

## **A BRIEF REVIEW OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT: DEFINITION, ANTECEDENTS AND APPROACHES**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Employee engagement, across the globe became a buzzword for business houses and the concept is also gaining importance as many antecedents of employee engagement are recognized, which are directly and indirectly proportional to company's profitability. Hence, employee engagement has become powerful source of competitive advantage and emerged as a new research interest for academicians and practitioners. Although the subject has been carved well however, little rigorous academic research has been done. This research gap has resulted in a disorganized approach to understand and develop employee engagement strategies within organizations. Thus, this article attempts to report the outcomes of a integrated literature review. The seminal works are identified and reviewed for the (1) defining of engagement construct by different researchers (2) summarize the key antecedents of employee engagement at work and instruments to measure engagement and (3) approaches to employee engagement are explored and interpretations are offered. Implications for theory, organizational practice, and scholarship are discussed.*

**Keywords: Employee Engagement, Definition, Antecedent, Approach, Literature Review.**

### **INTRODUCTION**

In the organizations, employee and management are in symbiotic relationship mediated by good employee engagement practices. Therefore, employee engagement has become a buzzword for business houses and emerged as a new research interest for academicians and practitioners, across the globe (Chalofsky, 2010; Chalofsky & Krishna, 2009; Czarnowsky, 2008; Ketter, 2008; Macey & Schneider, 2008b; Zigarmi, Nimon, Houson, Witt, & Diehl, 2009). Underlying reasons for this popularity of the concept are: (1) conceptualization of engagement as a positive psychological state of motivation with behavioral manifestations and (2) research (Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes, 2002; Saks, 2006; Shuck, Reio & Rocco, 2011) findings depicted a bond between employee engagement and organizational and performance outcome variables such as, discretionary effort, intention to turnover (Shuck et al., 2011) and overall performance (Rich, LePine, & Crawford, 2010).

Inspired from above positive engagement consequences, many corporate leaders have started volunteering the employee engagement programs because this lead to staff

performance, reduces staff turnover, improve the well-being of employees (Wright and Cropanzano, 2000; Taris et al., 2003; Griffith, 2004; Michie and West, 2004; Macey and Schneider, 2008b; Robinson et al., 2004; Hakanen, 2008) and helps to accomplish ultimate business goals. Today's organizations share the common notion that knowledge has become an organizational commodity (Kroth & Keeler, 2009; Pink, 2001) in a globalized free-agent talent market and employee engagement surge out as an undeniable preeminent source of sustainable competitive advantage at all levels (Schwartz, 2011). Hence, to become a socially responsible corporate citizen, boosting employee engagement is becoming a part of the ongoing evolution and a sole focus on the organizations.

The maiden use of term "employee engagement" made by Khan in 1990, who described it as being different from other employee role constructs such as job involvement, commitment or intrinsic motivation, asserting that it focus on how psychological experiences of work shape the process of people presenting and absenting themselves during task performances (Kahn, 1990). Since then, it has gained attention of many practitioners and academicians and has been defined, measured and conceptualized by researchers differently. Therefore, this review intent to add value to the current state of knowledge by judgmentally evaluating the prevailing differently conceptualized employee engagement literature and delivering a contemplative viewpoint on existing arguments and findings.

Finally, the concept of employee engagement has achieved place in the mainstream of corporate houses and academic research and scholarly community also advocates its importance in an organization's life. Still the research in the scholarly community has lagged slightly behind (Macey and Schneider, 2008a) intensive academic research (Christian, Garza, & Slaughter, 2011; Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001; Rich et al., 2010; Saks, 2006; Rurkkhum & Bartlett, 2012; Schaufeli et al, 2002a). Comprehensibly, on one hand the admiration of the concept in the practitioner community and on the other hand the escalating appearance and need for answers of the notion in the academic community have motivated the scholars and academicians to conduct more research in the area of employee engagement.

## **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The HR and corporate heads want to ensure the physical, mental and emotional presence of their employees at work place or wish to have an engaged workforce. Reason being engaged employees consistently outperforms and become the strategic competency of an organization. Different organizations of current age have diversified working environments, diversified pool of employees and the antecedents for employee engagement also diversify from organization to organization and employee to employee. Thus, requires the clear understanding of different approaches and drivers of employee engagement in this diversified environment. These are crafted in many empirical studies by the researchers,

however, so far has not been clubbed well. So, this literature review makes an attempt to club the employee engagement approaches, drivers and also select the key contributions to impart clarity on the term engagement in diversified organizations.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The integrated literature review is a method to capture data from various emerging fields. It is a distinctive form of research that generates new knowledge (Torraco, 2005 ). Employee engagement being an emerging topic and conceptualized differently in various frames, so an integrated literature review is recommended. Articles selection and organizing and analysis of data are discussed in section below.

## **SELECTION OF ARTICLES**

In a manner to make scholarly and multi-disciplinary approach the following data sources were searched for the representation of the human resource management, human resource development, business, management, sociology and psychology fields: Proquest, Elsevier, Emerald, Sage, Jstor, PsycInfo, ABI/Inform, ASTD's Training & Development Journal (T&D), the Society for Human Resource Management Journals, the Academy of Management database, all four Academy of Human Resource Development (AHRD) journals and google scholar and research gate were used additionally as a data collection sources. Abstracts from the data sources were queried using the keywords *engagement*, *employee engagement*, *work engagement*, *job engagement* and *workplace management*. This search was limited to, articles with keywords appearing in the title published or abstract of the English language peer-reviewed and academic journals.

Literature was extensively searched for the keywords and relevant publications were screened. Staged review method was used to analyze articles (Torraco, 2005) and each abstract was examined to check the relevancy of the article such that, the article must have some aspect of employee engagement and other keywords and should not coupled together by happenstance. Articles with the intentional use of keywords were considered relevant for review, were downloaded and saved for reading.

