Accepted 29 March 2016

Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to provide a framework through which to understand, predict and control factors affecting employee engagement in the public sector in the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

Design/methodology/approach – The paper examines research conducted in the area of employee engagement and proposes a conceptual framework that can be used by practitioners to engage employees and motivate them toward organizational growth and sustainability.

Findings – In line with the literature-based analysis, a framework of employee engagement was developed, illustrating the linkage between leader, team, perceived organizational support and organizational culture that is being mediated by employee motivation.

Research limitations/implications – Employee engagement as exemplified in this study is well suited for use in the public sector in the UAE. Further empirical study should be undertaken to ascertain the effect of the proposed framework and hypotheses.

Practical implications – The study incorporates determinants of employee engagement in a framework that practitioners can make use of to identify interventions with which to engage and retain talented employees for organizations' benefit.

Originality/value – This paper provides a comprehensive framework that contributes to the conceptualization of employee engagement and will help practitioners as well as academics to understand the underlying causes of disengagement in organizations.

Keywords Organizational culture, Employee engagement, Leadership

Paper type Conceptual paper

1. Introduction

Employee engagement is a positive force that motives and connects employee with their organization, either emotionally, cognitively or physically (Kahn, 1990; Wellins and Concelman, 2005). Ibrahim and Falasi (2014) found that managers should address the importance of engagement in the public sector in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) because it will enhance employee performance, increase job satisfaction and consequently lead the organization to achieve goals. Therefore, employee engagement is a vital issue for organizational leaders (Seijts and Crim, 2006), because employees are the core asset of any organization (Lockwood, 2007). MacLeod and Clarke (2011) say that the employees provide competitive advantage, are a valued asset and key to enhancing productivity in the organization. It is clearly in a company's interest, therefore, to concentrate on engaging employees, both intellectually and emotionally. Over the years, researchers and human resource (HR) specialists have found that enthusiastic workers are a productive asset to the organization (Kompaso and Sridevi, 2010). Furthermore, research results have indicated a positive relationship between engagement and work aspiration (Geldenhuis *et al.*, 2014). HRs practitioners and others in the organization should consider the differences between leaders' and employees' needs that will enable practitioners to tailor systems and policies to address those needs (Lockwood, 2007).



Employee engagement is critical for, and an important element in, the success of organizations. Prior research has found that individuals seek more meaning in their day-to-day work than they do in their personal lives (Mishra *et al.*, 2014; Ugwu *et al.*, 2014). Therefore, managers should strive to make work meaningful, such as by ascertaining and endeavoring to resolve any difficulties that employees face (Biswas *et al.*, 2013). In addition, clear guidance and direction should be provided to employees in order to empower them, so that they feel that their contributions are valued and relevant to the success of their organization (Robbins and Judge, 2012). Studies have shown that effective leaders can have a positive impact on the perceptions of workers about their jobs and thus boost retention (Macphee and Suryaprakash, 2012). On the other hand, Jackson and Schuler, (1983) and Hawkins *et al.* (2012) showed that employee burnout after four or five years. Which may result in employees being less likely to have an emotional bond with their organization and have greater intention to leave their jobs (Detached employees, 2005).

Gallup research has shown that only 13 percent of employees worldwide are engaged with their organizations (MacLeod and Clarke, 2011). Further observation indicates that, for example, in Japan, levels of engagement are as low as 11 percent, while levels of disengagement are as high as 45 percent in India (Haid and Sims, 2009). Country-level variations such as these are likely due to differences in culture, values, politics, management styles, individual differences and the national economy (Haid and Sims, 2009). Hence, it is essential for those managing across borders to be cognizant, too, of factors contributing to engagement in the nations where they are operating. Models of engagement that work in the host nation, for example, may have no effect, or an opposite effect, in other countries (Collins, 2013). A good example of a multinational environment in which managers need to possess the capabilities in and awareness of engagement concepts is the UAE (IndexMundi, 2014), which is the present study's setting.

Global competitiveness led the public sector in the UAE to go through a significant transformation as the Emirati government has boosted the prominence of innovation through such as excellence awards and leadership programs (Al Marashi and Bhinder, 2008). In a 2014 report on global competitiveness, the UAE ranked as the 12th most competitive nation globally (UAE Interact, 2014). Through endorsing organizational innovation, the position of the UAE improved, with Abu Dhabi, the capital of the UAE, ranked 21st in year 2014 as compared to 28th ranked in year 2013 globally in innovation, capacity and performance (Global Innovation Index, 2014). However, the public sector is facing management challenges in the provision of extraordinary services (Jabnoun and Chaker, 2003), and its leaders have recognized that there is an allied need to improve employee engagement and promote organizational excellence (Kompaso and Sridevi, 2010).

Currently, investigating the relationship between organizational leadership and employee engagement is of the utmost importance, as such relationships affect performance and productivity (Marquard, 2010). In the UAE, in particular, there is a need for leaders in the public sector who are able to engage employees (Al Saleh, 2014), a requirement reflected in the fact that 45 percent of job applicants are required to have leadership skills (Chibber, 2014). Meanwhile, Gallup research has revealed that the percentage of engaged employees working in the UAE is 26 percent, while 60 percent are not engaged and 14 percent are actively disengaged (Crabtree, 2013; Khoury and Tozer, 2013), while other studies have established that almost one in two workers are not engaged or are actively disengaged at work (Maceda, 2014).

