

## **Employee Engagement: A Literature Review**

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### **ABSTRAK**

Keterlibatan karyawan selalu menjadi masalah menarik di mana saja di seluruh dunia, tidak hanya di dunia wirausaha, tetapi juga pada orang biasa. Seiring dengan masalah-masalah ini, definisi spesifik "keterlibatan karyawan" selalu diperbarui juga seiring waktu. Pada dasarnya, tujuan dari penelitian literatur ini adalah untuk menganalisis konsep (definisi) keterlibatan karyawan secara kronologis dari jumlah jurnal dan buku yang terkait dengan penggunaan metode observasi literatur. Sedangkan kontribusi orisinalitas dari penelitian ini adalah tentang pengembangan definisi keterlibatan karyawan secara kronologis. Tentu saja, tulisan ini menciptakan kontribusi orisinalitas untuk pengembangan definisi keterlibatan karyawan itu sendiri. Poin terakhir dari penelitian ini adalah dalam bentuk kesimpulan, di mana keterlibatan karyawan didefinisikan sebagai keadaan kognitif karyawan yang benar-benar terlibat secara emosional dengan menunjukkan perilaku positif, seperti antusiasme, dan sangat peduli untuk mencapai tujuan organisasi atau perusahaan.

**Kata Kunci:** Keterlibatan, Karyawan, Studi Literatur.

### **ABSTRACT**

*Employee engagement always an interesting issue anywhere around the globe, not only in entrepreneurship world, but also in everyday people. Along with these issues, the specific definition of "employee engagement" has always regenerated as well over time. Basically, the point of this literature research is to analyze the concept (definition) of employee engagement chronologically from numbers of journal and books related to usage of literature observation method. While the originality contribution of this research is about development of employee engagement's definition chronologically. Certainly, this writing creates an originality contribution to development of employee engagement's definition itself. The last point of this research is in form of conclusion, where employee engagement defined as cognitive state of employee which is really involved emotionally with showing positive behavior, such as enthusiasm, and concerned deeply to reach the organization or company's goal.*

**Key Words:** Engagement, Employee, Literature Review.

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1. Back Ground**

Up till this date, the concept of employee engagement allegedly known to be confused with other concepts. But, there is some presumption state that employee engagement is so important in an organization or a company and very closely related with performance. The concept employee engagement mostly used, searched, and developed in lot of companies. Why? Notice the first definition popularized by Kahn (1990) which states that employee engagement meant to be the bound of the member of the organization itself not only as physically, cognitively but also emotionally in term of performance.

The impact must be accompanied with, possibly, the advancement of company's productivity. Is that definition has been the concrete evidence and at least made a lot of companies to be tempted? This research actually working on obtaining the consistent definition that show a clear interpretation of concept, and historic understanding in construction about employee's involvement. Further point is to give perspective about employee engagement's definitions that involve at least five related and relevant journal to be explored.

### **1.2. Problem identification**

Nowadays, we may frequently find gaps of knowledge about this employee engagement. Sometimes it is hard to understand the organization's necessity and employee's involvement that later aimed for advancement of company's performance. There is a lot of definitions about employee engagement developed until today. But, is the context and goal of those definitions equal? To answer this problem, writer need to explore lot of definitions and historic understandings about construction in employee's involvement.

### **1.3. Problem Formulation**

In term of problem's formulation, this research problem formulated to:

1. What is the various definitions about employee engagement that has been developed until today?
2. How is the proving or validation of those definitions if it associated to existing concept and theory?

## **II. THEORETICAL BASIS**

Kahn (1990:694) was the first to coin and popularize the term engagement as he described how people can "use varying degrees of themselves – physically, cognitively and emotionally in work role performances". Furthermore, the concept or definition of employee engagement is growing and being used until now. Robinson et al. (2004: ix) define employee engagement as "a positive attitude held by the employee towards the organization and its value.

He also said "An engaged employee is aware of business context, and works with colleagues to improve performance within the job for the benefit of the organization. The organization must work to develop and nurture engagement, which requires a two-way relationship between employer and employee". Furthermore is definition of employee engagement from Shuck and Wollard, (2010:103).

They are defines employee engagement as "an individual employee's cognitive, emotional, and behavioral state directed toward desired organizational outcomes." This definition, encompassing the behavioral, cognitive, and emotional aspects of the employee experience of engagement offers a clarity that has seemingly eluded practitioners, is comprehensible to business and organization leaders, yet robust enough for future scholarly research.