## **DATA ORGANIZATION AND ANALYSIS**

For analysis of existing literature, all identified relevant literature (N=107) was reviewed. All relevant articles were printed and reviewed by the authors. Major theoretical articles were recognized for further review. Key contributions to engagement literature, definitions and drivers of engagement were noted in the data-books from each publication and were referred throughout the data analysis. Articles were also categorized according to the engagement approaches. At the end, 41 of the articles were selected for complete reading

as they provided the seminal works on the topic of engagement, the reason being either (a) the authors were well known for the contributions in their areas of expertise, and (b) the abstract of the article was research specific to our topic of employee engagement.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT: DEFINITIONS, DRIVERS AND APPROACHES**

### **Definitions:**

Since the inception of the engagement concept, it has been defined numerous, interpreted inconsistently in the field of psychology, business and human resource consulting practitioner forums of literature (Macey & Schneider, 2008a; Saks, 2006). The contemporary definition of engagement is created based on qualitative studies with employees, in-depth interviews and consultations (Q12 developed by The Gallup organization; Department of Health, 2008a; Department of Health 2008b; Robinsons et al., 2004; Robinson et al., 2007). The term has become so ambiguous that it is rare to find two individuals defining it in the same way (Macey and Schneider, 2008a). Rotter (1990, p. 490) highlighted the importance of defining terms such as engagement by suggesting that a good definition of a concept, especially one of a cognitive or subjective nature: 'leads to common understanding ... is illustrated with many behavioral examples ... stated in such a way that the operations for its measurement are ... clear ... and widely accepted as logical and reasonable'. Several definitions were reviewed from academic and practitioner literature for this paper are listed below in chronological order:

#### Academic Definitions of employee engagement:

- Kahn (1990, p. 694) - the harnessing of organization members' selves to their work roles; in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances.
- Maslach & Leiter (1997) - as positive scores on the Maslach Burnout Inventory.
- Schaufeli et al. (2002) - a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication and absorption.
- Harter et al. (2002, p. 269) - the individual's involvement and satisfaction with as well as enthusiasm for work.
- Hewitt (2004) - as the employees desire to say (speak positively about the organization), stay (desire to be a member of the organization) and strive (go beyond the expected for the organization)
- Colber, Mount, Harter, Witt, and Barrick (2004) - high internal motivational state.
- Wellins and Concelman (2004) - illusive force that motivates employees to higher levels of performance. This coveted energy is an amalgam of commitment, loyalty, productivity an ownership. Further added that it includes, feelings and attitudes employees have towards their jobs and their organization.

- Robinson, Perryman and Hayday (2004) - positive attitude held by the employee towards the organization and its values. An engaged employee is aware of the business context, works with colleagues to improve performance within the job for the benefit of the organization. Further added that organizations must develop and nurture engagement which is a two way relationship between employer and employee.
- Lucey, Bateman and Hines (2005) - how each individual connects to the company and the customers.
- Saks (2006, p. 602) - a distinct and unique construct that consists of cognitive, emotional, and behavioral components that are associated with individual role performance.
- Cook (2008) - how positively the employee thinks about the organization, feels about the organization and is proactive in relation to achieving organizational goals for customers, colleagues and other stakeholders.
- Czarnowsky (2008, p. 6) - engaged employees are mentally and emotionally invested in their work and in contributing to their employer's success.
- Macey & Schneider (2008, p. 5, 6) – as a disposition (i.e. trait engagement)..... an inclination or orientation to experience the world from a particular vantage point. Trait engagement gets reflected in psychological state engagement..... (state engagement)..... an antecedent to behavioral engagement..... (behavioral engagement) is defined in terms of discretionary effort.
- Newman and Harrison (2008) - the simultaneous presence of three behaviors in employees, namely, their performance in job, citizenship behavior and involvement.
- Shuck and Wollard (2010) - an individual employees's cognitive, emotional and behavioral state directed toward desired organizational outcomes.

These definitions serve the common idea that employee engagement is a desirable condition, has an organizational purpose and connotes involvement, enthusiasm, commitment, passion, focused effort and energy, hence it has both attitudinal and behavioral components (Macey & Schneider, 2008). There is no perfect consensus from all the official definition in the research literature for the term engagement, however, there is a presence of common threads which is an expression of the self through work and other employee-role activities (Finn & Rock, 1997) that surfaced the nature of the construct well.

#### **Drivers:**

Organizations that ensure better engagement of their employees, exceed the competition. Research has proved that committed employees perform better. Thus, to understand the drivers of engagement is clearly in the interest of the organization. An analysis was done to summarize the key antecedents of employee engagement at work and instruments to measure engagement. For this 41 research papers were analyzed and their key contribution to literature was identified for engagement admirers. Analysis results suggest that most of

the antecedents of engagement are common to all organizations, regardless of industry; still, some variability exists and the relative strength of each antecedent is also contingent upon the organization being analyzed. Table 1 summarizes the employee engagement drivers, instruments, approaches, industry, and key contributions from the study.

**Table 1 - Summary of 41 engagement articles:**

Author (Year)	Approach	Antecedents and Measuring Instrument (MI) of Employee Engagement	Sample	Key Contribution
Khan (1990)	Need-Satisfying Approach	Antecedents – Meaningfulness (task, role, work Interactions), Safety (interpersonal relations, group and inter-group dynamics, management style and process, organizational norms) and Availability (physical energies, emotional energies, insecurity, outside life)	16 - Summer camp counselors and 16 - Architectural firm employees	First to define engagement as a separate concept using research. Three psychological conditions were identified – meaningfulness, safety, and availability.
May, Gilson, and Harter (2004)	Need-Satisfying Approach	Antecedents – Meaningfulness (job enrichment, work role fit, co-worker relations), safety (supervisor relations, co-worker relations, co-worker norms) and availability (resources, self-consciousness, outside activities) MI - 13-item scale to measure 3 components (cognitive, emotional,	213 – Insurance Firm’s employees	First to perform empirical research on Kahn’s (1990) conceptualization of employee engagement. Meaningfulness psychological condition exhibited strongest relation to engagement. Psychological safety partially mediated the relationship of job enrichment and work role fit to employee