This paper aims at investigate factors that affect employee engagement in public sector organizations in the UAE. The overall aim of this research is to propose a conceptual model to be used by researchers to reduce the gaps between research literature and contemporary managerial practices, especially in the UAE context, as well as establishing a framework for further researches on employee engagement. Furthermore, this study is an attempt to help managers and leaders in the UAE public sector organizations to enhance employee engagement that in turn will have positive influence on the organizational performance.

In the next section, the relevant literature on employee engagement is reviewed and hypotheses proposed. Then in Section 3, a framework is presented that links the various constructs to employee engagement. Toward the end, Section 4 discusses the academic and the managerial implications of this study followed by Section 5 wherein the authors present the conclusions and the limitations of the study.

2. Literature review

2.1 *Barriers to employee engagement*

Certain barriers may lead to low engagement at work, which, in turn, brings about complications for employees and challenges for leaders (Gatenby *et al.*, 2009; Lockwood, 2007). Moreover, a decline in employee engagement levels can have an effect on productivity, customer service and performance (Mone *et al.*, 2011). Pawar and Chakravarthy's (2014) study revealed that, generally, employees leave for financial reasons or because of difficulties with getting on well with their managers, career development, colleague cooperation, role ambiguity or a lack of information on job description, among other reasons. Correspondingly, leaders may contribute to disengagement by providing little appreciation, recognition or feedback, which leads to a lack of trust or confidence in a company's management (Branham, 2005). Furthermore, the variety of jobs can make it difficult for organizational leaders to define roles and tasks (Lockwood, 2007), but a culture in which employees' jobs do not match their expectations creates further engagement barriers (Mone *et al.*, 2011).

There are a number of often-conflicting conceptualizations of employee engagement arising from the practitioner and academic communities (Shuck *et al.*, 2011), with the most common philosophy used for investigating it being social exchange theory. This theory contends that social behavior is the outcome of an exchange, the purpose of which is to maximize benefits and reduce expenses (Saks, 2006).

2.2 *Correlates of employee engagement*

Kahn's (1990) study of personal engagement and disengagement at work involved connecting individuals to work, with that connection characterized by the emotional, cognitive and physical energy necessary for performance. Kahn also attributed certain psychological conditions, such as safety, availability and meaningfulness, to employee engagement levels. Elsewhere, studies published in numerous academic and specialist journals have pointed to the variability in characterizations of employee engagement (Saks, 2006). Schaufeli *et al.* (2002) suggested an operational meaning that facilitated an emotional status. Therefore, employees manifest specific characteristics that signify engagement: vigor, absorption and dedication. With "vigor," employees show persistence; with "absorption," they have problems separating from the job; while "dedication" describes employees' levels of involvement.

Alfes *et al.* (2010) explained it as a state of being positive, manifesting through enthusiastic contributions of intellectual energy, attitudes of optimism and evidence of meaningful relations with others, while Robinson *et al.* (2004) described it as an optimistic attitude held by a worker for their association and its principles. On the other hand, Wellins and Concelman (2005) contended that “engagement” is an undefined force that inspires employees to advanced stages of performance and illustrates the degree to which workers are satisfied with their occupations and feel appreciated in their roles and experience teamwork and trust. Similarly, Harter *et al.* (2002) described engagement as an individual’s participation and satisfaction displayed through their eagerness for work.

Engaged employees generally feel involved, loyal, enthusiastic, and empowered, and exhibit those feelings in their work behavior (Truss *et al.*, 2006). More specifically, such employees have great energy, are passionate about their work and are often fully absorbed in it such that their work time passes quickly (Macey and Schneider, 2008; May *et al.*, 2004). According to Macey *et al.* (2009), an individual’s feelings of reason and centered vitality are obvious to others in their initiative, versatility, exertion and consistency toward organizational objectives. Further, BlessingWhite (2006) argued that engagement relates directly to top-level input. Kenexa’s (2011) WorkTrends report found that the degree to which workers are motivated to add to hierarchical achievement and are willing to apply discretionary effort to fulfilling undertakings vital to the accomplishment of organizational objectives is directly related to the strength of the top level of the organization. On the other hand, the literature has proposed a link between employee engagement and the bottom line in organizations (Holbeche and Springett, 2004). Similarly, Jagoda *et al.* (2013) found that a bottom-up approach can be used in planning, supervising and projecting productivity enhancements. Additionally, engaged workers will stay with the business longer and frequently find cleverer, newer and more effective means to increase the value of the organization. This, in turn, results in a high-quality business in which people are thriving and productivity is both greater than before and sustained over time (Cattell *et al.*, 2007). Most scholars agree that engaged employees have high levels of energy and contribute strongly to their work through creativity, responsibility for their own professional development, teamwork and commitment to high-quality performance standards (Paulsen *et al.*, 2013).

