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A Study on Employee Engagement and its Impact on Organizational Effectiveness among IT Companies in Iraq

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Abstract: This paper explores employee engagement in IT companies in Iraq. The current research measured employee engagement and its influence on organizational effectiveness and suggested ways to improve it via employee engagement. Empirical research requires quantitative data collection and analysis. The research was survey-based. Structured questionnaires were employed to collect data for the examination. To meet the study's aims, primary and secondary data were collected the preliminary data gathered from 265 employees working in IT companies in Iraq. Journals, books, and websites provided secondary data. The researcher used correlation and regression analyses to analyze the data. The results reveal that work environment and organization culture are significant factors of employee engagement that affect organizational effectiveness. The results outcomes will shed light on employee engagement and organizational effectiveness. The study's results would also assist firms design programs and techniques to increase organizational effectiveness. Although, it's important to provide additional support for new employees in these information technology organizations by their supervisors during the process of adjusting to the work environment for the first time.

دراسة عن مشاركة الموظفين وأثرها على الفاعلية التنظيمية لشركات تكنولوجيا المعلومات في العراق

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المستخلص

يهدف هذا البحث دراسة العلاقة بين مشاركة الموظفين والفاعلية التنظيمية في شركات تكنولوجيا المعلومات في العراق، واقتراح وسائل لتحسين الفاعلية التنظيمية من خلال زيادة مشاركة الموظفين. ولتحقيق هذا الهدف تم تصميم استبانة لاستطلاع آراء 265 موظفاً يعملون في شركات تكنولوجيا المعلومات في العراق. كما تم جمع البيانات الثانوية من المجالات والكتب والمواقع الإلكترونية ذات الصلة بموضوع البحث. واستخدم الباحثان تحليلات الارتباط والانحدار لتحليل البيانات. وأظهرت النتائج أن بيئة العمل والثقافة التنظيمية عاملان هامان في مشاركة الموظفين التي تؤثر على الفاعلية التنظيمية. كما بينت نتائج الدراسة ضرورة قيام الشركات بتصميم برامج وتقنيات لزيادة الفاعلية التنظيمية. كما توصي الدراسة بضرورة تقديم دعم إضافي للموظفين الجدد من قبل مشرفيهم إلى حين اندماجهم في بيئة العمل.

الكلمات المفتاحية: بيئة العمل، الثقافة التنظيمية، أسلوب القيادة، مشاركة الموظفين، شركات تكنولوجيا المعلومات، الفاعلية التنظيمية.

Introduction

Today's businesses are under enormous pressure to perform better than ever before. To ensure that their firm prospers while simultaneously transforming for future success, organizational leaders must undertake strategic, structural, financial, and operational reforms. A diverse approach to problem resolution and strategic planning is required for organizational success. Organizations need to put their strategies into action and involve their employees if they want to see improved and long-term financial returns. People, processes, structure, and competencies (such as organizational culture) must all be aligned with the plan if leaders achieve organizational success. Employee morale, productivity, and profitability all improve due to this kind of engagement. A company that can maintain such alignment will generate tremendous business success. Organizational effectiveness is a common yardstick by which companies evaluate their progress.

Satisfied employees may only satisfy the job needs, but this will not contribute to greater performance (Ali and Anwar 2021). To stay competitive, employers must do more than just satisfy their workers' basic

needs. They must do their best to motivate them to use all their employees and skills, or the firm risks losing crucial human capital. Organizations demand employees that are adaptable, creative, ready to contribute, and willing to go "above and beyond" their formal job descriptions or employment contracts (Eva et al., 2019). In other words, firms want their employees to be engaged. Indeed, among the three pillars of optimism, trust, and employee engagement, leaders and managers view employee engagement as one of the most influential aspects in determining organizational performance. Indeed, the combined efforts of engaged employees are a product of organizational success and effectiveness.

Research shows a correlation between employee engagement and intended outcomes for employees and enterprises. Employee engagement reduces burnout and stress, which improves work-life balance (Wardani and Firmansyah 2019). Customer pleasure, sales growth, and shareholder return are all tied to a company's employee engagement at the organizational employee level. Engaged employees establish favorable psychological, social, and organizational settings by sharing, assisting, cooperating, and supporting. Rather than being intrinsically present, engaged employees may be nurtured within a company. Engagement is a process that must be approached methodically rather than as an event.