		physical) of Khan's (1990) psychological engagement.		engagement.
Rich, LePine, and Crawford (2010)	Need-Satisfying Approach	Antecedents – Value congruence, perceived organizational support and core self-evaluations. MI - Self designed with the help of previous sources.	245 – Four municipalities firefighters	One of the first modern studies to reconsider original domains of Kahn's engagement (meaningfulness, safety, availability).
Shuck et al. (2010)	Need-Satisfying Approach	Antecedents – Job fit, affective commitment and psychological climate (supportive management, role clarity, contribution, recognition, self-expression, challenge) MI - 17-item scale to measure 3 components (meaningfulness, safety, availability) (May et al., 2004)	283 - Service, technology, health care, retail, banking, nonprofit and hospitality employees	First empirical research work to advocate engagement as a variable to predict intention to turnover construct. Also suggested against the well-established belief that engagement may not be a predictor of outcome variable: discretionary effort.
James et al. (2011)	Need-Satisfying Approach	Antecedents – Job quality (supervisor support and recognition, schedule satisfaction, career development and promotion, job clarity) MI - 8-item scale to measure 3 components (social, cognitive, behavioral) developed by a company's vendor	6047 – retail employees	For younger employees development and promotion and for older employees supervisor support and recognition are most important antecedents for engagement. Employees reaching their retirement age are more engaged than younger ones.
Shuck (2014)	Need-Satisfying	Antecedents – Psychological	207 - health care employees	Research findings offer empirical

	Approach	workplace climate. MI - 18-item Job Engagement Scale (JES) to measure 3 components (cognitive, emotional, physical engagement) (Rich et al., 2010)		support that psychological climate affects an employee beyond the issues of productivity and turnover and share a relation with employees on an individual affective level.
Leiter and Maslach (2004)	Burnout-Antithesis Approach	Antecedents – Work life (workload, control, reward, community, fairness, values) MI - Maslach Burnout Inventory-General Scale (MBI-GS) to measure 3-dimensions of burnout/engagement (exhaustion, cynicism, efficacy) (Schaufeli et al., 1996a)	1005 - Time 1 992 - Time 2 812 - Time 3 University administrative and support staff employees	Results supported that burnout/engagement is the mediating link between organizational context and employees' perceptions of organizational change.
Laschinger et al. (2005)	Burnout-Antithesis Approach	Antecedents – Areas of work life (control, value congruence, reward, community, fairness, workload) MI – 9-item MBI-GS to measure emotional exhaustion subscale (Maslach et al., 1996)	285 –medical–surgical unit's nurses	Three models developed in research suggested that empowerment had an indirect effect on burnout/work engagement through several areas of work life. Structural empowerment had a direct and positive effect on work life. Emotional exhaustion reported strong

				and direct positive effect on depressive symptoms, a strong and negative effect on energy levels and a moderate effect on physical symptoms.
Laschinger and Leiter (2006)	Burnout-Antithesis Approach	Antecedents – Work environments for professional nursing practice (participation, nursing model, leadership, staffing, nurse/physician relationship) MI - 22-item Maslach Burnout Inventory-Human Service Scale (MBI-HSS) to measure 3 subscales (emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, personal accomplishment) (Maslach et al., 1996)	8597 –different hospital's nurses	Study results advocate the positive relationship between work environment with greater support for professional practice and engagement and this ultimately results in safer patient care.
Leiter and Laschinger (2006)	Burnout-Antithesis Approach	Antecedents – Work environments for professional nursing practice (participation, nursing model, leadership, staffing, nurse/physician relationship) MI - 22-item Maslach Burnout Inventory-Human Service Scale (MBI-HSS) to measure 3 subscales	8597 – different hospital's nurses	Good leadership influences the quality of work life (policy involvement, staffing level, nursing model of care, physician-nurse relationships). Results showed a direct path from nursing model of care to personal accomplishment and from staffing

		(emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, personal accomplishment) (Maslach et al., 1996)		to emotional exhaustion.
Cho et al. (2006)	Burnout-Antithesis Approach	Antecedents – Structural empowerment and work life (workload, control, rewards, community, fairness and values) MI - 5-item MBI-GS to measure emotional-exhaustion subscale (Schaufeli, 1996b)	226 – acute care area’s hospital’s nurses	Research displayed direct link between structural empowerment and areas of work life and emotional exhaustion.
Greco et al. (2006)	Burnout-Antithesis Approach	Antecedents – Leader’s empowerment behaviors (enhance meaning, decision-making, express confidence, facilitate goals, foster autonomy), perceptions of staff empowerment (information, resources, support, opportunity, formal power, informal power), work life (workload, control, rewards, community, fairness, value) MI - 5-item MBI-GS to measure emotional-exhaustion subscale (Schaufeli et al., 1996b)	322 - hospital’s nurses	Hypothesized model supported that leader empowering behavior indirectly influences emotional exhaustion through structural empowerment and fits in the areas of work life. The hypothesized model accounted for 30% of variance in burnout/engagement.

Schaufeli, Salanova, González-Roma, and Bakker (2002)	Work Engagement Approach	Antecedents – Vigor, dedication and absorption MI - self-constructed 24-item scale	314 – students from university 619 - private and public companies' employee	Maslach et al. (2001) burnout model was tested to measure employee engagement and results indicated a negative relationship between levels of burnout and employee engagement.
Schaufeli and Bakker (2004)	Work Engagement Approach	Antecedents – Job demands (workload, emotional demands) and job resources ( feedback, social support, supervisory coaching) MI - Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) (Schaufeli et al., 2002a)	1698 - insurance, occupational health & safety service, pension fund Company and home care institution employees	The research confirmed that: (1) work engagement and burnout are negatively related; (2) job demands and lack of job resources, predict burnout, whereas available job resources, predict work engagement; (3) relationship between job resources and turnover intention mediated by work engagement.
Hakanen et al. (2005)	Work Engagement Approach	Antecedents – Job demands (qualitative workload, physical work environment, emotional dissonance, negative changes), job resources (job control, innovativeness, variability, positive patient contacts, peer contacts) MI - UWES (Schaufeli et al., 2002a)	1919 – dentists	Job resources are beneficial factors in coping with the demands of job and help employees stay engaged.

