

## EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AND JOB PERFORMANCE OF EMPLOYEES: A STUDY FROM HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY IN HIMACHAL PRADESH

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### ABSTRACT

Himachal Pradesh (H.P.), a northern Himalayan state of India possesses all natural parameters followed by the Government backing for the fast growing hospitality industry in the state. The study was taken assess the effect of Vigor, Dedication and Absorption dimensions of Employee engagement on the Job performance of the employees and its implication on this industry. The sample for the study was drawn from all the population units with the help of multi-stage sampling technique. Data was collected from manager/senior executives and supervisors/ junior executives by administering them structured questionnaire on employee engagement and job performance .Data analyses & interpretation was done by using simple percentage, Pearson Correlation and One Way ANOVA .

Among the total employees surveyed, 86.86 percent were males and 13.14 percent females, 69.14 percent married and 30.86 percent un-married, 89.43 percent contractual and 10.57 percent were salaried. Correlation analysis reveals that vigor, dedication and absorption has positive and significant relationship with contextual and task performance of employees. ANOVA also confirmed that these employees engagement factors significantly effects contextual and task performance of the employees. The Stake holders involved in H.P. Hospitality industry should conduct regular survey of their organizations and give impetus on employee engagement for the success of this industry.

**KEYWORDS:** Employee Engagement, Job Performance, Hospitality Industry, Himachal Pradesh (H.P.)

### INTRODUCTION

#### Introduction of the Study

In today's global competitive scenario Employee Engagement has emerged as an important and critical element for business success. Businesses are striving hard to gain an upper edge above others. Work place has no longer remained a place meant for earning a livelihood but it has turned into centre for discovering individual identity. Performance of employees plays a pivotal role in shaping the future of any organization. Organization as a whole and individual in particular contributes towards improved job performance.

The growing trends and increased competition in hospitality industry has caused even the front runners of the industry to evaluate their practices and check for areas of improvement.

The most fundamental challenge facing the hospitality industry is “the attraction and retention of the necessary number and quality of young people” (Lewis & Airey, 2001). Kim et al. (2009), commenting on the focus on engagement in hospitality research, have observed that “despite the growing interest about work engagement, studies in employee engagement are limited”.

Travel & Tourism generated 100,894,000 jobs directly in 2013 (3.4% of total employment) , this is forecast to grow by 2.2% in 2014 and by 2024, it will account for 126,257,000 jobs directly, an increase of 2.0% p.a. over the next ten years (Travel & Tourism Economic Impact 2014). In India this industry contributes around 6.23 percent to the national GDP and 8.78 percent of the total employment in the country in the year 2013 (Ministry of Tourism Govt. of India, 2013). The constant transformation has made the Indian hotel industry more functional and practical and has gained a level of acceptance all over the world. In Himachal Pradesh, hospitality industry is one of the important and growing industry (Economic Survey of HP, 2013), but on it virtually no study is made to assess the employee engagement and performance . Hence the present study is under taken to assess the effect of employee engagement on job performance of employees in hospitality industry of the state and to provide management of hospitality firms with an understanding that can stimulate employee engagement.

### **Concept of Employee Engagement**

The term “engagement” is rooted in the role theory, particularly in the work of Erving Goffman (1961) defining engagement as the “spontaneous involvement in the role” and a “visible investment of attention and muscular effort”. According to Maslach et al. (2001), engagement is characterized by energy, involvement, and efficacy, the direct opposite of the three burnout dimensions of exhaustion, cynicism, and inefficacy. It is the level of energy and decisions making that employee take to solve work related issues. Schaufeli et al. (2002), defined Work engagement as a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by firstly, vigor that is indicated by high levels of energy and mental resilience while working. Secondly, dedication which refers to being strongly involved in one’s work and experiencing a sense of significance, enthusiasm, and challenge. Thirdly absorption that is characterized by being fully concentrated and happily engrossed in one’s work, whereby time passes quickly and one has difficulties with detaching oneself from work (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Robinson et al. (2004), states engagement as a positive attitude held by the employee towards the organization and its values. An engaged employee is aware of business context, and works with colleagues to improve performance within the job for the benefit of the organization. According to Bakker et al. (2007), engagement is conceptualized as a high level of energy at work and a strong identification with one’s job. Macey et al. (2009) argued that engagement is best characterized as purposeful and focused energy which is directed toward organizational goals. Definition of engagement reflects two essential qualities that are positive and energized work related motivational state and a genuine willingness to contribute to work role and organizational success.

