

## The Impact of Employee Engagement on Task Performance

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### Abstract

*In developed countries of the world, many studies have been carried out on the link between engagement and task performance in different context. Ignorable studies are conducted in developing countries like Pakistan. The aim of the present study was to explore potential link between engagement and task performance. This link was analyzed through statistical techniques called Pearson Correlations and Regression. The data was gathered through self-administered questionnaire distributed among teaching faculty working in the private owned universities. A total of 224 questionnaire were returned by respondents. After analyzing these questionnaires the results showed that there was positive connection in engagement and task performance and thus confirmed the hypothesis of the study.*

**Keywords:** Employee Engagement, Task Performance, Academic Staff, Private University.

### 1. Introduction

Organizations now a days more focus on efficiency and effectiveness of their resources. Whereas the most critical resource of organization's efficiency are its employees. If employees are satisfied and engaged will lead an organization to achieve its objectives (Rich, LePine & Crawford, 2010). Engaged employees are energetic and enthusiastic to fulfill their assigned duties (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Such employees take pride in taking additional responsibilities, sharing information with their colleagues, investing extra energy in performing a job and remaining with the same organization longer than the less engaged employees (LePine, Erez, & Johnson, 2002). Managers in organization are more curious to focus on employee engagement in order to achieve the organization

priorities (Shuck & Wollard, 2010). This shows that engagement is an important factor to support organization goals (Harter, Schmidt & Hayes, 2002, Schaufeli, & Taris, 2014). Engaged employees fulfill the duties according to their job description and always trying to improve their in-role performance (Rich et al., 2010). The in-role or task performance includes those activities or behaviors which directly add to the overall performance of an organization (Rotundo, 2000). In private university organization, academic staff plays an essential role in the overall performance. The academic staff of such universities are always trying to accomplish the tasks which are identified as part of their job description. This study is conducted to explore this association between engagement and task performance in the setting of faculty of private owned universities.

### **1.1 Statement of the Problem and Significance of the Study**

A mounting literature has shown positive association between employee engagement and task performance mostly in developed countries (Chughtai & Buckley, 2011). Ignorable studies have been showed to determine the relationship between employee engagement and task performance specifically for teaching faculty working in private owned universities of developing countries such as Pakistan. This study is an effort to fill this gap by investigating the said relationship in academic staff employed in universities of developing countries. The significance of the present study is to probe into the connection between engagement and task performance in the setting of academic staff working in the private owned universities of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan.

### **2. Literature Review**

Employee Engagement is an essential concept of industrial and organizational psychology and having an important role in the success of an organization by improving employee performance and efficiency (Harter, Schmidt & Hayes, 2002; Iaffaldano & Muchinsky, 1985). Schaufeli, Salanova, González-Romá, Bakker (2002) particularized that engagement is a positive, fulfilling work associated state of mind categorized by three important factors called vigor, dedication and absorption. Engagement not only improves the organizational level results but also increases individual level performance outcome (Iaffaldano & Muchinsky 1985). Thus engaged employee devotes maximum energy and efforts for achieving individual and organizational level outcomes.

Employee engagement can be seen from different perspectives (Shuck, 2011). The first perspective is based on Kahn (1990) Needs Satisfying Approach, saying that employees attached himself to their work roles, where they physically, emotionally, cognitively and mentally expresses themselves in the performing a specific role. The second perspective of employee engagement is based on Leiter (1997) and Schaufeli, Salanova, González-Romá, and Bakker (2002), which is the Burnout-Anti Thesis Approach. This approach explains engagement as an opposite of burnout. The dimensions of burnout consisting exhaustion, cynicism and lack of accomplishment are considered the exact opposite of vigor, dedication and absorption respectively. If an employee is highly engaged will be eventually lower in burnout and vice versa. Both these approaches have the similar meanings except the Kahn (1990) definitions ignores the burnout side.

Attridge (2009) elaborated that engaged employees always sense positive emotions at their work, find their work meaningful, accept extra work load and are always optimistic about their work. These behaviors are related to the Kahn (1990) definition that engaged employees are physically, cognitively and emotionally involved in their job. Schaufeli et

al., (2002) definition of employee engagement is expanded version of Kahn (1990) definition, where emotional component is associated with dedication, physical aspect is related to vigor and cognitive is associated with absorption (Attridge, 2009). In the present study, the Schaufeli, Salanova, González-Romá, Bakker (2002) and Schaufeli & Salanova, (2008) engagement concept has been used and measure through Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) as this scale is the highly reliable scale to measure engagement of employees (Schaufeli, 2012; Schaufeli & Taris 2014). Task performance or in-role performance is an important component of employee job performance and it plays an essential part in achieving organization competitive advantage. Borman and Motowidlo (1993) elaborated that task performance is the efficacy of employees with which they execute their work role in the way to add the organization's technical core. Task performance is considered as an important controllable employees' behavior focused towards organizational goals. Such behavior includes both physical and mental process for accomplishing of activities and tasks engraved in employee's job performance (McShane & Glinow, 2005; Murphy, 1989). Task performance is an obligatory behavior that related to obtaining stock or inventory, producing and selling of products, dealing with peers and subordinates and quality service delivering to customers (Motowidlo, 2003).

