Edu Rekha International Journal of Entrepreneurship, Economics and Business Management

ARTICLE TITLE:

Investigating Factors that Influence Employee Engagement at Bank Kerjasama Rakyat Malaysia Berhad or Bank Rakyat

Abdul Kadir bin Othman

Faculty of Business and Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA, 40450 Shah Alam, Selangor, Malaysia

Abstract

Employee engagement is a critical determinant of organizational success, yet disengagement persists as a challenge, particularly in workplaces composed of diverse generational cohorts. This study investigates the factors influencing employee engagement across Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials, and Generation Z, exploring how distinct generational values, attitudes, and preferences shape engagement drivers and outcomes. Existing literature highlights the multidimensional nature of employee engagement, encompassing vigor, dedication, absorption, and key engagement factors such as communication, recognition, professional growth, work-life balance, and leadership. However, limited research has focused on generational perspectives, leaving a gap in understanding how engagement strategies can be tailored to generational differences. Using a mixed-methods approach, this study will conduct qualitative interviews and focus groups to develop a generationally sensitive engagement measure, followed by a pilot test to validate the instrument. Quantitative analysis of survey data will identify significant predictors of engagement for each generation and inform the development of an Employee Engagement Index. The findings aim to enrich theoretical insights and offer actionable strategies for fostering engagement in multigenerational workplaces. By addressing generational nuances, this research provides a foundation for designing inclusive practices that enhance employee satisfaction, performance, and organizational success.

Keywords: employee engagement, Generation X, Generation Y, Millennials, Generation Z

Introduction

Employee engagement is a critical issue faced by many organizations across the industry. Organizations have realized that engaged employees can do amazing things for them. However, unengaged employees are their liability. Unengaged employees have become more prevalent with the emergence of different generations of employees in the workplace. Four generations of employees are actively employed: Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials or Generation Y, and Generation Z. These generations have different personalities and characteristics, work attitudes and cultures, orientations toward careers, and orientations toward technology.

Although abundant past studies have been conducted regarding employee engagement in the last few decades, these studies have focused on the predictors of engagement and its outcomes. Limited studies have integrated this topic with the emergence of different generations of employees in the workplace. It is assumed that different generations have different perspectives on work engagement; different factors might contribute to it according to generation. Furthermore, the outcome of engagement might also be different. These are the research gaps that researchers worldwide should explore to obtain convincing results.

This paper aims to discuss factors contributing to work engagement from the perspectives of different generations of employees in the workplace. The expected findings can enrich work in the research area and contribute to organizational practices for engaging employees from all workforce cohorts. The paper is organized as follows: introduction, literature review, proposed research methodology, implications of the proposed study, and conclusion.

Literature Review

Employee engagement refers to employees' emotional commitment and dedication toward their work, organization, and goals (Schaufeli, 2013). Engaged employees are enthusiastic about their jobs, feel connected to their workplace, and are motivated to contribute their best efforts to help the organization succeed (Azevedo, Schlosser, & McPhee, 2021). Engaged employees tend to go beyond mere satisfied employees to have a deeper connection that involves an individual's emotional and intellectual investment in their work.

Work engagement is a multidimensional concept encompassing various aspects of an individual's psychological and emotional connection to work. One commonly used model for understanding the dimensions of work engagement is the "Utrecht Work Engagement Scale," developed by Schaufeli, Bakker, and Salanova (2006). This model constitutes three dimensions of work engagement. The first dimension of work engagement is vigor, which reflects high energy levels, mental resilience, and a strong willingness to invest effort in one's work. Employees with high vigor are typically enthusiastic, persistent, and eager to take on challenging tasks (Schaufeli et al., 2006).

The second dimension of work engagement is dedication. It involves a strong sense of significance, enthusiasm, and pride in one's work. Engaged employees with high dedication are often characterized by a strong emotional connection to their work and a belief in the value of their contributions to the organization (Schaufeli et al., 2006). The third dimension of work engagement is absorption, which refers to being fully concentrated and deeply engrossed in one's work to the point where time seems to pass quickly. Employees who experience high levels of absorption are often so immersed in their tasks that they may lose track of their surroundings (Schaufeli et al., 2006).