Statement of the problem: In today's competitive landscape, the success of companies heavily relies on the motivation and commitment of their workforce. However, a concerning trend of declining employee engagement has been observed globally, attributed to various factors such as inadequate Human Resources practices, limited recognition and growth opportunities, and insufficient support resources (Richman, 2006). Despite increased investment in enhancing employee commitment, studies like Kumar and Pansari's (2016) indicate a lack of proportional improvement, potentially jeopardizing the competitive advantage of companies. This study aims to assess the current level of employee engagement and its impact on organizational effectiveness within Iraq's IT companies. By identifying ways to enhance employee engagement, the goal is to bolster organizational effectiveness and competitiveness in this sector.

Research Questions:

- ❖ How does employee engagement influence organizational effectiveness within IT companies in Iraq?

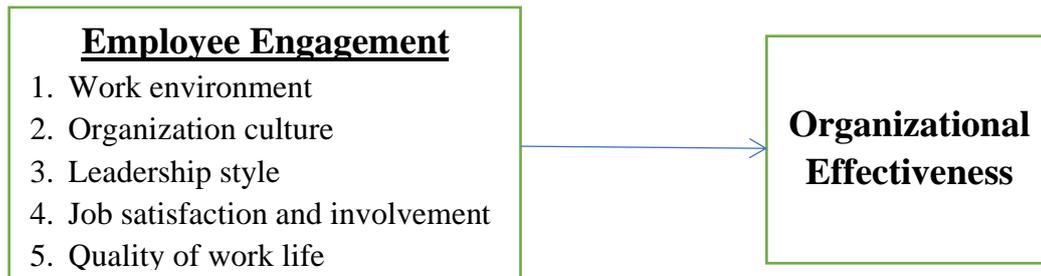
❖ What is the relationship between employee engagement and organizational effectiveness in the context of Iraq's IT industry?

Significance of the study: The research focuses on examining the correlation between employee engagement and organizational effectiveness within the IT sector of Iraq. It aims to identify the factors contributing to employee engagement, determine measurable indicators, and pinpoint issues affecting optimal performance. By shedding light on these aspects, the study intends to offer valuable insights for enhancing employee engagement levels. Furthermore, it seeks to provide a deeper understanding of organizational effectiveness, aiding companies in implementing targeted programs and strategies to elevate their overall efficiency and competitiveness in the global market.

Objectives of the study:

1. To examine the relationship between employee engagement and organizational effectiveness.
2. To examine the impact of Employee Engagement on Organizational Effectiveness.

Conceptual model:



Hypothesis: The researcher formulated null and alternative hypotheses based on the above purposes for both objectives.

H1₀: There is no significant relationship between employee engagement and organizational effectiveness.

H1₁: There is a significant relationship between employee engagement and organizational effectiveness.

H2₀: There is no significant impact of employee engagement on organizational effectiveness.

H2₁: There is a significant impact of employee engagement on organizational effectiveness.

Literature review

Empirical Studies on Employee Engagement: Employee engagement is frequently defined as employees' discretionary effort in their jobs or emotional and intellectual commitment to the company (Shaw, 2005: 26). Kahn (1990: 692), who is widely regarded as the practice's progenitor, was the pioneer who popularized engagement. He established the first grounded theory on work-related personal engagement and disengagement. He did this by conducting extensive research. According to him, for employees to become highly involved in their work, their jobs must provide all three of the following psychological conditions: psychological meaningfulness, psychological safety, and psychological availability. Engagement entails being intellectually and physically present while performing an organizational task.

According to (Shaw, 2005: 26) research, successful programs to increase employee engagement should be led by a company vision statement that includes precise, quantifiable goals. In addition, the results of (Gill, 2013: 92) indicate that senior management should boost employee engagement by increasing the quality of internal communication. The outcomes of several earlier research where personal ties have also been demonstrated to affect professional engagement. In his study, employees were asked if they had three or more days in the previous month when job stress prompted them to act adversely toward family or friends. 51% of actively disengaged employees say yes, vs. 35% of not-engaged and 18% engaged employees.