### **Concept of Job Performance**

According to Lawler (1976), job performance refers to the record of the results when employees have practiced a job for a certain period of time. Job performance is defined as quality and quantity accomplished by individuals or groups after fulfilling a task after a certain period of time, measurements of employees’ job performance could serve as criterion for promotions, wage adjustments, rewards, punishments and evaluations (Schermerhorn, 1989) . According to Bommer et al. (1995) “Job performance is the most widely studied criterion variable in the organizational behavior and human

resource management literatures". Lee et al. (1999) divided job performance into efficiency, efficacy and quality. According to Borman & Motowidlo, 1993; Goodman & Svyantek, 1999, employees performance consists of their task or in-role behavior and their contextual or extra-role behavior. The definition of task performance emphasizes the instrumentality of performance for organizational goals. It refers to those required outcomes and behaviors that directly serve the goals of the organization (Motowidlo & Van Scotter, 1994). Contextual or extra-role performance is defined as discretionary behaviors on the part of an employee that are believed to directly promote the effective functioning of an organization without necessarily directly influencing an employee's productivity (Podsakoff et al., 2000). Robbins (2005) divided the measurement of job performance into job result, job behavior and personal traits. One among the factors that encourage positive feelings in the work place and help develop a sense of belongingness in the employees is Employee Engagement. It is considered as a major source of employee development and innovation (Ghafoor et al., 2011). Engaged employees are called the 'builders' (Mishra & Misra, 2011). These are the employees who work with passion and feel a profound connection to their organization. They remain interested in always exceeding the expectation of their role so that they can perform consistently at higher levels.

### **Hospitality Industry in Himachal Pradesh**

Hospitality is 'a harmonious mixture of food, beverage, and/or shelter, a physical environment, and the behavior and attitude of people' (Casseo & Reuland, 1983). Good hospitality includes generosity towards the visitors to feel comfortable in their stay, delicious and satisfying food and affectionate behavior of hospitality providing staff. Though hospitality is inbuilt character of human beings and every civilization/ regions/ countries has its history and its guiding principle to serve the guest, but in India based on mantras from the Taittiriya Upanishd, the principle of *Atithi Devo Bhava* meaning "the guest is God" is followed. (Anonymous, n. d.)

Himachal Pradesh is a small hilly State anciently known as "Dev Bhumi" (The abode of Gods) situated in the northern part of the country. The word "Hima" means snow when translated to Sanskrit, and the meaning of the term stands out to be an area that sits on the laps of the mountains. The state is covered with immense natural beauty and is undoubtedly, one of the most popular tourist destinations in the world. It has 12 districts namely Bilaspur, Chamba, Hamirpur, Kangra, Kullu, Lahaul & Spiti, Mandi, Shimla, Sirmour, Solan, Una and Kinnaur (H.P Development Report, 2001). The state situated between latitudes 30°22'40" North to 33°12'40" North and longitudes 75°45' 55" East to 79°04' 20" East. Located in the northern part of India, the state stands bordered by Punjab in the west, Uttar Pradesh in the southeast, China in the east, Haryana in the southeast and Jammu and Kashmir in the north. The entire state of Himachal has a hilly and rugged terrain, with the altitude ranging from 350 meters to 7000 meters above sea level (PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry report, 2012). Geographical and cultural diversity ranging from, snow covered mountains, clean, peaceful and beautiful streams, sacred shrines, historic monuments and the friendly and hospitable people empower the state with all the basic resources necessary for the attraction and development of hospitality industry in this hilly state. Based on the above said factors followed by the govt. backing up in the form of appropriate infrastructure and amenities, this industry is picking up. Number of tourists increased from 71.36 lakh in 2005 to 161.46 lakh in 2012 and number of hotels, guest houses and other entrepreneur venture are coming up particularly in well known hill stations like Manali, Kullu, Shimla, Dharmshala, Dalhousie, Solan etc. (Economic Survey of HP, 2013).