Previous studies have discovered that certain factors might lead to employee engagement (Albrecht, Green, & Marty, 2021; Heslina, & Syahruni, 2021; Katili, Wibowo, & Akbar, 2021; Lai, Tang, Lu, Lee, & Lin, 2020; Lartey, 2021; Rahman, Björk, & Ravald, 2020; Rasool, Wang, Tang, Saeed, & Iqbal, 2021; Riyanto, Ariyanto, & Lukertina, 2019; Riyanto, Endri, & Herlisha, 2021; Siddiqui, & Sahar, 2019; Teo, Bentley, & Nguyen, 2020).

The first factor is clear communication (Siddiqui, & Sahar, 2019). Leaders who practice open and transparent communication foster trust and help employees understand the organization's goals, values, and expectations. It also involves listening to employees' concerns and feedback. The second factor that can contribute to employee engagement is recognition and appreciation (Lartey, 2021). Organizations that regularly acknowledge employees' contributions and achievements, whether through formal recognition programs or simple expressions of gratitude, can engage them.

The third factor that can contribute to employee engagement is opportunities for growth and development (Riyanto et al., 2021). Employees become more engaged when they find the organization provides professional and personal development opportunities. This includes training programs, mentorship, and career advancement opportunities. The fourth factor that can contribute to employee engagement is work-life balance (Katili et al., 2021; Riyanto, et al., 2019). Organizations that provide a healthy work-life balance among their employees help prevent burnout and contribute to their overall well-being. Among other things, flexible work arrangements, reasonable working hours, and policies that promote work-life balance can enhance employee engagement.

A positive workplace culture is the fifth factor that can contribute to employee engagement (Rasool et al., 2021; Teo et al., 2020). A positive and inclusive workplace culture encourages collaboration, diversity, and a sense of belonging. Employees are more likely to be engaged if they feel valued and included. Empowerment and autonomy are the sixth factors that can contribute to employee engagement (Albrecht et al., 2021; Rahman et al., 2020). Organizations that provide their employees with a sense of control over their work, decision-making, and the ability to contribute ideas to foster a sense of ownership and engagement among their employees.

The seventh factor that can contribute to employee engagement is fair compensation and benefits (Lartey, 2021; Riyanto et al., 2021). Organizations that provide fair compensation to their employees that reflect their contributions, including competitive salaries, benefits, and reward systems, can create a positive employee perception of the organization. As a result, employees will become more engaged. The eighth factor that can contribute to employee engagement is effective leadership (Lai et al., 2020). Leaders who provide a clear direction set a positive example, and support the well-being of employees are crucial for engagement (Nikolova, Schaufeli, & Notelaers, 2019). Approachable, empathetic, and supportive leaders create a positive work environment that engages employees.

Meaningful work is the ninth factor that can contribute to employee engagement (Kaur & Mittal, 2020). Employees are more engaged when they find their work meaningful and aligned with their values. Understanding the impact of their contributions to the organization's goals can enhance engagement. The last factors that can contribute to employee engagement are social connection and team dynamics (Budrienė & Diskienė, 2020). Organizations that build strong interpersonal relationships among team members and foster camaraderie can contribute to a positive and engaging work environment (Chakraborty & Ganguly, 2019).

Although these factors have been researched extensively throughout the world, some may or may not be applicable to addressing employee engagement issues. Most authors agreed that the effort to investigate the predictors of engagement should be specifically tailored to contexts and organizations since different contexts and organizations may have distinct practices and elements, including culture, manpower composition and readiness, leadership styles, and managerial practices.

Employee generational differences are another set of factors that should be considered when working on employee engagement. Employee engagement strategies can be received differently by employees of different generations due to variations in values, expectations, and work preferences. While it's crucial to avoid broad generalizations, as individuals within each generation are diverse, some tendencies and preferences have been observed.