To create and sustain employee engagement, (Cook, 2008: 214) says that organizations must let go of negative employees, ensure that employees have everything they need to do their jobs, and communicate what is expected of them, the company's values and vision, and how the company defines success. Get to know your employees' goals, stressors, what excites them, and how they define success; train them in problem-solving and conflict resolution; ask how you're doing in their eyes; pay attention to company stories and rituals; reward and recognize employees in meaningful ways, and be consistent over time. (Koyuncu et al., 2006: 307) have noted that engagement has potentially good repercussions for employees and their employing firms. Employee involvement is a direct result of their daily interactions with their workplace. (Aboramadan et al., 2019: 165) have

delivered the notion that managers play a significant role in promoting engagement. Individual employee engagement may be assessed by looking at how well the company sets objectives and goals, recognizes work, provides feedback, and provides the required resources for effectiveness. According to (Saks, 2006: 611), there should be two different but connected types of involvement: involvement in one's work and participation in one's organization. His research findings demonstrated that perceived organizational support influenced both job and organizational engagement. (Keers, 2007: 10) showed that employee engagement is strongly influenced by business culture, creative leadership, and managers' attention. In other words, employees are more likely to concentrate on the bad than on the good parts of the company, which affects levels of engagement. The research addressing employee participation revealed that employee engagement in choices might promote an engaged workforce (Afsar et al., 2020: 1274). (Fernandez et al., 2012: 255) say there is strong evidence that many employees are severely under-utilized in the workplace via the absence of engagement in work-based choices. According to (Cliff, 2016: 51), a company's bottom line suffers due to low morale and poor customer service, as well as difficulty retaining and attracting new employees. To achieve this degree of employee engagement, employees must demonstrate that they are living up to their promises and maintain open lines of communication between upper management and front-line employees. (Avery et al., 2007: 1551) have explored the interaction between employee age and perceived colleague age composition. Satisfaction with older and younger coworkers on engagement and their research suggested that pleasure with one's coworkers contributed substantially to engagement.

Moreira-Fontán et al., (2019: 72) confirmed that conflicting values and goals, manipulation and violation, a lack of resources, and the use of power or coercion are all critical barriers to employee motivation and engagement. Individuals are more inclined to withdraw and disengage from their responsibilities if their organization does not supply them with these resources. Consequently, an individual's willingness to dedicate the mental, emotional, and physical resources necessary for job performance may be influenced by the company's financial and psychological help. According to a study by (Chakraborty and Ganguly, 2019: 194), happy employees are more likely to be engaged. According to (Yu et al., 2019: 13), a less stressful

workplace that allows employees to think freely can increase creativity. According to (Shah et al., 2022: 19), employees working for organizations that don't overburden them are more likely to be engaged. As a result, a more conducive work environment may result in more engaged employees. The working environments and work-from-home programs result in higher employee engagement and retention and a decrease in employee misbehavior. (Yuesti and Adnyana, 2022: 312) claim that well-executed improvements significantly impact employees' personal and professional lives. Furthermore, open communication and effective change management may improve employee engagement and retention.

The research done by (Zhu et al., 2012: 216) shows that the employees working in Asia carry a culture of strong collectivism, which is a typical trait among developing nations. Collectivism stresses the interconnectedness of people. This is mirrored in the behavior of employees, and demonstrating care was considered the essential part of empowering leadership behavior compared to other behavior. This supportive culture will influence the engagement levels of the employees. (Gutermann et al., 2017: 309) provide the support that promotes employee satisfaction with leader-member interactions. There is little doubt that internal choices like recruiting, pay schemes, and training have a substantial impact on the performance and behavior of employees and, in particular, on employee engagement (Umar et al., 2020: 97).

Empirical Studies on Organizational Effectiveness: Organizational effectiveness is a metric that assesses how well a company's core strategies help it achieve its goals. According to) Yankey and McClellan, 2003: 10), organizational effectiveness is "the degree to which an organization has achieved its stated goals and objectives, as well as the degree to which it performs in the process." Organizational effectiveness measurements focus on finding the precise talents that an organization develops to ensure success, including evaluating the worth of an organization's human resources. Measuring the value of intangible assets (people) entails determining how closely those assets are linked to the company's plans. Suppose the company has a good strategy, and the intangible assets are aligned with that strategy. In that case, the investments will generate value for the company. Intangible assets will have little value no matter how much money is spent on them if they do not meet the goal (Ferdaous and Rahman 2019: 161).