Salanova et al. (2005)	Work Engagement Approach	Antecedents – Organizational resources, training, autonomy and technology MI – Spanish version (Salanova et al., 2001) of UWES (Schaufeli et al., 2002a)	342 - 58 hotels (reception area) and 56 restaurant employees	A hypothesized model proved to have a positive relation between organizational resources and work engagement and service climate which predict employee performance and customer loyalty.
Hakenen et al. (2006)	Work Engagement Approach	Antecedents – An energetic process (job demands) and a motivational process (job resources) MI – 11-item of UWES to measure vigor and dedication (Schaufeli et al., 2002a)	2308 - Finnish teachers	This study also supported that work engagement mediate the effects of job resources on organizational commitment and burnout mediate the effect of high job demands on ill health and also mediate the effects of scarce resources on low work engagement.
Koyuncu et al. (2006)	Work Engagement Approach	Antecedents – Work-life experiences (control, rewards, recognition, value fit) MI - UWES (Schaufeli et al., 2002a)	286 - Turkish bank women managers and professionals	Work engagement was predicted by work-life experiences not by individual characteristics. In turn, work engagement predicted intent-to-quit, job satisfaction and psychological well-being.
Llorens et al. (2006)	Work Engagement Approach	Antecedents – Job demands (quantitative overload and emotional overload) and job resources (job control, social	654 - Spanish & 477 - Dutch Information and communication technology employees	The model supported partially that: burnout and work engagement partially mediates the effect of job demands and job resources,

		support and performance feedback) MI – Spanish and Dutch version of UWES to measure vigor and dedication (Schaufeli et al., 2002a)		respectively on organizational commitment.
Richardson et al. (2006)	Work Engagement Approach	Antecedents – Job demands, job resources and type A personalities (individual characteristics) MI - UWES (Schaufeli et al., 2002a)	150 - Norwegian police officers	Work engagement partially mediated the effects of job demands, job resources and individual characteristics on organizational commitment and self-efficacy.
Schaufeli, Bakker, and Salanova, (2006)	Work Engagement Approach	MI - Engagement was assessed with the UWES (Schaufeli et al., 2002a).	14,521 - 27 studies were carried out from 1999 to 2003 in 10 countries	Utrecht Work Engagement Scale: shortened UWES-9 item scores were established. Also characterized engagement as a positive work-related state inclusive of vigor, dedication and absorption, supported the earlier Schaufeli, Salanova et al. (2002) model.
Hallberg et al. (2007)	Work Engagement Approach	Antecedents – Type A behavior (achievement, striving, irritability/impatience) MI - UWES short version of 9-item (Schaufeli, Bakker & Salanova, 2006)	329 - information and communication technology managers, programmers, and consultants	Variance shared by Type A behavior and work engagement was only 13% of common variance.
Mauno et al. (2007)	Work Engagement	Antecedents – Job resources (job	409 - Finnish health care	Work engagement was predicted

	Approach	control, organization-based self-esteem, management quality) and job demands (perceived job insecurity, time demands at work and work-to-family conflict) MI – UWES (Schaufeli et al., 2002a, 2002b)	employees	better by job resources than job demands. Work engagement was best predicted by a job control factor of job resources.
Xanthopoulos et al. (2007)	Work Engagement Approach	Antecedents – Personal resources (self-efficacy, organizational-based self-esteem, optimism) and job resources (autonomy, social support, supervisory coaching and professional development) MI - UWES short version of 9-item (Schaufeli, Bakker & Salanova, 2006)	714 - electrical engineering company employees	Research results depicted that personal resources mediate the relationship between job resources and work engagement and exhaustion and also influence the sensitivity of job resources.
Bakker et al. (2008)	Work Engagement Approach	Antecedents – Job resources (social support, performance feedback, skill variety, autonomy, supervisory coaching, learning opportunities) and Personal resources (optimism, self-efficacy, self-esteem, resilience, an active coping style) MI – (1) UWES (Schaufeli et al.,	Qualitative and quantitative studies on work engagement were reviewed	This research consolidated the findings of previous studies in a model that can be used to develop work engagement. Also showed that when job demands are high, job and personal resources have a positive impact on engagement.

		2002a), (2) 9-item of short UWES (Schaufeli et al.,2006) (3) Oldenburg Burnout Inventory (OLBI) (Demerouti and Bakker, n.d.), (4) May et al. (2004) three-dimensional (physical, emotional, cognitive)concept		
Wefald (2008)	Work Engagement Approach	Antecedents – Personality facets (extraversion, conscientiousness, neuroticism, openness, agreeableness) and leadership MI - UWES short version of 9-item (Schaufeli, Bakker & Salanova, 2006) and four item scale by Britt, Thomas, and Dawson (2006)	382 – financial Institution employees	Research critically examined the concept of engagement and delivered empirical support regarding its validity as a work-related constructs.
Cuyper et al. (2008)	Work Engagement Approach	Antecedents – Employability MI - 10-item of UWES to measure vigor and dedication (Schaufeli and Bakker, 2003)	559 - 7 Belgian organization employees	Research has depicted that employability is positively related to work engagement.
Schaufeli et al. (2009)	Work Engagement Approach	Antecedents – Job Resources (autonomy, social support, performance feedback, opportunities to learn and develop) MI - 11-item of UWES to measure vigor and	201 - telecom managers	Research suggested that job resources increases the work Engagement. This study is one of its kind to illustrate that job resources and engagement strengthen each other reciprocally.