Lockwood (2007) identified the need to know what drives engagement, particularly in culturally diverse workforces. Employee engagement is influenced by different variables, such as job resources (Bakker *et al.*, 2008; Mauno *et al.*, 2007; Mendes and Stander, 2011) and culture (Bhuvanaiah and Raya, 2014; He *et al.*, 2014; Suharti and Suliyanto, 2012), perceived organizational support (POS) (Pati and Kumar, 2010; Saks, 2006; Alvi *et al.*, 2014), leadership (Kular *et al.*, 2008; Seijts and Crim, 2006; Zhu *et al.*, 2009), job demand (Hicks *et al.*, 2014), rewards (Soemaryani and Rakhmadini, 2013) and teamwork (Anitha, 2014). The first four of these variables are the most researched predictors of employee engagement. On the other hand, other predictors of employee engagement, such as job demand (Mauno *et al.*, 2007), rewards (Biswas and Bhatnagar, 2013) and teamwork (Brunetto *et al.*, 2013), are also frequently studied, though. Conversely, several potentially significant themes are not commonly explored in the literature, such as self-efficacy, self-esteem, employee empowerment, communication, self-expression, perceived supervisor support, procedural justice, perceived employer branding and individual characteristics (Anitha, 2014; Bakker *et al.*, 2008; Chaudhary *et al.*, 2012; Hicks *et al.*, 2014; Holbeche and Springett, 2004). The results of a study

conducted by Mendes and Stander (2011) suggested that engagement is best predicted by job resources and personal resources. On the other hand, other studies have revealed employee development to be the principal contributing factor to employee engagement; in addition, extended employee care, reward and recognition have been shown to enhance employee skills, which will reflect positively on the overall performance (AbuKhalifeh and Som, 2013). Another study showed there to be a limited influence of employer branding on employee engagement through employee expectation (Piyachat *et al.*, 2014). However, front-line supervision has been demonstrated to be key to employee engagement in organizations, emphasizing the need for effective communication and support from managers (Mishra *et al.*, 2014). The influence of procedural justice, though, may depend on cultural context, and might play a less significant role in encouraging employee engagement in Eastern cultures in which leaders are more directive in making some decisions (He *et al.*, 2014).

The present study focusses on the key predictors of culture, leadership, POS and teamwork as these variables significantly affect employee engagement (Anitha, 2014; Brunetto *et al.*, 2013; He *et al.*, 2014; Kular *et al.*, 2008; Saks, 2006; Suharti and Suliyanto, 2012). The relationships between these constructs are set out in the Section 3. The underpinning hypotheses, suggested by the employee engagement literature, that lead to the development of the proposed framework are discussed in the following sections.

2.2.1 Organizational culture and employee engagement. Soemaryani and Rakhmadini (2013) stated that “organizational culture” is what the workers observe and that this observation generates an outline of opinions, value and anticipations. Hence, work environments, team and peer relations can be seen to be the main influencers of employee engagement, which in turn has significant effects on worker performance (Anitha, 2014). Likewise, Soemaryani and Rakhmadini (2013) found that, when organizations encourage and reward their employees for high performance, it affects social relations, organizational performance and employee engagement. Boone (2012) established that the effective execution of change requires a sincere commitment on the part of workers and management, as resistance to change can slow down or disrupt the change initiative. However, employees who perceive change as positive will be more willing to shift from a system of competitive interactions to a teamwork style, categorized by cooperative working relations (Bateman and Snell, 2009).

On the other hand, Janasz *et al.* (2013) suggested that a move toward a more “family-friendly” work environment might raise feelings of inequity in people without families, possibly contributing to low job satisfaction and lower work performance. Bhuvanaiah and Raya (2014) concluded that future research should focus on the indirect influence of organizational culture, even though it might not impact engagement directly. Nevertheless, it can be inferred from the literature overall that an uncooperative culture could result in a steady decline in employee engagement levels. Based on the above arguments, the following is proposed:

H1. Organizational culture significantly impacts employee engagement through employee motivation.

2.2.2 Leadership and employee engagement. Another construct that impacts employee engagement is leadership. Hawley (1993, p. 11) posited that today’s leaders should concern themselves less with issues of task and structure and more with their employees’ “spirit”: “We all yearn for spiritually rooted qualities at work – integrity, character, inspiration, belief, and even reverence – qualities that are key factors in an

enterprise's success." Similarly, Seijts and Crim (2006) found that leadership roles and behaviors can have positive results as employees become more engaged in the organization. According to Yukl *et al.* (2009), participative leader behavior increases the positive valence of work for subordinates who require more independence, while directive leader behavior is thought to be especially effective with achievement-focussed employees, because the leader will clarify objectives and guide their subordinates accordingly (Malik, 2013). Lockwood (2007) also inferred that effective communication between leader and employee could influence employee engagement: a leader who positively conveys strategies to subordinates can inspire employee engagement among those workers. Robbins and Judge (2012) considered the core objective of a leader to be to assist subordinates in achieving their objectives successfully, providing the necessary guidance and assistance to attain these aims in addition to those of the organization.