Christian, Garza, and Slaughter (2011) revealed that in term of task performance engaged employee perform their duties more effectively and efficiently. Bakker and Xanthopoulou (2009) in a survey of 124 Dutch workers found a positive association between engagement and task performance. Gorgievski, Bakker, and Schaufeli (2010) collected data from 2164 Dutch workers through self-reported questionnaire. The data was assessed by UWES of Schaufeli *et al.*, (2006) and was analyzed through multi group structural equation modeling. The outcomes of the study concluded positive link in engagement and task performance. The same results were also confirmed by Bakker, Demerouti, and ten Brummelhuis (2012). Therefore, on the basis of the previous literature, the present study hypothesizes that there is a positive connection between employee engagement and task performance in the context of teaching faculty working in private owned universities of developing countries such as Pakistan.

### **3. Methodology**

The self-administered questionnaire was distributed among the teaching of private universities. The data was gathered randomly from a sample of 224 individual faculty members working on permanent basis in these universities. The Schaufeli *et al.*, (2002) UWES Scale comprised of 17-items were used for collection of data regarding employee engagement whereas task performance was measured by a 9-items scale of Goodman and Svyantek's (1999). The 5- point Likert Scale was used for measuring both employee engagement and task performance scales where 1 represents 'strongly disagree' 2 specified disagree, 3 denoted neither agree nor disagree, 4 symbolized agree, while 5 epitomized 'strongly agree'.

### **4. Analysis**

The data for the present cross sectional study was process by Pearson Correlation and Regression. The Pearson correlation results shows positive association between employee engagement and task performance that is  $r = .60$  at significant level 0.01. This

means that there is significant correlation between engagement and task performance and therefore supported hypothesis of the study.

**Table 1: Correlations**

		Employee Engagement	Task Performance
Employee Engagement	Pearson Correlation	1	.600**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	224	224
Task Performance	Pearson Correlation	.600**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	224	224

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

To know the strength of the significant relationship in employee engagement and task performance, regression analysis was applied. The results of ANOVA expressed that  $F = 125.20$ , Sig at level of 0.05 further confirmed that employee engagement significantly effect the task performance. The results of the ANOVA test are shown in the following Table 2.

**Table 2: ANOVA<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	16.121	1	16.121	125.201	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	28.713	223	.129		
	Total	44.834	224			

a. Dependent Variable: Task Performance

b. Predictors: (Constant), EE

For supporting and further verification of prediction of task performance by employee engagement was analyzed by calculating the slope and intercept of the relationship. The results suggested a constant value 1.34 and a standardize coefficients 0.60 shown in the following table 3. This means that a one unit intensification in employee engagement can significantly escalate 0.60 unit in task performance.

**Table 3: Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.342	.152		8.839	.000
	Employee Engagement	.541	.048	.600	11.189	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Task Performance

To determine the level of variance in task performance a Model Summary of R-square change was calculated. The results shows a value of 0.36 R square change, which validates a 36% change in task performance base on employee engagement score. The details of the results are shown in the give Table 4.

**Table 4: Model Summary<sup>b</sup>**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					
					R Square Change	F Change	df 1	df2	Sig. Change	F Change
1	.600 <sup>a</sup>	.360	.357	.35883	.360	125.201	1	22	.000	

a. Predictors: (Constant), Employee Engagement

b. Dependent Variable: Task Performance

## 5. Discussion

A total of 224 questionnaire received from respondents were analyzed through statistical package (Version 21). The instrument was intended to analyze the affiliation between employee engagement and task performance. There were two sections of questionnaire: the one was measuring the employee engagement and the other was measuring the task performance. The study has confirmed a positive connection between employee engagement and task performance. The results of our research were similar to the results of Rich, LePine and Crawford (2010) study of 245 firefighters. Likewise, Schaufeli, Bakker and Salanova (2006) also found positive relationship between employee engagement and task performance. Furthermore, Bakker and Demerouti (2009) in a study of 175 Dutch couples also supported the Schaufeli, Bakker and Salanova (2006) results.

### 5.1 Conclusion and Future Implications

This study was an important contribution to the existing literature in the context of academic staff working in private universities. This study examined how employee engagement is related with task performance. The outcomes of this study concluded that employee engagement significantly related with task performance. To further elaborate the association between employee engagement and task performance, this research study recommends that a qualitative research in similar environment should be conducted. This will add rich meanings, de tails to the findings and opportunity to extend the research. Our sample size was quite low and was only representing universities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, therefore a larger sample representing overall private universities of Pakistan needs to be considered in ordered to further generalize the results of the present research.

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