		dedication (Schaufeli et al., 2002a)		
Arora et al. (2011)	Work Engagement Approach	Antecedents – Personality dispositional factors (independence, superego-control, tough-poise, extraversion and anxiety) MI – UWES (Schaufeli and Bakker, 2003)	60 - IT Sector employees	Research study indicated that superego-control, tough-poise and independence act as predictor of employee engagement.
Beek et al. (2012)	Work Engagement Approach	Antecedents – Identified regulation, intrinsic motivation and introjected regulation MI - UWES short version of 9-item (Schaufeli, Bakker & Salanova, 2006)	760 - health care employees	This research used the self-determination theory to correlate motivation with work engagement. Results paralleled to previous findings (Schaufeli et al., 2007) that intrinsic motivation was found to be positively related with work engagement and work engagement also correlate with extrinsic motivation factors.
Lee (2012)	Work Engagement Approach	Antecedents – Core self-evaluation and psychological climate (managerial support for service, interdepartmental service and team communication). MI - UWES 9-item (Schaufeli and Bakker, 2003)	394 - hotel employees	The research result supports Kahn's (1991) three psychological conditions theory. Core self-evaluation was found to be significantly associated with employee engagement. Employee psychological

				climate acted as a significant predictor of engagement and this result was in line with previous researches on the JD-R model.
Remo (2012)	Work Engagement Approach	Antecedents – Job characteristics (autonomy, feedback and skill variety) and organizational culture (supportiveness and innovative culture). MI - UWES 17-item (Schaufeli and Bakker, 2003)	273 - accountant professionals	This study reinforced that Schaufeli et al.'s (2002) 3-factor model of work engagement was better grounded in theory than Shirom's (2003) model of vigor.
Menguc et al. (2013)	Work Engagement Approach	Antecedents – Supervisory Feedback MI - 17-item of UWES (Salanova et al., 2005)	482 - retail employees	Employee engagement was reinforced by supervisory feedback in contrast to supervisory support. In between supervisory feedback and employee performance engagement acted as a mediator.
Danish et al. (2014)	Work Engagement Approach	Antecedents – Self-evaluation, fairness and treatment and services environment MI - UWES 9-item (Schaufeli and Bakker, 2003)	301- Universities, Hospital, Banks, and Telecommunication employees	Results supported the positive and statistically significant relationship between employee engagement and self-evaluation, services environment and fairness and treatment.
Jose et al.	Work	Antecedents –	101 - three	This research also

(2014)	Engagement Approach	Psychological empowerment (meaning, competence, self-determination, impact) MI – UWES short version of 9-item (Schaufeli, Bakker & Salanova, 2006)	service organization employees	supported the positive relationship between employee engagement and psychological empowerment. Employee engagement was highly influenced by meaning.
Harter et al. (2002)	Satisfaction-Engagement Approach	Meta-analysis study	7939 - Business units of 36 independent companies from 5 industries	First published study which looks at business unit level's employee engagement, satisfaction and business unit outcomes. One of the first research to mention a profit linkage with employee engagement. The study also generalized relationships between unit-level employee satisfaction-engagement and five organizational outcomes: customer satisfaction, productivity, profitability, turnover, employee safety.
Luthans and Peterson (2002)	Satisfaction-Engagement Approach	MI – 12 questions (Q12) of Gallup Workplace Audit (GWA) (Buckingham and Coffman, 1999) was used to measure cognitive	170 - Gallup leadership institute managers.	Research examined the relation between employee engagement and manager's self-efficacy. Results showed a positive

		and emotional aspects of engagement		relationship between manager's self-efficacy and employee engagement.
Cathcart et al. (2004)	Satisfaction-Engagement Approach	Antecedent – Span of control MI – Q12 of GWA (Buckingham and Coffman, 1999)	651 - healthcare system nurses	Results displayed a relation of higher work engagement with a manager's span of control.
Arakawa and Greenberg (2007)	Satisfaction-Engagement Approach	Antecedents – Optimism Positive leadership. MI – Q12 of GWA (Buckingham and Coffman, 1999)	117 - insurance company's technology department employees	This study explored the role of managers in improving employee engagement. Study also provided evidence that management style could affect the level of engagement, performance of a team and optimism.
Britt, Castro, and Adler (2005)	Multidimensional Approach	MI - 4-item scale, a modified version of a scale used in past research (Britt, 2003; Britt, Adler, & Bartone, 2001).	176 - U.S. combat soldiers	Research has inspected the role of psychological, emotional, and cognitive resources on soldiers. Research results displayed that engaged employees experience less fatigue and stress when they are engaged in their work.
Saks (2006)	Multidimensional Approach	Antecedents – Job characteristics, perceived organizational support, rewards and recognition, procedural justice and distributive	102 – different industries employee	This research was one of its kind to examine the antecedents and consequences of employee engagement in academic

		Justice. MI – 6-item, a self- designed scale		literature. Also hypothesized that employee engagement developed from the social exchange model.
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**APPROACHES:**

**1) Khan (1990) - Need-Satisfying Approach (Personal Engagement)**

Khan (1990) credited to introduce the word "engagement" to describe worker's involvement in various tasks at work in the article "Psychological Conditions of Personal Engagement and Disengagement at Work". Khan (1990) defined engagement as "the simultaneous employment and expression of a person's 'preferred self' in task behaviors that promote connections to work and with others, personal presence, and active full role performances" (p. 700)". Khan also suggested that using one's full self in work, an employee understood to be physically involved, emotionally connected, and cognitively vigilant (Rich et al., 2010) and that these conditions of being were affected considerably by three psychological domains: meaningfulness, safety, and availability (Kahn, 1990).

Psychological *Meaningfulness* defined as the positive "sense of return on investments of self in role performance" (Kahn, 1990, p. 705). Employee's added value and significance to their work simultaneously received feedback for their value and significance to an organization (Kahn, 1990; Maslow, 1970). Tasks, roles, and work interactions are identified as meaningfulness variables. Psychological *Safety* defined as the ability to show one's self "without fear or negative consequences to self-image, career or status" (Kahn, 1990, p. 705). Safety speak about each employee's prerequisite to trust their working environment emotionally, cognitively and behaviorally simultaneously prerequisite to rationally understand what was expected of them at work. Interpersonal relationships, groups and intergroup dynamics, management styles, organizational norms, job descriptions, contingency plans, feedback from a supervisor, etc. are identified as safety variables. Psychological *availability* defined as the "sense of possessing the physical, emotional, and psychological resources necessary" (Kahn, 1990, p. 705) for complete one's work. Availability for employees means they must have an impression of having all tools to complete their work or that can be obtained for them. Supplies, manpower for task completion, sufficient budget are tangible availability variables (Harter et al., 2002; Wagner & Harter, 2006) whereas, intangible availability variables would be reasonable degree of job fit (Resick, Baltes, & Shantz, 2007), opportunities for learning and skill development (Czarnowsky, 2008), and commitment to the organization (Allen & Meyer, 1997) etc.