Leadership studies show that the mediating role of motivation positively links the behavior of leadership and followers (Xu and Thomas, 2011). Tims *et al.* (2011) identified a positive correlation between transformational leaders and employee engagement on a daily basis. Leadership style components that inspire and promote employee opportunities to exercise their abilities and consequently improve job-related resources have positive effects on employee engagement (Breevaart *et al.*, 2014). Zhu *et al.* (2009) revealed that a transformational leadership style is linked with engagement and the development of dynamic, visionary and creative employees. Leaders demonstrating high levels of engagement encourage employees to be innovative and move the organization onward, as engagement impacts the cognitive and emotional aspects of the employees (Kular *et al.*, 2008). Suharti and Suliyanto (2012) found that employee engagement mediates the influence of organizational culture and leadership style on employee loyalty. In view of the above findings, the following is proposed:

H2. Leadership significantly impacts employee engagement through employee motivation.

2.2.3 Teamwork and employee engagement. "Teamwork" is a key component of organizations (Senior and Swailes, 2004), and refers to the formation of a group of employees who cooperate with each other toward a mutual goal. It frequently involves employees supporting and assisting one another, often through complementary tasks (Rasmussen and Jeppesen, 2006). Sparrowe and Liden (2005) recognized that the quality of the supervisor-subordinate relationship has some influence on engagement; similarly, Brunetto *et al.* (2013) suggested that the supervisor-subordinate relationship has an effect on the quality of teamwork, and that teamwork has a positive impact on engagement. Rasmussen and Jeppesen (2006) provided evidence that linked teamwork with better organizational commitment and fewer issues leading to employee turnover. Kindermann (1993) found that continuity in the motivational structure of peer groups, in spite of extensive variations in individual memberships, increased the engagement level of each individual. In addition, work environment and member personality characteristics impact the level of engagement during teamwork (Liao *et al.*, 2013). On the other hand, Markova and Ford (2011) study showed that the intrinsic motivation of the group mediates the relationships between received non-monetary rewards and performance, employee knowledge as well as innovation. In view of the above, the following is proposed:

H3. Teamwork significantly affects employee engagement through employee motivation.

2.2.4 POS and employee engagement. POS is a classic construct in work relations, and is defined as the beliefs that employees possess that their organization values their contributions and considers their well-being (Pati and Kumar, 2010). POS is significant since it influences the quality of the supervisor-employee relationship (Wayne *et al.*, 1997) and predicts employee engagement (Saks, 2006), organizational commitment, citizenship behavior and retention (Pati and Kumar, 2010). Biswas and Bhatnagar's (2013) study indicated a direct effect of person-organization fit and POS on employee engagement leading to differences in organizational commitment and job satisfaction. Furthermore, Gillet *et al.* (2013) found that employees who feel that they are supported by their organization, through recognition and authority, display higher levels of self-determined motivation and work engagement. Hence, employees of organizations that ensure POS are expected to have a competitive advantage over those that do not foster the emotional attachment of their workers (Alvi *et al.*, 2014). Thus:

H4. An employee's POS affects employee engagement through employee motivation.

3. Proposed employee engagement framework

This study presents four hypotheses derived from literature in the domain of employee engagement, further to which a framework is now proposed. In this framework, which is shown in Figure 1, employee engagement is the dependent variable, motivation is the mediator and the independent variables are organizational culture, leadership, teamwork and POS.

Engagement reflects a two-way exchange between workers and managers (Saks, 2006). Firms with engaged employees have greater employee retention, efficiency, productivity and development, as well as employee and customer satisfaction (Lockwood, 2007; Malik, 2013; Silverthorne, 2001). Hence, there is a practical incentive to investigate these constructs and to come up with a clear definition and scope that can be used for assessing employee engagement, extenuating the importance of the

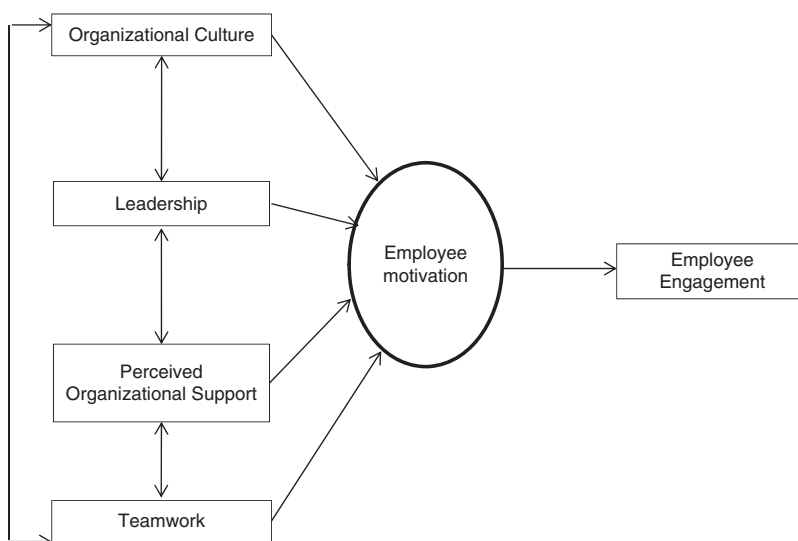


Figure 1.
A proposed
framework

engagement model. Some commentators in the literature believe that organizational leaders worldwide can discuss and review means to retain talented employees and to engage others (Catteuw *et al.*, 2007; Pueschel, 2005). It should be acknowledged, though, that, as Macey and Schneider (2008) observed, measuring engagement is challenging, as it involves evaluating complex employee attitudes and ambitions.

