
Editorial

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In today's increasingly competitive and rapidly changing business environment, the fields of employee satisfaction and engagement are very important for both theory and practice. Most employee satisfaction and engagement studies in academia appeared sometime after practitioner research, although several researchers have recently started to address the constructs of employee satisfaction and especially engagement by studying their dimensions, predecessors, antecedents and consequences. Some authors take their own approach to understanding employee satisfaction and engagement, others offer their reinterpretations. Both constructs have been examined by different disciplines (e.g., HRM, HRD, psychology, sociology, management), or even interdisciplinarily.

In an era of high technology, wage slavery and dominance of the market model, one might claim that employee satisfaction, as one of the constructs historically most often examined in HRM, does not matter at all. On the other hand, theorists and practitioners in the HRM field contend that employees and their satisfaction are the key factors bringing success and excellence in today's business. Moreover, satisfaction in itself is not enough – employees must be engaged in order to perform to the maximum benefit of the

organisation and society. A special issue of *International Journal of Human Resources Development and Management (IJHRDM)* therefore provides a particularly suitable vehicle for covering the mentioned themes at the most appropriate level.

This special issue includes eight papers with a focus on employee satisfaction and engagement in various working environments around the world. They present studies from both the private and public sector, thereby offering deep and interesting insights into the latest research on important human resources management themes.

In the first paper, Monica and Krishnaveni from India present an integrative framework that empirically examines the relationship between a unique combination of enablers of employee engagement, and its subsequent impact on job satisfaction. Their study investigates the relationship between job characteristics, competence-development practices, social support, communication, employee engagement and job satisfaction. The study findings point to the need for a robust employee engagement strategy that is levered by the identified enablers, namely job characteristics, competence-development practices, social support and communication, and its subsequent impact on job satisfaction.

The next paper focuses on engagement as an antecedent of the satisfaction-performance relationship. Here, Ferreira and Rodrigues from Portugal look at the relationship between satisfaction and performance, when preceded by employee engagement. Specifically, they examine the relationship between job satisfaction and company perceived performance following the influence of the three-dimensional concept of employee engagement (vigour, dedication and absorption) on job satisfaction. The results show, on one hand, that vigour and dedication are related with job satisfaction, although absorption does not make a significant contribution. On the other, job satisfaction influences company perceived performance.

In the third paper written by Mansour and Tremblay from Canada, the objective of the research conducted in Quebec with 562 health-sector staff, mainly nurses, was to examine the direct and indirect effects of the psychosocial safety climate on work engagement and organisational citizenship behaviours. The results of structural equations show that the psychosocial safety climate increases engagement (vigour, dedication and absorption). However, it has no direct effect on organisational citizenship. The bootstrap results demonstrate that vigour, dedication and absorption all mediate the relationship between psychosocial safety climate and altruism and compliance; yet, the indirect link between climate and altruism through absorption is not significant.

The paper by Balasubramanian and Lathabhavan from India presents a study on the relationship between glass-ceiling beliefs and job satisfaction through the mediating role of work engagement. The study surveyed a sample of 420 women employees and structural equation modelling was used to understand the relationships. The relationship between glass-ceiling beliefs and job satisfaction was found to be fully mediated by work engagement. The study recommends that longitudinal studies be carried out in this area in the future.

The fifth paper by Villacé-Molinero et al. from Spain reveals that even though the hotel industry labour market has a strong female presence, women are still limited in their access to management positions. Their research is based on a survey designed to analyse the participation of women in management positions at hotel chain corporate headquarters and at 3-, 4- and 5-star hotels (both independent and associated with a chain) in the Community of Madrid (Spain). The study concludes there is a glass ceiling due to the male dominance of management and stereotyping of certain positions (vertical and horizontal segregation). Nevertheless, a change in the trend is observed with new

positions emerging in response to the appearance of information and communications technology.

The management of human resources in responsible small businesses is examined by Cantele from Italy. Her study seeks to deepen our understanding of the relationships underlying the motivation to adopt a socially responsible approach, the practices with regard to employees and the perceived benefits, all in the context of Italian small businesses. Analysis of the interviews conducted shows that small businesses consider employee satisfaction and commitment a priority. Despite what is shown in the literature, they do not try and avoid implementing formal tools to manage and communicate their ethical approach to human resources management, and are fully aware of the strategic relevance of engaging with employees in the pursuit of excellence.

In the paper by Tomažević et al. from Slovenia, the focus is on public administration where the notion of good administration must be expanded and connected with the concept of business excellence since public administration as a system is inevitably interdisciplinary and holistic. In particular, it must incorporate specific managerial elements because satisfied civil servants better satisfy the public interest and the rights of parties (i.e., users of public services) as well as legitimate expectations. In view of the above, an analysis of good administration in relation to job satisfaction was conducted, with a special focus on Slovenian practices in various types of administrative agencies. First, the results show that job satisfaction is a factor of good administration and, second, that the understanding and enforcement of the integration of good administration and job satisfaction in Slovenia vary according to the type of public administration agency involved (service or authoritative). Third, there is an insufficient level of awareness of the importance of caring for job satisfaction and its impact on both the satisfaction of parties in administrative procedures and on good administration.

In the final paper by Bajec also from Slovenia, the presented study explores the relationships between time-perspective dimensions, the Big Five personality traits and job satisfaction. People with higher past-positive and lower past-negative and present-fatalistic time perspectives are more satisfied with their jobs, individuals with higher present-hedonism show higher affective job satisfaction, and those with a higher future time perspective show greater cognitive job satisfaction. The results also show that the time-perspective dimensions and a balanced time perspective explain additional variance in job satisfaction beyond what is explained by personality traits, age and gender. The study results can guide possible interventions to affect organisational commitment, turnover intentions and other outcomes of job satisfaction.

In summary, these eight papers clearly emphasise the importance of effective and efficient human resource management in order to ensure employee satisfaction and engagement. Moreover, some of them stress that both phenomena have a significant influence on company performance. It is therefore necessary to continue researching into them and to put the related activities in place in practice so as to improve the operations of organisations of all types in the long run. Further research and additional measures in this field will help organisations from both the private and public sector achieve higher levels of employee satisfaction and engagement and, consequently, the excellence and sustainability of their business. The main theme successfully reflected the idea that 'technology is a motor of changes, but people are the heart'.

The key objective of this special issue was to present the most interesting papers presenting research on employee satisfaction and engagement as the core competitive

advantages of modern businesses, both private and public. Many factors make organisations competitive and able to achieve business excellence. A number of these factors are easily controllable and changeable, whereas those connected with the human factor, like employee satisfaction and engagement, are very difficult to initially establish and then later maintain. Therefore, attracting and retaining satisfied and engaged employees is becoming a critical factor of competitive advantage and business excellence. Leaders must possess the competence, authority and interest to encourage and promote high levels of employee satisfaction and engagement since they bring several measurable and unmeasurable benefits; first, for individual employees, second, for organisations and, third, for society as a whole.