According to (Cameron, 1978: 605), the ability of an organization to have access to necessary resources is an organizational determinant of its effectiveness.

Fanasch and Frick, (2018: 282) compared the organizational effectiveness of three different organizations: public, private, and cooperative. Organizational effectiveness was judged in terms of objective indicators like growth, new business, profitability, labor turnover, and absenteeism. Rather than focusing just on technology, (Lin et al., 2022: 103) found that empowering employees to take charge of their new surroundings while fostering a strong sense of self-worth is essential to a company's organizational effectiveness. There is no single model of organizational effectiveness in the literature that matches all companies. According to (Malik et al., 2011: 37), organizational effectiveness characteristics include performance, customer happiness, motivation, retention, degree of business, organizational environment, management expertise, creative synergy, and multiethnic and racial background. The banking industry needs to develop an environment that allows it to grow its business, primarily via redeployment, thorough training, and improved incentives. (Calvo and Calvo, 2018: 1224) have defined Organizational effectiveness as the capacity of a corporation to gather resources and utilize them effectively to reach certain objectives, fulfilling the interest of all the stakeholders. Further, he has discovered various organization development approaches. Organizational Development experts use these four sets of attributes in the workplace: values, assumptions about people and the organization's structure as a whole, goals for practitioners and employees in the organization, and the actual methods by which these values, assumptions, and goals can be achieved.

Empirical studies on Employee Engagement and Organizational Effectiveness: An increasing amount of focus is being placed on the concept of employee engagement in modern businesses due to research showing a correlation between employee engagement and several critical organizational success indicators like job performance and output and customer satisfaction, profitability, and company growth (Sundaray, 2011: 53). There is a widespread belief that there is a correlation between individual employee engagement and company performance. Individual and organizational success is dependent on the level of employee engagement.

Employee engagement predicts a company's performance and financial health (Richman et al., 2008: 183). The impact of engagement and disengagement can be seen in various ways, including productivity and organizational performance, business results for customers, employee retention rates, organizational culture, advocacy, safety outcomes, and the firm's external image. Employees who are entirely dedicated to their jobs regularly go above and above their employee responsibilities (Harter et al., 2002: 273). Employee engagement is a significant corporate motivation for achieving organizational goals. Employee engagement is essential for a company's ability to retain talent, generate consumer loyalty, and increase organizational effectiveness.

(Greenberg, 2004: 3), employee engagement is critical for any company that wants to retain good employees and improve its performance. (Prabhu and Nambirajan, 2016: 8727) discovered a clear correlation between employee engagement and profitability through enhanced productivity, revenue, customer happiness, and employee retention.

(Jones and Harter, 2005: 78) discovered that employee engagement was positively related to the willingness to continue with the firm both in terms of short-term (one year) and long-term (five years) periods using a questionnaire. Employee contributions in task proficiency, proactivity, mental resilience, and devotion are precious. They serve as the foundation for any organization's survival and growth. Taking this into account, it is reasonable to conclude that employee engagement and active commitment are more crucial for innovation, organizational success, and competitive advantage. Thanks to two elements, the relationship between employee engagement and organizational effectiveness may be investigated. Employee engagement is one of the essential components of a company's success (Slatten and Mehmetoglu, 2011: 88). Employee engagement is a good experience that promotes proactivity and inventiveness at work and employees' ability to respond to workplace changes in employees of crisis. They're also more resilient in the face of failures, resulting in more organizational adaptability. Second, motivated employees are more likely to take actions that contribute to the company's effectiveness. Employees engaged are more likely to work harder and go above and beyond the call of duty (Chalofsky and Krishna, 2009: 189). Furthermore, engaged employees are passionate about their work, produce high-quality products, and believe

that their contributions help the company advance. As a result, employee engagement is often thought to have some bearing on a company's effectiveness.