Referring to existing definitions, Schliemann (2011:211) also defines employee engagement as willingness to advocate on behalf of the company, this includes the willingness to promote his company, buy and even invest in his company. Ariani (2013:52)

define employee engagement as a positive attitude held by the employee towards the organization and its values.

While Rustono and Akbary (2015:1174) formulates an employee engagement as an enthusiastic sense of work and a willingness to advocate for his company and employees to bring the physical, cognitive and emotional dimensions to work. Additionally, Vaidya Nathan and Maheshwari (2016: 28) also defines employee engagement as Employee involvement is an emotional commitment the employee has for the organization and its goals.

This Emotional commitment means that the employees involved really care about their work and company. They say engaged Employees do not work just for salary or just promotion. They are connected very closely to the goals of the organization and business results. In addition, Devi (2017:13) also said that employee engagement is a positive attitude held by the employees towards the organization and its values. It is rapidly gaining popularity and importance in the workplace and impacts organizations in many ways.

### **III. RESEARCH METHOD**

For this research, the methodology we used is the literature method. Bugin (2008) interprets literature method as one of data collection method used in social research methodology to discover historic data. While Sugiyono (2013) views literature method as notation to previous events in from of writings, drawings, and monumental creations of some people. And in this case research source tend to be secondary, which is data that required in supporting research outcomes from literatures, articles, and any source related to research (Sugiyono, 2013). In this research, secondary literature material from some site is included such as proquest.com, managejournal.com, academia.edu, hrd.sagepub.com, sciedu press, etc.

### **IV. DISCUSSION**

In this session, writer will review as much as five related journal related to employee engagement's definition. In first observation, it refers to research of Shuck and Wollard (2010) titled " Employee engagement HRD: A seminar review of the foundations". Basic of this journal's goal is to explore historic development of employee involvement in struggle to define and place the concept to the relevant literature field.

In this case Shuck and Wollard formulate some questions in their literature observation. One of the formulation that exactly related to understand employee engagement's definitions is about "what is definition of employee's involvement cited in literatures?" To acquire a valid definitions, those researcher worked to perform synthesis of some definitions from the experts. In that kind of proses they found each definitions, some consistency and inconsistency of some field that can be identified.

But, they also found some inconsistencies in understanding in definitions formulated by previous experts. Czarnowsky (2008), for example, which is reveals involvement generally only, made the readers assume involvement is an organization-level variable. He states that is a misunderstanding of employee's involvement is about organization and explain why some scientists, researchers, and practitioner have difficulty in developing some strategies.

They only begin the planning just too extensive. Instead, according to Kahn (1990), Harter, et.al. (2002), Saks (2006), and Marcey and Schneider (2008), advice the readers that employee engagement is a subject about individual, not mass, and is a personal decision which could not be mandated nor forced. Involvement in work is a personal experience that could not be separated from individualistic character of human being.

So according to Suck and Wollard with similar opinion that really in the meaning of “employee engagement” should be viewed deeply not generally. Suck and Wollard (2010) eventually have a notion “the scientist agreed in involvement of employees is about adaptive behavior focused in achievement and exceed organization outcomes” (in deep and personal scope).

Finally, the last process of definition synthesis from some experts like Kahn (1990), Herter (2002), then Suck and Wollard (2010) bring a deep definition about “employee engagement”. Suck and Wollard (2010) define it as “an individual employee’s cognitive, emotional, and behavioral state directed toward desired organizational outcomes”. They emphasize that the definition encompass behavioral, cognitive, and emotional aspect from experience of employee’s involvement giving clear explanation that can be understood by practitioner, business leader and organization, and strong enough for scientific research in the future.

The second journal to be studied in this writing is titled “The Relationship between Employee Engagement, Organizational Citizenship Behavior, and Counterproductive Work Behavior”, introduced by Ariani (2013). The purpose of this article is to explore the historical development of employee engagement in an effort to define and situate the concept across relevant fields of literature.

Several problem formulation on this journal, such as (1) what are the historical underpinnings of employee engagement? (2) How has the concept evolved? And (3) what definitions of employee engagement are cited in the literature? Based Ariani’s research goal, writer view a resemblance on first and second journal that is both in purpose to synthesis definition from some experts about employee engagement and with aid from literature review method.