Baby Boomers (born roughly 1946-1964)

Baby Boomers may appreciate formal recognition programs and public acknowledgment of their contributions (Hansen, & Slagsvold, 2020; Suomäki, Kianto, & Vanhala, 2019; Zemke, Raines, & Filipczak, 2013). They value hard work and dedication. They may respond well to initiatives that highlight their experience and expertise. They prefer face-to-face and traditional communication over digital (Looney, Caton-Rosser, Ristau, Haar, & Escudero, 2021).

Generation X (born roughly 1965-1980)

Gen Xers may appreciate autonomy and independence in their work (Tarigan, Mariatin, & Ananda, 2021; Suomäki et al., 2019; Zemke et al., 2013). They may respond positively to initiatives that allow for flexibility and self-direction. This generation seeks a balance between work and personal life. Flexible work arrangements and wellness programs may be well-received by this generation of employees. Gen Xers may appreciate direct and constructive feedback to help them improve and grow.

Millennials (born roughly 1981-1996)

Millennials often seek purpose and meaning in their work (Gustitia, 2019; Suomäki et al., 2019; Zemke et al., 2013). Engagement initiatives highlighting the organization's values and social responsibility may resonate with them. Millennials are generally comfortable with technology. They may prefer digital communication channels and enjoy using technology for training and development. They value collaboration and teamwork. Team-building activities and opportunities for social connections can be effective.

Generation Z (born roughly 1997-2012)

Gen Z employees often focus on learning and career development (Tootle, 2020). Opportunities for skill-building and mentorship programs may be attractive to them. Gen Z highly values diversity and inclusion (Gabrielova, & Buchko, 2021). Organizations that actively promote these values may appeal to this generation. Gen Z is the first generation to grow up with technology. They may prefer digital communication methods and platforms (Szymkowiak, Melović, Dabić, Jeganathan, & Kundi, 2021).

Based on the above discussion, various factors may contribute to employee engagement. The quest to determine the right factors should be tailored to a particular organization so that correct measures and interventions can be implemented to enhance the level of employee engagement. Moreover, a specific focus should be given to different generations of employees in the organization. They have distinct work attitudes, orientations, and styles that the management should give special attention.

Proposed Research Methodology

This proposed study should use qualitative and quantitative research methods. A qualitative research method is meant to gain insight into the factors contributing to workplace employee engagement. It will be done using interviews. After that, a focus group study should follow where items for the measuring instrument will be identified. After that, a pilot test should be conducted to validate the newly developed measure, which will later be used to collect the required data to confirm the employee engagement model.

The first qualitative technique is the interview, where representatives of the employees working with the organization will be chosen. The total number of representatives can be determined, as the objective of the interview is to get saturated answers to the research questions. The interview session will cease once the respondents repeatedly give the same answers. The estimated number of subjects for the interview is 10 to 20, and the number can be increased or reduced based on the responses given by the respondents during the interview.

The second qualitative technique is a focus group study. The items will be developed based on the responses received from the interview sessions. Experts in the human resource management field should represent the focus group study. They can be separated into four groups that will be assigned different tasks based on the study's objectives. Each group will discuss the given topic, and at the end of the session, the group leader will present the findings from the group discussion. This approach allows valid and reliable questionnaire items to be developed, and the questionnaire is ready for the pilot test.

The pilot test should be conducted by having at least 30 respondents representing employees working at the organization. The primary purpose of this pilot test is to ensure that respondents understand the items and provide valid and reliable answers. Once the questionnaire's validity and reliability are confirmed, it will be used to collect the data for the main study. Since one of the study's objectives is to develop the Employee Engagement Index, a census is preferred to determine the score for each branch and demographic factor.

The data from the pilot test and the main study will be analyzed using descriptive, reliability, correlation, and multiple regression analyses. The findings should be reported in tables and figures that facilitate understanding.