The first field study in a large insurance firm of 203 employees (May, Gilson, & Harter, 2004) tested Kahn's (1990) conceptualization of all three (Kahn, 1990, 1992) psychological conditions of engagement indicated that meaningfulness ( $r = .63$ ), safety ( $r = .45$ ) and availability ( $r = .29$ ) had a positive relationship with engagement. Rich et al. (2010) contributed by providing empirical evidence to Kahn's approach in a sample of 245 firefighters that engagement (Kahn, 1990) arbitrates the relationship between perceived organizational support, value congruence, core self-evaluation, and outcome variables, organizational citizenship behavior and task performance. Moreover, they suggested further refinement of engagement concept because job involvement, job satisfaction and intrinsic motivation failed to elucidate the higher level of variance than engagement (Kahn, 1990). Shuck et al. (2011) also tested Kahn's framework in multiple industries and suggested that employee engagement was significantly associated to affective commitment, job fit and psychological climate and intention to turnover and discretionary effort. Kahn's conceptualization of employee engagement is an employee's internal state of being affected by external forces, is a foremost and popular theoretical framework for engagement studies.

## **2) Maslach et al. (2001) – Burnout-Antithesis Approach**

Maslach and Leiter (1997) rephrased burnout as a lack of engagement in one's work, i.e. erosion of engagement means, what employee's starting out as an important, meaningful, and challenging work became unpleasant, unfulfilling, and meaningless (Maslach et al., 2001, p. 416). Engagement is directly opposite of burnout and exist on a gamut—with engagement and burnout on opposite. Maslach et al. (2001) theorized employee engagement as a positive antithesis to burnout. According to Maslach's framework "burnout is characterized by low levels of activation and pleasure, whereas engagement is characterized by high levels of activation and pleasure" (Maslach et al., 2001 p. 417). Consequently, engagement is measured as the reverse scores of the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI-GS; Maslach & Leiter, 1997). Energy changes to exhaustion, involvement changes to cynicism, and efficacy changes to ineffectiveness (Maslach et al., 2001 p. 416). Hence, engagement is portrayed by energy, involvement and efficacy—the direct opposites of exhaustion, cynicism, and ineffectiveness - the three burnout dimensions. *Exhaustion is the* most evident form of burnout manifestation and defined as "being overextended and depleted of one's emotional and physical resources" (Maslach et al., 2001, p. 399). *Cynicism* defined as "a negative, callous, or an excessively detached response to various aspects of the job" (Maslach et al., 2001, p. 399). *Ineffectiveness* defined as "feelings of incompetence and lack of achievement and productivity at work" (Maslach et al., 2001) and assumed as a direct result of exhaustion and cynicism.

Schaufeli et al. (2002) stated burnout and engagement as distinct concepts experienced as opposite psychological states. Schaufeli et al. (2002) proposed that an employee who is highly engaged may not be experiencing low burnout and vice versa. Consequently, he postulated work engagement separate from burnout. In contrast, additional empirical

support for the Maslach et al. (2001) approach (Shirom, 2003, 2007; Shrager, 2008; Wefald, 2008) was provided by using Schaufeli et al. (2002) framework.

### **3) Schaufeli et al. (2002) – Work Engagement Approach**

Schaufeli et al. (2002) used the Maslach Burnout Inventory-General Scale (MBI-GS) to analyze the Maslach et al. (2001) conceptualization among the sample of 314 Spanish university students and 619 Spanish Employees. Results showed a negative relationship between burnout and work engagement ( $r = -.46$  and  $r = -.61$ ) and Schaufeli et al. (2002) renamed the employee engagement state (Kahn, 1990) as *work engagement*. In addition, they presented the empirical evidence for using MBI-GS as a measure of engagement. (Schaufeli, Salanova et al., 2002, p. 74) Defined engagement as a “positive, fulfilling, work related state of mind characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption”, engagement refers to a more persistent and pervasive affective-cognitive state that is not focused on any particular object, event, individual or behavior. Schaufeli et al. (2002a) developed and tested (17-item, Schaufeli et al., 2003; 9-item short version, Schaufeli et al., 2006) a self-report questionnaire called Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES), which includes all three aspects of work engagement: vigor, dedication, and absorption. UWES has emerged out as a widely used engagement measure.

Schaufeli et al. (2001) on the basis of their theoretical analysis underlined two dimensions of work-related well-being: (1) activation – ranging from exhaustion to vigor and (2) identification – ranging from cynicism to dedication. Schaufeli et al. (2002) suggested engagement dimensions - vigor and dedication are opposite of two burnout dimensions (exhaustion and cynicism, respectively). Furthermore, absorption and reduced professional efficacy were identified (Schaufeli and Bakker, 2001) as the third component of work engagement and burnout, respectively. However, these are not the end points of a continuum like their other two counterparts, rather they are conceptually distinct aspects. Vigor 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 (Schaufeli et al., 2002, p. 74). Dedication is characterized by a sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride and challenge (Schaufeli et al., 2002, p. 74). Absorption is characterized by being fully concentrated and deeply engrossed in one's work, whereby time passes quickly and one has difficulties with detaching oneself from work (Schaufeli et al., 2002, p. 75).

Job-Demands Resources (JD-R) model have used as an explanatory framework, particularly for scholars who assume that engagement is the antithesis of burnout in their studies on work engagement (Bakker and Demerouti, 2008; Schaufeli and Taris, 2014). The reason being it conceptualizes burnout and engagement as two distinct constructs integrated in an overarching conceptual model (Schaufeli, 2013). Fundamentally, JD-R model believes that work engagement is the result of two inherently motivating nature of resources; (1) job

resources – that particular facets of job useful in achieving work goals, stimulate personal growth and development or reduce job demands (e.g. job control, performance feedback, and social support from colleagues, etc.) (Hakenen et al., 2006; Llorens et al., 2006; Mauno et al., 2007; Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004; Xanthopoulou et al., 2007) and (2) personal resources - that particular facets of self associated with resiliency and have the ability to control and impact one's environment successfully (e.g. optimism, self-efficacy, and emotional stability, etc.) (Schaufeli, 2013). According to the JD-R model, resources cultivates engagement in terms of vigor (energy), dedication (persistence) and absorption (focus) and in turn, engagement delivers positive outcomes such as job performance (Schaufeli, 2013). As a whole, JD-R model postulates that work engagement mediates the relationship between job and personal resources on one side and positive outcomes on the other side (Schaufeli, 2013).