Ariani finds that contrary to the belief that employee engagement is dominated by extra-role behaviors. This is because the employees involved experience high levels of connectivity with the organization. She continued, that the results of her research provides one answer in that employees who exhibited higher levels of engagement were found to contribute to their organizations with higher levels of individual OCB.

Thus she conclude that definition of employee engagement is “a positive attitude held by the employee towards the organization and its values”. The third journal titled “The Impact of Employee Engagement toward Employee Performance DAPEN TELKOM” by Rustono and Akbary (2015). The purpose of this research is to describe descriptively about employee engagement and employee performance in Bandung Telkom Pension Fund as well as determine the effect of employee engagement to employee performance in Bandung Telkom Pension Fund.

Not much differ from previous reviewed journals, in this journal Rustono and Akbary synthesize employee engagement’s definitions from some experts like Schliemann (2011),

Kahn (1990), and Robinson (2004). Rustono and Akbary eventually formulate the definition of employee engagement, they view is that is an enthusiasm in work and willingness to advocate the company and the employee, present physical dimension, cognitive, and emotional at work.

The fourth journal titled “Employee Engagement: A Literature Review” by Vaidyanathan and Maheshwari (2016). This journal in short working on understanding terms, function, and necessity of employee engagement. Vaidyanathan and Maheshwari (2016) review lot of previous researches such as Kahn (1990), Katie, et.al (2006), Gatenby, et.al (2009), Shuck and Wollard (2011).

In the reviewing and synthesizing process of the definitions of those researches, Vaidyanathan and Maheshwari (2016) conclude the concept of employee engagement as:

1. In a nutshell, all definitions of employee engagement can be summarized as the property of the relationship between an organization and its employees. What the employee is carrying to the office and what is organization is offering to the employee.

$$EE = f(\text{Employee, Organization})$$

2. All definitions of engagement addresses or stems from three concepts, a) Antecedents of engagement or what leads one to engagement, b) The state of engagement itself, and c) Outcomes of engagement, what the employee and the organization gets out of it.
3. All definitions of engagement encompass the three dimensions of engagement shared by Kahn, a) Emotional, b) Cognitive and c) Physical.

Eventually, Vaidyanathan and Maheshwari (2016) generate formula “Employee engagement is the emotional commitment the employee has to the organization and its goals. This emotional commitment means engaged employees actually care about their work and their company. An engaged employee do not work just for a paycheck or just promotions. They connect very closely with the organization’s goals and its business outcomes”.

The last journal, is a recent one from Devi (2017) titled “Impact of employee engagement on organizational performance: A study of select private sector banks”. The purpose of this journal is to have deep analysis of the relationship between Employee Engagement and Organizational Performance and its outcomes. This study giving a contribution in the banking sector by providing an insight to look up as how Employee Engagement enhances the Organizational Performance in banks.

In defining employee engagement, Devi oriented to Leitter and Bakker (2010) and Schaufeli et al. (2002). She argued that employee engagement is generally seen as a two-way interaction between the employee and the organization for which the organization has the accountability to show the way. She says again, there are numerous unique characteristics of an ‘engaged’ workforce consist of loyalty, satisfaction and encouragement, an association with the organization’s strategy, and the expression of discretionary effort on the part of the engaged employee.

In short, engaged employees have high levels of energy and are enthusiastic about their work. Her statement is supported by Schaufeli et al., (2002) view employee engagement as a positive, fulfilling work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption. Likewise with Leiter and Bakker (2010), who said that “engaged workers are full of life, are optimistically associated to their work and feel they are doing their jobs effectively”.

Based on reviews above, there is objective thoughts about rational definition of employee engagement. Of course we or you, as a reader, could think or underline that employee engagement assumed as a perspective related to psychiatric aspect of employee in loving their work including involvement of emotional side.

## V. CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis, it is a correct thing that there is definition of employee engagement still in form of perspective but most of them have resembled same ideas. At least the experts and the researchers have similar thoughts in formulating those definitions. Refers to statement above writers try to formulate this definition of employee engagement which is not so differ from previous definitions, at least to try to perfect existing definitions. Thus, the last point is that employee engagement is “cognitive state of employee which is really involved emotionally with showing positive behavior, such as enthusiasm, and concerned deeply, in purpose to reach the organization or company’s goal”.

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