4. Implications

This study set out to improve the body of knowledge in the domain of employee engagement by providing leaders with literature on behavior efficiency and its impact. It also identified opportunities for new areas of further investigation in relation to employee engagement. Thus, the findings of the study lead to the following suggestions for future research and for application in the workplace.

4.1 Managerial implications

- (1) Retain talented employees for the success of the organization.
- (2) Provide employees with regular feedback and day-to-day informal recognition of their performance. Also, seek opportunities to develop and enhance skills that will reflect positively on engagement.
- (3) Empower employees and let them know that their contributions are important to the decision-making process and the success and sustainability of the organization.
- (4) Create a collaborative culture that will motivate employees to be creative, loyal and more engaged with the organization and to do their best to contribute to its success and sustainability.
- (5) Set a clear strategy and vision for motivation through talent management and employee engagement to contribute to the organization's productivity.

4.2 Academic implications

- (1) Undertake further research on employee engagement, including its possible antecedents and consequences, and determine a clear definition of the concept.
- (2) Study and validate the relationships between the research variables, which have been shown, in the present study, to be influential for organizations in their decisions on employee engagement strategies.

5. Conclusions

This paper presents a conceptual framework of employee engagement, demonstrating the relationships between organizational culture, leadership, teamwork and POS, as mediated by the employee motivation. Employee engagement is vital for organizations' success and sustainability. However, there is a scarcity of research-based literature on employee engagement in the context of the UAE to be used by managers and leaders. The model of employee engagement proposed in this study based on a rigorous literature review and will help solve the pressing problem of engaged in the workplace in the public sector organizations in the UAE. Furthermore, empirical studies on the proposed framework of employee engagement need to be carried out to ascertain its validity. The managerial implications as proposed in the study will help the managers and the leaders to retain talented employees in the organization.

References

- AbuKhalifeh, A. and Som, A. (2013), "The antecedents affecting employee engagement and organizational performance", *Asian Social Science*, Vol. 9 No. 7, pp. 41-46.
- Alfes, K., Truss, K., Soane, C., Rees, C. and Gatenby, M. (2010), "Creating an engaged workforce: findings from the Kingston employee engagement consortium project", available at: www.cipd.co.uk/NR/rdonlyres/DD66E557-DB90-4F07-8198-87C3876F3371/0/Creating_engaged_workforce.pdf (accessed November 10, 2015).
- Al Marashi, H. and Bhinder, J. (2008), "From the tallest to the greenest – paradigm shift in Dubai", in Wood, A. (Ed.), *Tall & green: Typology for a Sustainable Urban Future, Proceedings of the CTBUH 8th World Congress, Dubai*, Council on Tall Buildings and Urban Habitat, Chicago, IL, March 3-5, pp. 1-8.
- Al Saleh, A. (2014), "The need to develop second line of leadership in public sector", available at: www.slideshare.net/TheHRobserver/day-1-1240-abdullah-ahmed-al-saleh/ (accessed October 10, 2015).
- Alvi, K., Abbasi, S. and Haider, R. (2014), "Relationship of perceived organisational support and employee engagement", *Science International*, Vol. 26 No. 2, pp. 949-952.
- Anitha, J. (2014), "Determinants of employee engagement and their impact on employee performance", *International Journal of Productivity and Performance Management*, Vol. 63 No. 3, pp. 308-323.
- Bakker, A., Schaufeli, W., Leiter, M. and Taris, T. (2008), "Work engagement: an emerging concept in occupational health psychology", *Work and Stress*, Vol. 22 No. 3, pp. 187-200.
- Bateman, T. and Snell, S. (Eds) (2009), *Management*, McGraw-Hill, New York, NY.
- Bhuvanaiah, T. and Raya, P. (2014), "Employee engagement: key to organizational success", *SCMS Journal of Indian Management*, Vol. 11 No. 4, pp. 61-71.
- Biswas, S. and Bhatnagar, J. (2013), "Mediator analysis of employee engagement: role of perceived organizational support, P-O fit, organizational commitment and job satisfaction", *Vikalpa: The Journal for Decision Makers*, Vol. 38 No. 1, pp. 27-40.
- Biswas, S., Varma, A. and Ramaswami, A. (2013), "Linking distributive and procedural justice to employee engagement through social exchange: a field study in India", *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, Vol. 24 No. 8, pp. 1570-1587.
- BlessingWhite (2006), "Employee engagement report 2006", available at: www.blessingwhite.com/ (accessed October 10, 2015).
- Boone, B. (2012), "Improving employee engagement: making the case for planned organizational change using the Burke-Litwin model of organizational performance and change", *Information Management and Business Review*, Vol. 4 No. 7, pp. 402-408.
- Branham, L. (2005), *The 7 Hidden Reasons Employees Leave: How to Recognize the Subtle Signs and Act Before it's Too Late*, American Management Association, New York, NY.
- Breevaart, K., Bakker, A., Hetland, J., Demerouti, E., Olsen, K. and Espevik, R. (2014), "Daily transactional and transformational leadership and daily employee engagement", *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, Vol. 87 No. 1, pp. 138-157.
- Brunetto, Y., Xerri, M., Shriberg, A., Farr-Wharton, R., Shacklock, K., Newman, S. and Dienger, J. (2013), "The impact of workplace relationships on engagement, well-being, commitment and turnover for nurses in Australia and the USA", *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, Vol. 69 No. 12, pp. 2786-2799.
- Catteeuw, F., Flynn, E. and Vondrhorst, J. (2007), "Employee engagement: boosting productivity in turbulent times", *Organization Development Journal*, Vol. 25 No. 2, pp. 151-157.
- Chaudhary, R., Rangnekar, S. and Barua, K. (2012), "HRD climate, occupational self-efficacy and work engagement: a study from India", *The Psychologist-Manager Journal*, Vol. 15 No. 2, pp. 86-105.