After reviewing the present literature on employee engagement and organizational effectiveness, the following research gap can be identified: In the vast majority of studies undertaken by academics and research institutions, cross-sectional studies using quantitative research methodologies are unusual. To fill this research gap, the current research is being conducted to investigate the impact of employee engagement on organizational effectiveness in IT companies in greater depth.

Research methodology: An empirical study, the data for which were gathered and analyzed via quantitative research. The investigation was done by cross-sectional descriptive study. To carry out the investigation, the structured questionnaire approach was employed to understand the themes investigated in the research work. For the aim of the research, primary data is collected from employees having a minimum of three years of work experience in IT companies located in Iraq. The secondary data was acquired from journals, books, the internet etc. Companies operating in Iraq provided the data for this research. Based on the literature assessment on Employee Engagement and Organizational Effectiveness and a comprehensive conversation with Human Resources experts, a questionnaire was designed using five points Likert scale to collect the information from the respondents. This research considers organizational effectiveness to be a dependent variable for independent variables, namely Employee Engagement (5 components - Work environment, Organization culture, Leadership style, Job satisfaction & involvement, and Quality of life at work). And independent variable Organizational effectiveness may be summarized in five different ways: 1) Corporate image 2) Organization Competency 3) Customer satisfaction 4) Retention of employees 5) Corporate Social Responsibility. Regression analysis is carried out to analyze the level of influence of independent variables on dependent variables.

Analysis: This chapter shall present the results of the analysis conducted on the data collected from the employees in IT companies in respect of employee engagement and organizational effectiveness.

The correlation coefficient between Employee Engagement and Organizational Effectiveness: The study utilized Pearson Correlation

coefficients to explore the relationship between employee engagement and organizational effectiveness. The analysis unveiled noteworthy positive correlations between various dimensions of employee engagement and both independent and dependent variables. Specifically, factors such as the work environment ($r = 0.611$), organizational culture ($r = 0.465$), leadership style ($r = 0.425$), job satisfaction and involvement ($r = 0.243$), and quality of work life ($r = 0.488$) exhibited significant positive correlations. Moreover, these aspects of employee engagement were found to have a positive association with organizational effectiveness, indicating that improvements in employee engagement dimensions can potentially lead to enhanced overall organizational effectiveness.

Table (1): Correlation coefficient between Employee Engagement and Organizational Effectiveness

Correlation	Organizational Effectiveness	Work environment	Organization culture	Leadership style	Job satisfaction and involvement	Quality of work life
Organizational Effectiveness	1					
Work environment	.611	1				
Organization culture	.465	.332	1			
Leadership style	.425	.394	.227	1		
Job satisfaction and involvement	.243	.215	.291	.211	1	
Quality of work life	.448	.322	.352	.149	.367	1

The results show a significant relationship between organizational effectiveness and employee engagement. Table 1 shows a significant correlation between organizational effectiveness and all aspects of employee engagement. However, the strength of the association between certain employee engagement components, job satisfaction, and participation in organizational effectiveness was low. This demonstrates that findings support hypothesis H₁.

Influence of Employee Engagement on Organizational Effectiveness: Regression analysis was done to find out how much each employee

engagement variable added to the organization's effectiveness. The study results showed that the Five variables of employee engagement could explain more than 53% of the variation in the level of organizational effectiveness. The R^2 value for five variables related to employee engagement was 0.53, and the F value was 18.11. Both values were significant at the 1% level of probability.

Table (2): Regression analysis of Employee Engagement on Organizational Effectiveness

Coefficients						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.245	.346		9.385	.000
	Work environment	.338	.081	.316	4.186	.000
	Organization culture	.310	.091	.255	3.410	.001
	Leadership style	.053	.064	.054	.830	.407
	Job satisfaction and involvement	.001	.097	.001	.007	.994
	Quality of work life	.034	.090	.027	.374	.709
R square				0.53		
F value				18.11		
a. Dependent Variable				Organizational Effectiveness		

Based on the regression analysis, it was found that two of the five selected variables about employee engagement were significant for predicting the different levels of organizational effectiveness. Also, out of the five variables, two (work environment and organization culture) were found to be highly significant (1 percent level), while the other three (leadership style, job satisfaction & involvement, and quality of work life) were found to be non-significant. This shows that the results partially supported hypothesis H2₁.