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### Study Hypotheses

Job Performance dimensions that is contextual and task performance of employees was taken for the study. Contextual Performance includes activities that support the organizational, social, and psychological environment in which task performance occurs. They are common to all jobs. These activities are less role-prescribed. For contextual performance, the major sources of variation are employee predispositions and volition. Behaviors such as volunteering, helping, persisting, etc. are probably better predicted by volitional variables related to individual differences in motivational characteristics and predisposition (Borman & Motowidlo, 1993; Motowidlo & Van Scotter, 1994) or person–organization fit (Borman et al., 1995). Task Performance includes activities that contribute either directly or indirectly to the technical core of the organization. It varies between different jobs within the same organization. The activities are role-prescribed and are behaviors that employees perform in exchange for pay. The important human characteristics for completing task activities are knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs). These KSAs usually co - vary with task proficiency (Goodman & Svyantek, 1999).

The dimensions of Employee Engagement which were taken for the study includes:

**a) Vigor:** It is characterized by high levels of energy and mental resilience while working, the willingness to invest effort in one's work, and persistence even in the face of difficulties.

**H<sub>0</sub>1:** Vigor has no effect on job performance of employees.

**b) Dedication:** It refers to being strongly involved in one's work and experiencing a sense of significance, enthusiasm and challenge.

**H<sub>0</sub>2:** Dedication has no significant influence on job performance of employees

**c) Absorption:** It is characterized by being fully concentrated and happily engrossed in one's work, whereby time passes quickly and one has difficulties with detaching oneself from work (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004).

**H<sub>0</sub>3:** Absorption has no effect job performance of employees.

### Data Collection

Primary data has been collected from manager/senior executives and supervisors/ junior executives of selected hotels by administering them the questionnaire on employee engagement and job performance. Interpersonal interactions and observations have also been utilized for cross checking the questionnaires.

The sample for the study was drawn from all the population units with the help of multi-stage sampling. At the first stage all the districts were arranged in descending order of the number of registered hotels under Department of Tourism and Civil Aviation Govt of Himachal Pradesh and are given in table 1.

**Table 1: List of Registered Hotels/Guest Houses (2012-2013)**

Sr. No.	District	No. of Hotels/Guest House
1.	Kullu	613
2	Shimla	397
3.	Hamirpur	35
4.	Kangra	379
5.	Kinnaur	73
6.	Bilaspur	66
7.	Lahaul & Spiti	89
8.	Mandi	145
9.	Chamba	123
10.	Sirmour	72
11.	Solan	204
12.	Una	51

In the second stage in order to make the sample representative, the following procedure was adopted.

- 4 districts [ Kullu (613), Shimla (397), Kangra(379) ,Chamba (123)] consisting of one among highest , two moderate and lowest number of registered hotels were identified for the study.
- In each district the hotels were arranged in the alphabetical order of their names and every 10<sup>th</sup> hotel is selected for the study.

Finally 151 hotels were selected for study comprising of the hotels from four different districts as shown in table 2.

**Table 2: Districts and Number of Hotels Selected for the Study**

S. No.	District	No. of Hotels
1	Kullu	61
2	Shimla	40
3	Kangra	38
4	Chamba	12

### Tools for Analysis

The data was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Science Research (SPSS) and the following tools were used:

- Simple percentage
- Pearson Correlation
- One way ANOVA

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Demographic profile of the respondents as regards to demographic variables, Age, Gender, Education Marital Status, Annual Income and income status along with their Frequency and percentage is given in Table 3.

**Table 3: Demographic Variables**

S. No.	Demographic Variables	Description	Frequency	Percentage
1	Age (Years)	20-30	151	43.14
		30-40	125	35.71
		40-50	57	16.29
		Above 50	17	4.86
2	Gender	Male	304	86.86
		Female	46	13.14
3	Education	10 <sup>th</sup>	46	13.14
		12 <sup>th</sup>	117	33.43
		UG	160	45.72
		PG	27	7.71
4	Marital Status	Married	242	69.14
		Un-Married	108	30.86
5	Annual Income (Rs.)	0-50000	32	9.15
		50000-100000	161	46.00
		100000-150000	116	33.14
		Above 150000	41	11.71
6	Income Status	Contractual	313	89.43
		Salaried	37	10.57