- Chibber, A. (2014), "UAE job market set to grow further – survey: forty-four per cent of UAE employers are definitely hiring in the coming three months", available at: www.gulfbusiness.com/articles/industry/uae-job-market-set-to-grow-further-survey/ (accessed August 15, 2015).
- Collins, C.J. (2013), "When it comes to employee engagement, one size does not fit all", CAHRS Research Link No. 2, Center for Advanced Human Resource Studies, Cornell University ILR School, Ithaca, NY.
- Crabtree, S. (2013), "Worldwide, 13% of employees are engaged at work", available at: www.gallup.com/poll/165269/worldwide/ (accessed September 10, 2015).
- Detached employees (2005), *International Journal of Productivity and Performance Management*, Vol. 54 No. 3, pp. 221-223.
- Gatenby, M., Rees, C., Soane, E. and Truss, C. (2009), "Employee engagement in context", Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, London.
- Goldenhuys, M., Laba, K. and Venter, M. (2014), "Meaningful work, work engagement and organizational commitment", *SA Journal of Industrial Psychology*, Vol. 40 No. 1, pp. 1-10.
- Gillet, N., Huart, I., Colombat, P. and Fouquereau, E. (2013), "Perceived organizational support, motivation, and engagement among police officers", *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, Vol. 44 No. 1, pp. 46-55.
- Global Innovation Index (2014), "Launch with 143 countries within 81 indicators", available at: http://campuses.insead.edu/abu_dhabi/press-releases/2014-global-innovation-index-2014-launch.cfm (accessed March 22, 2016).
- Haid, M. and Sims, J. (2009), "Employee engagement: maximizing organizational performance", available at: www.right.com/thought-leadership/research/employee-engagement-maximizing-organizational-performance.pdf/ (accessed September 10, 2015).
- Harter, J., Schmidt, F. and Hayes, T. (2002), "Business-unit-level relationship between employee satisfaction, employee engagement, and business outcomes: a meta-analysis", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 87 No. 2, pp. 268-279.
- Hawkins, P., Shohet, R., Ryde, J. and Wilmot, J. (2012), *Supervision in the Helping Professions*, McGraw-Hill Education.
- Hawley, J. (1993), *Reawakening the Spirit in Work: The Power of Dharmic Management*, Berrett-Koehler Publishers, San Francisco, CA.
- He, H., Zhu, W. and Zheng, X. (2014), "Procedural justice and employee engagement: roles of organizational identification and moral identity centrality", *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 122 No. 4, pp. 681-695.
- Hicks, R., O'Reilly, G. and Bahr, M. (2014), "Organizational engagement and its driving forces: a case study in a retail travel organization with international outreach", *International Journal of Management Cases*, Vol. 16 No. 3, pp. 4-19.
- Holbeche, L. and Springett, N. (2004), *In Search of Meaning at Work*, Roffey Park Institute, Horsham.
- Ibrahim, M. and Falasi, S. (2014), "Employee loyalty and engagement in UAE public sector", *Employee Relations*, Vol. 36 No. 5, pp. 562-582.
- IndexMundi (2014), "United Arab Emirates, population", available at: www.indexmundi.com/united_arab_emirates/population.html/ (accessed December 12, 2015).
- Jabnoun, N. and Chaker, M. (2003), "Comparing the quality of private and public hospitals", *Managing Service Quality*, Vol. 13 No. 4, pp. 290-299.
- Jackson, S.E. and Schuler, R.S. (1983), "Preventing employee burnout", *Personnel*, Vol. 60 No. 2, pp. 58-68.
- Jagoda, K., Lonseth, R. and Lonseth, A. (2013), "A bottom-up approach for productivity measurement and improvement", *International Journal of Productivity and Performance Management*, Vol. 62 No. 4, pp. 387-406.