Implications of the Proposed Study

Theoretical Implications

The proposed study has a few theoretical implications. First, it contributes to the existing knowledge on employee engagement by incorporating generational perspectives. It bridges a significant gap in the literature, offering insights into how generational differences influence engagement factors and outcomes. Second, by identifying generationally distinct drivers of engagement, the study provides a nuanced framework for understanding engagement across cohorts. This model can serve as a basis for further theoretical exploration and validation. Third, integrating generational preferences within established engagement dimensions—vigor, dedication, and absorption—broadens the scope of these constructs, making them more inclusive and contextually relevant. Fourth, the proposed mixed-methods approach combines qualitative insights and quantitative validation, demonstrating a robust methodology for studying engagement in diverse workplaces. This may encourage researchers to adopt similar comprehensive approaches in related studies.

Practical Implications

The proposed study provides some practical implications for organizations. First, organizations can develop targeted interventions to enhance engagement based on generational preferences, such as flexible work arrangements for Generation X, technology-driven solutions for Millennials and Gen Z, and traditional recognition programs for Baby Boomers. Second, by addressing the unique needs of each generation, companies can foster a more inclusive and engaging work environment, reducing turnover rates and retaining top talent across cohorts. Third, the findings can inform human resource practices, including recruitment, onboarding, training, and performance management, to better align with generational expectations and values. Fourth, a deeper understanding of generational differences can help organizations build a positive workplace culture that promotes collaboration, diversity, and mutual respect among employees of all ages. Fifth, creating a comprehensive index allows organizations to systematically assess engagement levels, identify improvement areas, and track progress over time. Lastly, leaders can leverage the insights to adopt leadership styles and communication approaches that resonate with employees from

different generational cohorts, fostering stronger connections and motivation.

By addressing theoretical and practical implications, the study aims to contribute to the scholarly understanding of employee engagement and provide actionable strategies for enhancing workplace performance and satisfaction in multigenerational settings.

Conclusion

Employee engagement remains a pivotal factor in organizational success, and addressing it effectively is increasingly complex in today's multigenerational workforce. This study acknowledges the significance of generational differences, highlighting how employees from Baby Boomers to Generation Z exhibit distinct work attitudes, values, and preferences that influence their engagement levels. While previous research has extensively examined predictors of engagement and its outcomes, this study fills an essential gap by exploring these predictors through a generational lens. The proposed research methodology employs a mixed-methods approach, integrating qualitative insights with quantitative validation to ensure a robust and comprehensive understanding of engagement factors. By developing an Employee Engagement Index and identifying generationally distinct drivers, this study aims to provide a theoretical framework for future research and practical tools for organizations. The expected outcomes have wide-reaching implications. Theoretically, the study enriches the academic discourse on employee engagement by incorporating generational perspectives. Practically, it offers actionable insights to help organizations design targeted engagement strategies, foster inclusivity, and adapt leadership practices to diverse workforce needs. Ultimately, this research seeks to enable organizations to harness the full potential of their multigenerational talent, creating a more engaged, productive, and harmonious workplace.