The table 3 Shows that the sample consists of 43.14 percent employees from the age group of (20-30 yrs), 35.71 percent from the age group (30-40 yrs), 16.29 percent from the age group of (40-50 yrs) and 4.86 percent from the age group above (50 yrs) Among the total employees, 86.86 percent are males and 13.14 percent females, 69.14 percent married and 30.86 percent un-married, 89.43 percent contractual and 10.57 percent salaried. The table further shows 13.14 percent 10<sup>th</sup> standard, 33.43 percent 12<sup>th</sup> /plus two /Diploma holders, 45.72 percent undergraduate and 7.71 percent Post graduate employees. 9.15 percent employees have income per annum less than Rs. fifty thousand, 46 percent between Rs. Fifty thousand and Rs. One lakh, 33.14 percent between Rs. one lakh and Rs. One lakh fifty thousand and 11.71 percent above Rs . One lakh fifty thousand respectively. 89.43 percent employees were contractual while only 10.57 percent constituted a salaried class. Organization variables of the respondents i.e. Job Tenure , Designation at work , Type of organization and its Size along with their frequency and percentage is given in Table 4.

**Table 4: Distribution of the Sample in Terms of Organizational Variables**

S. No.	Organizational Variables	Description	[Frequency	Percentage
1.	Job Tenure(Years)	0-10	240	68.57
		10-20	81	23.14
		20-30	21	6.00
		Above 30	8	2.30
2.	Designation at work	Manager/Senior Executive	267	76.29
		Supervisor/Junior Executive	83	23.71
3	Type of organization	Private	314	89.71
		Public	36	10.29
4	Size of organization (No. of Rooms)	1-10	35	10
		10-20	189	54
		20-30	103	29.43
		Above 30	23	6.57

The table 4 shows that the respondents with the lowest years of experience that is (0-10yrs) were 68.57 percent, with the experience of (10-20 yrs) were 23.14 percent, with (20-30 yrs) were 6 percent and with more that (30 yrs) of experience were 2.30 percent. The number of managers/senior executives in the sample was 76.29 percent where as supervisors/ junior executives were 23.71 percent. 89.71 percent employees were employed in private hotels and 10.29 percent were employed in public hotels. The employees from lowest size of organization (1-10 rooms) were 10 percent, with the size of (10-20 rooms) were 54 percent, further with (20-30 rooms) were 29.43 percent and with the size of more than 30 rooms were 6.57 percent.

Interrelationship between employee engagement and job performance on the basis of correlation analysis is presented in Table 5.

**Table 5: Interrelationship between Employee Engagement and Job Performance**

Employee Engagement Dimensions	Job Performance Dimensions	
	Contextual Performance	Task Performance
Vigor	.534(**)	.576(**)
Dedication	.431(**)	.443(**)
Absorption	.507(**)	.618(**)

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

Table 5 shows the following impact of Vigor, Dedication and Absorption factors on the Contextual Performance and Task performance dimensions of Job Performance of the employees .

**a) Vigor:** ( $r=.534, p<0.01$ ) for contextual performance and ( $r= .576, p<0.01$ ) for task performance shows that vigor has a positive and significant relationship with contextual and task performance.

**b) Dedication:** There is a positive and significant relationship between dedication and contextual performance ( $r=.431, p<0.01$ ) as well as task performance ( $r= .443, p<0.01$ ). Thus it can be inferred that if dedication of employees is high, it can lead to increase in contextual and task performance.

**c) Absorption:** There exist a significant positive relationship between absorption and contextual performance ( $r=.507, p<0.01$ ) and task performance ( $r= .618, p<0.01$ ). The above observation concludes that increased degree of absorption changed the two job performance parameters of contextual and task performance in positive direction.

Interrelationship between employee engagement and job performance based on One- Way ANOVA is given in Table 6.