-
- Janasz, S., Forret, M., Haack, D. and Jonsen, K. (2013), "Family status and work attitudes: an investigation in a professional services firm", *British Journal of Management*, Vol. 24 No. 2, pp. 191-210.
- Kahn, A. (1990), "Psychological conditions of personal engagement and disengagement at work", *Academy of Management Journal*, Vol. 33 No. 4, pp. 692-724.
- Kenexa (2011), "Engagement levels in global decline: organizations losing competitive advantage – a 2011/2012 Kenexa High Performance Institute Worktrends report", available at: www.hreonline.com/pdfs/02012012Extra_KenexaReport.pdf (accessed September 19, 2015).
- Khoury, G. and Tozer, J. (2013), "How the UAE can promote growth", available at: www.gallup.com/businessjournal/166103/uae-promote-growth.aspx (accessed September 15, 2015).
- Kindermann, A. (1993), "Natural peer groups as contexts for individual development: the case of children's motivation in school", *Developmental Psychology*, Vol. 29 No. 6, pp. 970-977.
- Kompaso, M. and Sridevi, S. (2010), "Employee engagement: the key to improving performance", *International Journal of Business and Management*, Vol. 5 No. 12, pp. 89-96.
- Kular, S., Gatenby, M., Rees, C., Soane, E. and Truss, K. (2008), "Employee engagement: a literature review," Working Paper No. 19, Kingston Business School, Kingston University.
- Liao, F., Yang, L., Wang, M., Drown, D. and Shi, J. (2013), "Team-member exchange and work engagement: does personality make a difference?", *Journal of Business and Psychology*, Vol. 28 No. 1, pp. 63-77.
- Lockwood, R. (2007), "Leveraging employee engagement for competitive advantage: HR's strategic role", *HR Magazine*, Vol. 52 No. 3, pp. 1-11.
- MacLeod, D. and Clarke, N. (2011), "Engaging for Success: Enhancing Performance Through Employee Engagement", Department for Business Innovation and Skills, London.
- Macphee, M. and Suryaprakash, N. (2012), "First-line nurse leaders' health-care change management initiatives", *Journal of Nursing Management*, Vol. 20 No. 2, pp. 249-259.
- Maceda, C. (2014), "1 in 2 employees in UAE and GCC not engaged in their job: study", available at: www.GulfNews.com/ (accessed October 10, 2015).
- Macey, W. and Schneider, B. (2008), "The meaning of employee engagement", *Industrial and Organizational Psychology*, Vol. 1 No. 1, pp. 3-30.
- Macey, W., Schneider, B., Barbera, M. and Young, S. (2009), *Employee Engagement: Tools for Analysis, Practice, and Competitive Advantage*, Wiley-Blackwell, Malden, MA.
- Malik, H. (2013), "Relationship between leader behaviors and employees' job satisfaction: a path-goal approach", *Pakistan Journal of Commerce and Social Sciences*, Vol. 7 No. 1, pp. 209-222.
- Markova, G. and Ford, C. (2011), "Is money the panacea? Rewards for knowledge workers", *International Journal of Productivity and Performance Management*, Vol. 60 No. 8, pp. 813-823.
- Marquard, J. (2010), "Leadership behavior impact on employee engagement", doctoral dissertation, Pepperdine University, Los Angeles, CA.
- Mauno, S., Kinnunen, U. and Ruokolainen, M. (2007), "Job demands and resources as antecedents of work engagement: a longitudinal study", *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, Vol. 70 No. 1, pp. 149-171.
- May, D., Gilson, R. and Harter, L. (2004), "The psychological conditions of meaningfulness, safety and availability and the engagement of the human spirit at work", *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, Vol. 77 No. 1, pp. 11-37.
- Mendes, F. and Stander, M. (2011), "Positive organization: the role of leader behavior in work engagement and retention", *SAJIP: South African Journal of Industrial Psychology*, Vol. 37 No. 1, pp. 29-41.

- Mishra, K., Boynton, L. and Mishra, A. (2014), "Driving employee engagement: the expanded role of internal communications", *Journal of Business Communication*, Vol. 51 No. 2, pp. 183-202.
- Mone, E., Eisinger, C., Guggenheim, K., Price, B. and Stine, C. (2011), "Performance management at the wheel: driving employee engagement in organizations", *Journal of Business and Psychology*, Vol. 26 No. 2, pp. 205-212.
- Pati, P. and Kumar, P. (2010), "Employee engagement: role of self-efficacy, organizational support and supervisor support", *Indian Journal of Industrial Relations*, Vol. 46 No. 1, pp. 126-137.
- Paulsen, N., Callan, J., Ayoko, O. and Saunders, D. (2013), "Transformational leadership and innovation in an R&D organization experiencing major change", *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, Vol. 26 No. 3, pp. 595-610.
- Pawar, A. and Chakravarthy, V. (2014), "Factors influencing employee turnover in fusion healthcare organization", *International Journal of Management Research and Reviews*, Vol. 4 No. 9, pp. 834-846.
- Piyachat, B., Chanongkorn, K. and Panisa, M. (2014), "The mediate effect of employee engagement on the relationship between perceived employer branding and discretionary effort", *DLSU Business and Economics Review*, Vol. 24 No. 1, pp. 59-72.
- Pueschel, A. (2005), "The effect of imposed organizational culture change on the productivity, employee satisfaction and quality of life of both work leaders and work groups within a learning organization", doctoral dissertation, Robert Morris University, Moon, PA, May.
- Rasmussen, T. and Jeppesen, H. (2006), "Teamwork and associated psychological factors: a review", *Work and Stress*, Vol. 20 No. 2, pp. 105-128.
- Robbins, P. and Judge, A. (Eds) (2012), *Organizational Behavior*, 14th ed., Prentice Hall, Upper Saddle River, NJ.
- Robinson, D., Perryman, S. and Hayday, S. (2004), "The drivers of employee engagement", Institute for Employment Studies Report No. 408, Institute for Employment Studies, Brighton.
- Saks, M. (2006), "Antecedents and consequences of employee engagement", *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, Vol. 21 No. 7, pp. 600-619.
- Schaufeli, W., Salanova, M., González-romá, V. and Bakker, A. (2002), "The measurement of engagement and burnout: a two sample confirmatory factor analytic approach", *Journal of Happiness Studies*, Vol. 3 No. 1, pp. 71-92.
- Seijts, G. and Crim, D. (2006), "What engages employees the most, or the ten Cs of employee engagement", *Ivey Business Journal*, Vol. 70 No. 4, pp. 1-5.
- Senior, B. and Swailes, S. (2004), "The dimensions of management team performance: a repertory grid study", *International Journal of Productivity and Performance Management*, Vol. 53 No. 4, pp. 317-333.
- Shuck, B., Reio, T. and Rocco, T. (2011), "Employee engagement: an examination of antecedent and outcome variables", *Human Resource Development International*, Vol. 14 No. 4, pp. 427-445.
- Silverthorne, C. (2001), "A test of the path-goal leadership theory in Taiwan", *Leadership and Organization Development Journal*, Vol. 22 No. 4, pp. 151-158.
- Soemaryani, I. and Rakhmadini, D. (2013), "Work-life balance and organizational culture in creating engagement and performance", *International Journal of Innovations in Business*, Vol. 2 No. 4, pp. 350-372.
- Sparrowe, T. and Liden, C. (2005), "Two routes to influence: integrating leader-member exchange and social network perspectives", *Administrative Science Quarterly*, Vol. 50 No. 4, pp. 505-535.
- Suharti, L. and Suliyanto, D. (2012), "The effects of organizational culture and leadership style toward employee engagement and their impacts toward employee loyalty", *World Review of Business Research*, Vol. 2 No. 5, pp. 128-139.