Johnson (2003) argued that Maslach et al. (2001) and Schaufeli, Salanova et al. (2002) models focus only on emotional and physical absences of burnout and devoid of the cognitive engagement processes to understand engagement conceptualized by Kahn. Moreover, Shirom (2007) guided that due to the Maslach et al. (2001) and Schaufeli, Salanova et al. (2002) models, employee engagement could be distinguished from other psychological constructs for e.g. commitment (Allen & Meyer, 1990), flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 2004) and peak experiences (Schaufeli, Martinez, Pinto, Salanova, & Bakker, 2002). On the contrary, Shirom (2003) also recognized major potential limitation of the Maslach et al. (2001) and Schaufeli, Salanova et al. (2002) framework of engagement and advised that these researches had conceptualized engagement on a continuum as the reverse of a negative, not a distinct state. In addition, studies using a similar framework as Schaufeli, Salanova et al. (2002), have empirically supported the work engagement outcomes, turnover intention (Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004), service climate and customer loyalty (Salanova et al., 2005) and organizational commitment (Hakenen et al., 2006; Richardsen et al., 2006).

#### **4) Harter et al. (2002) – Satisfaction-Engagement Approach**

Harter et al. (2002) work was an outgrowth of the positive psychology movement of the early 21st century, and one of the most cited and widely read literature on employee engagement. Harter et al. (2002) conducted the meta-analysis of a gigantic data ( $N = 7,939$  business units from multiple industries) on employee engagement held at the Gallup Organization. Over the course of 30 years, The Gallup Organization researchers developed their employee engagement model, indicate thousands of investigations of successful productive work groups, managers and employees. A well-recognized and proprietary 12-item questionnaire (Q12) (Buckingham & Coffman, 1999) Gallup Work Audit (GWA) was used and results recommended a positive relationship of employee engagement to significant business outcomes such as safety ( $r = -.32$ ), turnover ( $r = -.36$ ), productivity ( $r = .20$ ), customer satisfaction ( $r = .33$ ) and profitability ( $r = .17$ ). Gallup researchers define

employee engagement as an “individual’s involvement and satisfaction with as well as enthusiasm for work” (Harter et al., 2002, p. 417).

Harter et al. (2003) in his model of employee engagement, presented four antecedent elements supposed to be necessary for engagement at the workplace, includes: (a) clarity of expectations and basic materials and equipment provided, (b) feeling a sense of belonging to something beyond oneself, (c) feelings of contribution to organization, and (d) feeling that as there are opportunities to discuss progress and growth. In Harter’s model the measurement of employee engagement focuses on these antecedents. Harter et al. (2002) used 12-item well-known Gallup questionnaire and reported that these 12-item explain a big portion of the variance in “overall job satisfaction” and are antecedents of personal job satisfaction and other constructs.

Luthans and Peterson (2002) by using the GWA ( $N = 2,900$ ) and other measures examined the relationship between employee engagement, managerial self-efficacy and the perception of effective management practices to extend Harter et al.’s (2002) model. Results advocated a positive relationship between manager self-efficacy scores and employee engagement when supervisors rated their manager’s level of effectiveness ( $r = .89$ ) and when managers rated employee effectiveness ( $r = .33$ ). Luthans and Peterson (2002) suggested that “the most profitable work units of companies have people doing what they do best, with people they like, and with a strong sense of psychological ownership” (p. 376). Their research findings complemented early theories of engagement (Kahn, 1990; Maslach et al., 2001; Schaufeli, Salanova et al., 2002) and also prolong existing theory for a manager’s role in generating a supportive psychological climate (Brown & Leigh, 1996). Harter et al. (2002) approach got empirical support from studies of similar framework (Arakawa & Greenberg, 2007; Heger, 2007). There are continuous updates by researchers using the Harter et al. (2002) approach (Harter, Schmidt & Keyes, 2003; Jones & Harter, 2005; Wagner & Harter, 2006) and new findings are also enriching the literature (Fleming & Asplund, 2007; Luthans, Norman, Avolio, & Avey, 2008; Luthans & Peterson, 2002).

### **5) Saks (2006) – Multidimensional Approach**

The fifth approach emerged from a multidimensional perspective of employee engagement. Saks (2006) was the first academic researcher to hypothesize that employee engagement developed from a social exchange model and suggested two separate states of engagement: *job engagement* and *organizational engagement*. Saks 2006 argued that Kahn’s (1990) and Maslach et al.’s (2001) models indicated the psychological conditions necessary for engagement, though they failed to entirely elucidate the variance in degrees of engagement of individuals with these conditions. This gave rise to an entirely different theoretical rationale for explaining employee engagement, which came from social exchange theory (SET) (Saks 2006). SET also provides a theoretical groundwork to explicate that why employees select to be more or less engaged in work and organization. Saks defined

engagement "as a distinct and unique construct that consists of cognitive, emotional, and behavioral components that are associated with individual role performance" (Saks 2006 p. 602). This definition was comprehensive of previous literature suggests that employee engagement developed from cognitive (Kahn, 1990; Maslach et al., 2001; Maslow, 1970), emotional (Harter et al., 2002; Kahn, 1990), and behavioral elements (Harter et al., 2002; Kahn, 1990; Maslach et al., 2001) and prolong current thinking on employee engagement by developing a three-component model. Saks also suggested engagement is distinguishable from organizational commitment, organizational citizenship behavior and job involvement.