Conclusion: The research conducted on employee engagement and its impact on organizational effectiveness among IT companies in Iraq yielded crucial insights. The study unveiled a significant positive relationship between employee engagement factors and organizational effectiveness.

Specifically, aspects such as work environment, organizational culture, leadership style, and quality of work life demonstrated strong correlations with organizational effectiveness. However, job satisfaction and involvement displayed a weaker connection in this context.

Regression analysis highlighted that among the selected employee engagement dimensions, work environment and organizational culture emerged as highly significant predictors of organizational effectiveness at the 1 percent level. Conversely, leadership style, job satisfaction & involvement, and quality of work life did not exhibit significant influence. The findings highlighted the significant influence that the work environment and the culture of the organization have in determining the effectiveness of the organization over time. It is important to note that the study found that new employees in these information technology organizations required additional support and attention from their supervisors during the process of adjusting to the work environment for the first time.

The significance of the study is further emphasized by the fact that it is in agreement with the remark made by Macey and Schneider (2008) on the key role that leadership plays in affecting employee job satisfaction and engagement level. In addition, the incorporation of information technology firms in Iraq into this study offers a foundation for the possibility of expanding into other industries, such as the manufacturing sector, the service sector, and the small-scale industries. An expansion of this kind might provide complete insights about the involvement of employees and the success of organizations across a wide range of business landscapes, which would contribute to improved operational procedures.

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QUESTIONNAIRE

A Study on Employee Engagement and its Impact on Organizational Effectiveness among IT Companies in Iraq

Part A: Demographic Profile

1. **Name** (optional).....
2. **Age**
 21-25 years 26 -30 years 31-35 years 36-40 years above 40 years
3. **Gender**
 Male Female
4. **Qualification**
 Bachelor Degree Master Degree Others
5. **Designation**
 Software Engineer Programme Developer DBA Consultant
 Other:
6. **Experience: (Years)**
 1-5 Years 6-10 Years Above 10 Years
7. **Marital Status**
 Unmarried Married

Part B: Employee Engagement

(Strongly Agree – 5; Agree – 4; Neutral – 3; Disagree – 2; Strongly Disagree – 1)

S.No	Particles	5	4	3	2	1
Work Environment						
1	I believe interpersonal relationships between employees are highly encouraged					
2	I believe reliable safety and security mechanisms are strictly enforced					
3	I believe a work environment with adequate facilities exists					
4	I believe there is quality provision of health, hygiene, and medical care					
5	I am completely satisfied with the handling of the employees					

S.No	Particles	5	4	3	2	1
Organization Culture						
6	Management places a high value on organizational culture fidelity.					
7	Adherence to organizational culture improves employee commitment.					
8	Work-life balance is promoted by organizational culture.					
9	The organizational culture promotes excellent performance and individual advancement.					
10	Organizational culture ensures that employees are completely satisfied.					
Leadership Style						
11	The leadership style used is upbeat and enthusiastic.					
12	Leaders value subordinates' opinions					
13	Leadership encourages interactive contact with employees					
14	Employee interests are considered in decision making					
15	Leadership demonstrates integrity, sincerity, and sound judgment.					
Job satisfaction & Involvement						
16	IT profession matches my attitude and knowledge level					
17	There are several opportunities for self-development and career advancement.					
18	IT job profiles provide excellent social prestige and recognition.					
19	There is a good probability of getting a better portfolio in a foreign country.					
20	I am satisfied with the pay package and other benefits in the IT profession.					

S.No	Particles	5	4	3	2	1
Quality of Work Life						
21	My work performance and the performance of my organization are both impacted by the Quality of my Work Life.					
22	At the end of the day, my job and the working environment make me happy.					
23	The job is demanding and engaging in order to bring out the best in the personnel.					
24	I love talking about this organization with individuals outside of it.					
25	Overall, I am pleased with the Quality of Work Life that this organization offers.					

Part C: Organizational Effectiveness:

(Strongly Agree – 5; Agree – 4; Neutral – 3; Disagree – 2; Strongly Disagree – 1)

SI No	Particulars	5	4	3	2	1
1	Corporate Image					
2	Organization Competency					
3	Customer Satisfaction					
4	Retention of Employees					
5	Corporate Social Responsibility					