**Table 6: Employee Engagement Dimensions and Job Performance Dimensions**

Employee Engagement Dimensions	Job Performance Dimensions			
	Contextual Performance		Task Performance	
	F-Value	P-Value	F-Value	P-Value
Vigor	4.133*	.000	5.036*	.000
Dedication	2.891*	.000	2.865*	.000
Absorption	4.036*	.000	5.720*	.000

$p < 0.05$  \*\*  $p < 0.01$



The one way ANOVA table 6 suggests that all employee engagement dimensions that is vigor ( $F=4.133$ ,  $p<0.05$ ), dedication ( $F=2.891$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) and absorption ( $F=4.036$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) affects contextual performance of employees significantly. Further task performance is also affected by vigor ( $F=5.036$ ,  $p<0.05$ ), dedication ( $F=2.865$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) and absorption ( $F=5.720$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) significantly. Thus employee engagement significantly effects contextual and task performance of the employees.

The above analysis concludes that employee engagement significantly influences job performance of employees. There are several reasons why engaged workers may perform better than their non-engaged counterparts (Demerouti & Cropanzano, 2010). According to the broaden-and-build theory (Fredrickson, 2001), positive emotions like joy, interest and contentment share the capacity to broaden people's momentary thought-action repertoires and build their personal resources (ranging from physical and intellectual resources to social and psychological) through widening the array of thoughts and actions. Thus, engaged workers may perform better because they often experience positive emotions and are open to new experiences. Several recent studies (Fredrickson & Losada, 2005; Demerouti & Cropanzano, 2010) have indeed shown that work engagement is positively related to job performance, which the present study also supports. The analysis of the effects of vigor, dedication and absorption reveals significant effect on contextual and task performance. Hence it rejects the null hypothesis ( $H_01$ ) that Vigor has no effect on job performance of employees.

The results indicate that strong relationship exists between employee engagement and job performance. Increase in vigor, dedication and absorption among employees increased their contextual and task performance. The more the employees are enthusiastic and involved in their job, the more their performance and work improves. It is also in accordance study by Bakker et al. (2007) that revealed that engaged employees scored higher in extra role performance than those not engaged employees and work engagement was significantly related to extra role performance of employees (Chung & Angeline, 2010). Further Schaufeli et al. (2002) & Ghafoor et al. (2011) in their research studies report that employee engagement has a positive relationship with employee job performance and outcomes in the organization. Xanthopoulou et al. (2008) in a survey on flight attendants concluded that employee engagement mediated the relationship between self efficacy and both in-role and extra- role performance. In short the above results conclude that all employee engagement is related to job performance of employees. Hence the present study rejects the null hypothesis ( $H_02$ ) that assumes no significant influence of dedication on the job performance of employees

Increase in degree of absorption found to positively effects job performance parameters of contextual and task performance hence the null hypothesis ( $H_03$ ) which states that absorption has significant effect on job performance of employees has been rejected .

The findings reveal that the null hypothesis taken for the study were not only found to be rejected but all the three dimensions of Employee Engagement i.e. vigor, dedication and absorption taken for the study were found to have positive relationship with dimensions of job performance i.e. Contextual and task performance, therefore hospitality industry should conduct regular Employee engagement surveys based upon these criteria's. This would help the top management to know about how employees feel while working in the organization and would help to increase their job performance. Career development programmes should be designed so that the employee can clearly figure out his career path and growth opportunities available to him. These programs would help employees understand how the organization would help them achieve their career goals, so that they develop a sense of belongingness that would further help in creating an engaged



organizational culture. H.P. Tourism department should conduct regular surveys of employees to know about the problems and working conditions of employees which will have a positive effect on the tourism industry in the state particularly when competition in the hospitality industry has increased manifold.

## CONCLUSIONS

The hospitality industry of H.P. which is growing industry in the state, the dimensions of Employee Engagement has been found to have positive relation with dimensions of job performance i.e. contextual and task performance of employees, hence for the healthy growth of this industry in the state, there needs to give impetus to these dimensions of employees. There is needs to conduct regular surveys and based on them re-dress employees problem and provide them incentives. It will not only develop a sense of belongingness of these employees in their respective organizations but will energize them to work enthusiastically not only for the success of their respective organizations but the state hospitality industry as whole. All Stake holders involved H.P. Hospitality industry including private individual & cooperative, Govt hotels, state H.P. Tourism department, state Department of welfare department and department of tourism Govt of India etc should have a policy for regular time bond assessment of employees engagement factors and their impact on the growth and success of this industry.

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