Saks (2006) enrolled 102 working students of Canadian university to test his cognitive-emotional-behavioral model. Test results showed a positive relationship among antecedent variables of procedural justice, perceived organizational support, and job characteristics, ( $r = .18$ ;  $r = .36$ ;  $r = .37$ ) and intention to quit, organizational commitment, and job satisfaction, had an outcome relationship with employee engagement ( $r = .22$ ;  $r = .17$ ;  $r = -.26$ ). Saks (2006) study results also suggested that antecedent variables influence the development of engagement and engagement mediate the relationship between antecedent and outcome variables. This research is in accordance with Schaufeli, Salanova et al.'s (2002) model of engagement in two ways; (1) that engagement could be practiced emotionally and cognitively and demonstrated behaviorally; and (2) engagement developed as absorption of person's resources into their work (Kahn, 1990 and Harter et al. 2002). As a whole, each framework suggests for absorption to happen, an employee must have physical, emotional, and psychological resources to finish their work and without them, employees ultimately disengage (Maslach et al., 2001; Schaufeli, Salanova et al., 2002). Rich et al. (2010) recent research is the first known research to observe the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral aspects of Kahn's framework of engagement and paralleling the Saks (2006) model of engagement to come up with similar empirical evidence.

Saks's (2006) model was further extended by Macey and Schneider's (2008) work, suggested that each advanced state of engagement (cognitive-emotional-behavioral) framed on the next and leads to complete engagement (Kahn, 1990). They also suggested that variables; (a) job characteristics, (b) personality and (c) leadership had a role to play in development of engagement. Macey and Schneider's work got support specifically on the behavioral manifestation of engagement (Christian et al., 2011; Christian & Slaughter, 2007) however, they faced resistance also (Griffin, Parker, Neal, 2008; Hirschfeld, Thomas, 2008; Newman, Harrison, 2008; Saks, 2008; Zigarmi et al., 2009).

In addition, Shuck and Wollard (2010) conducted an analysis of 159 articles on employee engagement to come up with the definition of engagement, which was inclusive of early research on engagement (Kahn, 1990; Maslach et al., 2001; Schaufeli, Salanova et al., 2002) and multidimensional framework of Saks (2006) and still grounded in emerging frameworks (Macey et al., 2009; Macey, Schneider, 2008; Saks, 2006). Shuck and Wollard

(2010) defined employee engagement, very precisely for the field of HRD, as a cognitive, emotional and behavioral state headed toward desired organizational outcomes. Multidimensional approach of Saks's (2006) remains extensively cited in the literature (Macey, Schneider, 2008) and frequently used as a framework for emerging employee engagement models (Dalal, Brummel, Wee, Thomas, 2008; Macey et al., 2009).

## **SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

This literature review has concluded not a single agreed definition for engagement and agreed that it has been conceptualized in many different ways as a multi-faceted construct (Kahn, 1990). The fragmented approach to define employee engagement has given itself the mischaracterization of the engagement construct and the potential for its misinterpretation. Various conceptualizations make it difficult to understand the state of knowledge around employee engagement, as every research has been done under a different protocol, by using different engagement measures and under different circumstances, despite of this, a similar pattern was found regardless of the country or synonym where the research was undertaken.

Literature review has suggested different antecedents which affect employee engagement under different circumstances. From psychological literature Kahn's (1990) model suggests that individual differences shape a person's nature, perception and personality which, affects their ability to personally engage or disengage in different role performances. Evidence also suggests the relation between employee engagement and emotional experiences and wellbeing (May *et al* 2004). As emotional factors get linked with individual's personal satisfaction and sense of affirmation and inspiration employees get from their work and from their organization (Towers Perrin 2008). While others argue that employees become more productive when their emotions are managed well (Holbeche, Springett 2004).

Review of literature has indicated that work-life balance relates to engagement. Relationships within the workplace also shown an impact on 'meaningfulness', which in turn relates to engagement. Locke and Taylor (1991) argued that individuals with satisfying interpersonal interactions with their co-workers experience greater meaning in their work. Management style, job design and employee voice affect the employee's level of engagement, regardless of demographic variables. In 2003 Institute for Employment Studies (IES) consultation of HR professionals suggested several factors to increase levels of engagement in the organization: two-way communication, good quality line management, a focus on development, effective internal co-operation, commitment to employee well-being, visible commitment by managers at all levels and clear, accessible HR policies and practices. These drivers for engagement clearly resemble the common drivers found in literature and are important for organizations to have an engaged workforce.

The review of literature highlighted five approaches that formulated the scaffolding for current academic frameworks of employee engagement: (1) Kahn's (1990) need-satisfying approach, (2) Maslach et al.'s (2001) burnout-antithesis approach, (3) Schaufeli et al.'s (2002) – work engagement approach, (4) Harter et al.'s (2002) satisfaction-engagement approach, and (5) Saks's (2006) multidimensional approach. Moreover, each approach remains assured and unanimous in conclusion, though they propose a different perspective: the development of employee engagement in the organizations has the potential to considerably influence vital organizational outcomes (Arakawa & Greenberg, 2007; Christian et al., 2011; Harter et al., 2002; Luthans & Peterson, 2002; Macey & Schneider, 2008; Maslach et al., 2001; Saks, 2006; Schaufeli, Salanova et al., 2002).

For HRD, this synthesis of engagement literature provides a potential framework for the development of workplaces that conceptualize how employees relate to their job and delivers potential drivers which suits across all the five perspectives to intricate how theory and research together can energize practical strategies for employees to reach at different levels of being in work (cognitive, emotional, and behavioral). This literature review aimed to provide a strategic, essential and decisive leverage points for HRD professionals to reshape their current organizational outlook to engage employees in current ambiguous and challenging economic environments with an evolving 21st-century workforce.

#### **LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

There are several limitations to this literature review. The keywords used to describe employee engagement may have led to miss some vital published research. Review was also limited to peer-reviewed and academic business, organizational psychology, business research and HRD journals to define the approach of engagement, to classify the state of the science of engagement and to identify antecedents at work.

To provide beneficial and generalize evidence regarding the antecedents, it is recommended to broaden the scope of engagement-based research and include a diverse set of circumstances. It is also recommended to have an industry specific generalization of antecedents for effective engagement and to provide business leaders with a better understanding of the antecedents at work place. Of equal significance is the necessity to scrutinize the consequences of work engagement. Future research should be directed towards the study of employee engagement as an important mediator between various antecedents and consequences.

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