- Tims, M., Bakker, B. and Xanthopoulou, D. (2011), "Do transformational leaders enhance their followers' daily work engagement?", *The Leadership Quarterly*, Vol. 22 No. 1, pp. 121-131.
- Truss, K., Soane, E., Edwards, L., Wisdom, K., Croll, A. and Burnett, J. (2006), "Working Life: Employee Attitudes and Engagement 2006", Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, London.
- UAE Interact (2014), "Nahyan hails UAE's latest achievement in global competitiveness", available at: www.uaeinteract.com/ (accessed May 12, 2015).
- Ugwu, O., Onyishi, E. and Rodríguez-Sánchez, M. (2014), "Linking organizational trust with employee engagement: the role of psychological empowerment", *Personnel Review*, Vol. 43 No. 3, pp. 377-400.
- Wellins, R. and Concelman, J. (2005), "Creating a culture for engagement", *Workforce Performance Solutions*, Vol. 4, pp. 1-4.
- Wayne, S.J., Shore, L.M. and Liden, R.C. (1997), "Perceived organizational support and leader-member exchange: a social exchange perspective", *Academy of Management Journal*, Vol. 40 No. 1, pp. 82-111.
- Xu, J. and Thomas, C. (2011), "How can leaders achieve high employee engagement?", *Leadership and Organization Development Journal*, Vol. 32 No. 4, pp. 399-416.
- Yukl, G., O'Donnell, M. and Taber, T. (2009), "Influence of leader behaviors on the leader-member exchange relationship", *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, Vol. 24 No. 4, pp. 289-299.
- Zhu, W., Avolio, J. and Walumbwa, O. (2009), "Moderating role of follower characteristics with transformational leadership and follower work engagement", *Group & Organization Management*, Vol. 34 No. 5, pp. 590-619.

Further reading

- Abu Dhabi Department of Economic Development (2014), "Abu Dhabi innovation index", research project, INSEAD Innovation and Policy Initiative, Abu Dhabi.
- Airila, A., Hakanen, J., Punakallio, A., Lusa, S. and Luukkonen, R. (2012), "Is work engagement related to work ability beyond working conditions and lifestyle factors?", *International Archives of Occupational and Environmental Health*, Vol. 85 No. 8, pp. 915-925.
- Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (2014), "Developing managers to manage sustainable employee engagement, health and well-being", Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, London.
- Edgeman, R., Neely, A. and Eskildsen, J. (2015), "Guest editorial: continuously relevant and responsible organizations via creativity, innovation and sustainability", *International Journal of Productivity and Performance Management*, Vol. 64 No. 3, available at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/IJPPM-12-2014-0197>
- Khanduja, M. (2014), "New age employee engagement surveys", available at: <http://hrdictionaryblog.com/2014/05/23/new-age-employee-engagement-surveys/> (accessed February 8, 2016).

About the authors

Nada Al Mehrzi is a DBA Student, College of Business Administration, Abu Dhabi University, Abu Dhabi, UAE. Nada Al Mehrzi is the corresponding author and can be contacted at lovelyspirit25@gmail.com

Dr Sanjay Kumar Singh is an Associate Professor of Management, College of Business Administration, Abu Dhabi University, Abu Dhabi, UAE. His area of research interest include organizational culture and leadership, organizational learning, knowledge management, emotional intelligence, and employee engagement and retention.

For instructions on how to order reprints of this article, please visit our website:

www.emeraldgroupublishing.com/licensing/reprints.htm

Or contact us for further details: permissions@emeraldinsight.com