References

1. Albrecht, S. L., Green, C. R., & Marty, A. (2021). Meaningful work, job resources, and employee engagement. *Sustainability, 13*(7), 4045.
2. Azevedo, M. C. D., Schlosser, F., & McPhee, D. (2021). Building organizational innovation through HRM, employee voice and engagement. *Personnel Review, 50*(2), 751-769.
3. Budrienė, D., & Diskienė, D. (2020). Employee engagement: Types, levels, and relationship with the practice of HRM. *Malaysian E-Commerce Journal, 4*(2), 42-47.
4. Chakraborty, T., & Ganguly, M. (2019). Crafting engaged employees through positive work environment: Perspectives of employee engagement. In *Management techniques for employee engagement in contemporary organizations* (pp. 180-198). IGI Global.
5. Gabrielova, K., & Buchko, A. A. (2021). Here comes Generation Z: Millennials as managers. *Business Horizons, 64*(4), 489-499.
6. Gustitia, A. A. (2019). The effect of psychological capital on work engagement with job crafting as a mediator variable among generation Y employees. *Russian Journal of Agricultural and Socio-Economic Sciences, 91*(7), 324-331.
7. Hansen, T., & Slagsvold, B. (2020). An "army of volunteers"? Engagement, motivation, and barriers to volunteering among the baby boomers. *Journal of Gerontological Social Work, 63*(4), 335-353.
8. Heslina, H., & Syahruni, A. (2021). The influence of information technology, human resources competency, and employee engagement on the performance of employees. *Golden Ratio of Human Resource Management, 1*(1), 01-12.
9. Katili, P. B., Wibowo, W., & Akbar, M. (2021). The effects of leadership styles, work-life balance, and employee engagement on employee performance. *Quantitative Economics and Management Studies, 2*(3), 199-205.
10. Kaur, P., & Mittal, A. (2020). Meaningfulness of work and employee engagement: The role of affective commitment. *The Open Psychology Journal, 13*(1), 115-122.
11. Lai, F. Y., Tang, H. C., Lu, S. C., Lee, Y. C., & Lin, C. C. (2020). Transformational leadership and job performance: The mediating role of work engagement. *Sage Open, 10*(1), 2158244019899085.
12. Lartey, F. M. (2021). Impact of career planning, employee autonomy, and manager recognition on employee engagement. *Journal of Human Resource and Sustainability Studies, 9*(02), 135.
13. Looney, B., Caton-Rosser, M., Ristau, J., Haar, C., & Escudero, C. (2021). Exploring a new communication model: Overcoming baby boomer online technology barriers. In *EDULEARN21 Proceedings* (pp. 2034-2042). IATED.
14. Nikolova, I., Schaufeli, W., & Notelaers, G. (2019). Engaging leader–Engaged employees? A cross-lagged study on employee engagement. *European Management Journal, 37*(6), 772-783.
15. Rahman, A., Björk, P., & Ravald, A. (2020). Exploring the effects of service provider's organizational support and empowerment on employee engagement and well-being. *Cogent Business & Management, 7*(1), 1767329.
16. Rasool, S. F., Wang, M., Tang, M., Saeed, A., & Iqbal, J. (2021). How toxic workplace environment affects employee engagement: The mediating role of organizational support and employee wellbeing. International *Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 18*(5), 2294.
17. Riyanto, S., Ariyanto, E., & Lukertina, L. (2019). Work-life balance and its influence on employee engagement "Y" generation in the courier service industry. *International Review of Management and Marketing, 9*(6), 25.
18. Riyanto, S., Endri, E., & Herlisha, N. (2021). Effect of work motivation and job satisfaction on employee performance: Mediating role of employee engagement. *Problems and Perspectives in Management, 19*(3), 162.
19. Schaufeli, W. B. (2013). What is engagement? *Employee engagement in theory and practice, 15*(321), 9780203076965-10.
20. Schaufeli, W. B., Bakker, A. B., & Salanova, M. (2006). *Utrecht Work Engagement Scale-9 (UWES-9)*. APA PsycTests.
21. Siddiqui, D. A., & Sahar, N. (2019). The impact of training & development and communication on employee engagement–A study of the banking sector. *Business Management and Strategy, 10*(1), 23-40.
22. Suomäki, A., Kianto, A., & Vanhala, M. (2019). Work engagement across different generations in Finland: A Qualitative Study of Boomers, Yers and Xers. *Knowledge and Process Management, 26*(2), 140-151.

23. Szymkowiak, A., Melović, B., Dabić, M., Jeganathan, K., & Kundi, G. S. (2021). Information technology and Gen Z: The role of teachers, the internet, and technology in the education of young people. *Technology in Society, 65,* 101565.

24. Tarigan, A. F., Mariatin, E., & Ananda, F. (2021). The influences of work-life balance on work engagement millennial employee at bpjs ketenagakerjaan. *International Research Journal of Advanced Engineering and Science, 6*(3), 207-209.

25. Teo, S. T., Bentley, T., & Nguyen, D. (2020). Psychosocial work environment, work engagement, and employee commitment: A moderated, mediation model. *International Journal of Hospitality Management, 88,* 102415.

26. Tootle, C. M. (2020). *Employee Engagement and the Intention to Quit Among Generation Z* (Doctoral dissertation, South University).

27. Zemke, R., Raines, C., & Filipczak, B. (2013). *Generations at work: Managing the clash of Boomers, Gen Xers, and Gen Yers in the workplace*. Amacom.