

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AND SATISFACTION DEPENDENCY ON EMPLOYEE GENDER

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Abstract

Our subsequent research was focused on the fact that there are differentiations within a company and identical job functions at the engagement and satisfaction of employees depending on the gender. We used a questionnaire based on the Focal EE as the engagement questionnaire, which was translated into Bulgarian, and standardized for both males and females.

The research output confirms that there is a significant difference between the engagement of males and females recognized at the 12 out of 14 factors mentioned. We are perceived that the key reason for such results is the fact that the research was carried out in the company where males prevail. In general, satisfaction of women working in male companies reaches much higher values. Another reason leading to a higher female satisfaction in Bulgaria can be represented as an additional family income.

Keywords: gender, gender differences, employee engagement, employee satisfaction, HR management

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Introduction

Nowadays, it is necessary to manage performance of employees in order to assure a company survival not only by means of the performance factors and KPIs, but also through their motivation, satisfaction and engagement. These are considered major factors of the company success in future and an assurance of an effective planning of resources. On account of the planning as well as a demographic one, in particular, we think it is inevitable to deal with the question of gender dependency and employee engagement, which is concerned with in this paper.

1 Theoretical Background on Engagement and Gender Diversity

1.1 Definitions of Engagement and Satisfaction

Our research target is not to provide an exhaustive compendium of definitions related to the given theme. Therefore, we have selected a certain number of definitions dealing with the employee engagement and satisfaction after our search of the available literature.

William Kahn provided the first formal definition of employee engagement as "the harnessing of organisation members' selves to their work roles; in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances" (Kahn, 1990).

The CustomInsight.com where we used the free questionnaire from defined employee engagement and satisfaction as "The extent to which employees feel passionate about their jobs, are committed to the organization, and put discretionary effort into their work. In contrast to the engagement definition, the employee satisfaction is quoted as: "The extents to which employees are happy or content with their jobs and work environment" (CustomInsight.com, 2015).

We had only a sole reliable research study at our disposal which we could draw our experience from themed the gender diversity and performance. So, we contextualize the conclusion of the research study:

The results of this research support the contention that gender diversity at the business-unit level positively affects financial performance, which appears to have substantial practical implications. This financial utility suggests that making diversity an organizational priority may realize financial benefits (Badal, Harter, 2014). Keiningham, Aksoy, Daly, Perrier, Solom, (2006) declare that "differences in store size may mask the true relationship between employee satisfaction and profitability. These findings suggest the imperative to measure and control for store size in studies aimed at assessing the impact of employee satisfaction on store performance." This particular citation acknowledges the relevance of the fact that employee satisfaction and engagement also play a significant role for the profitability of the business-unit level, and there is no point to separate the facts.

1.2 Management View on Employee Engagement

The latest trends within the HR Management field solve the need of a qualified labour force and performance management. As Legnerova&Fucikova say, this is the necessity to be managed including the employee diversity:

Employee diversity is necessary for better company results. This was mentioned by Legnerova, as well: „In a team of different types of people and personalities employers then need to learn to work with such diversity – and thus, master diversity management. Managers meet diversity quite often, although they may not always be explicitly aware of it. International or multicultural teams or interdisciplinary teams noticeably exemplify diversity in the workforce“ (Legnerova, Fucikova, 2014).

In view of the potential company needs' servicing, Stritesky supplies the following in terms of the HR field, thereto:

Then we structure of the HR department in both organizations that is divided into the front office and back office. Back office is represented by expert teams or administrative departments. Expert teams are mostly focused on the development, knowledge management and training, compensation and benefits, or recruitment. Furthermore, there are departments dealing with HR Controlling, HR projects and information management. Front office is represented by a newly created function of the HR Business Partner. His daily workload is characterized by little differences in each organization (Stritesky, 2013).

It is obvious that companies endeavour for a close approach to real needs of their internal clients as well as employees. Subsequently, inherent employee diversity and engagement help increase the company productivity together with the particular tools.

1.3 Hypothesis

We have determined our hypothesis in the following wording:

There is a differentiation between the employee engagement ratio and satisfaction at men and women in the company where men prevail as employees.

We anticipate that women shall be more satisfied for several reasons, which we are going to examine in our next researches.

1. Women working in male collective teams are more satisfied, in general.
2. Women participate in a family financing, so they bring another pay back home.

2 Methodology

This study was executed based on the customized order organized by the power company. The number of questionnaires comprised in the study amounts to 1,550 respondents in total, of whom 76 % (1,153) were men, and 13 % (202) were women out of the total number of participants. The number of 10 % (154) out of the questioned employees did not state their gender at all. The response rate of the questionnaires accounted to 72.4 %. All of the respondents occupy the non-managerial job positions. Majority of the respondents occupy the job positions such as electricians, fitters, and meter readers. The questionnaire consists of 79 questions distributed into fourteen specific categories.

The questionnaire was translated, tested in the Focus Group, and confirmed its efficiency via results achieved in the research study. The scales applied indicated their statistical significance in the form of existing differentiations between men and women employed by the Bulgarian power company. We received a final ladder of all categories with a similar order in evaluations of both men and women. On average, women evaluate by a single quantitative point higher than is the situation evaluated by men. Women evaluate significantly in a more positive way all 12 out of 14 criteria than men on the probability level of the statistical significance $\alpha = 0.05$ %.

2.1 Research Limitations/Implications

This research sample originated directly from a single company research. In terms of the future, we plan to expand it to other countries of the Eastern Europe. Another limitation considered is that mostly men work in the power company. Essentially, the application of industrial company employees solely representing the power company may be considered a limitation of the study itself. Therefore, understanding the correlates of gender differentiations may also be useful in helping companies employ a single gender predominantly to be able to deal with such a critical issue. Principally, researchers dedicated their excessive effort to explore the joint relationship of male and female gender perceived by both of them, co-working in the environment where the male gender duly outweighs (Colbert, A. E., Mount, M. K. & Barrick, M. R. & Harter, J. K. & Witt, L. A., 2004).

2.2 Practical Implications

As the questionnaire was used in Bulgarian language, we assumed it was necessary to use a distinct norm for both men and women. However, the outcome of the results specifies that women achieve a higher satisfaction as resulted from the statistically significant differences than men, whose results would not have any impact on formation of the HR Strategy of the company due to the fact that both genders identified approximately the same ladder of categories. Thereinafter, it is possible to contemplate that such a local diversity and its employee satisfaction interference produces an effect on an innovative potential, as well. This statement is presented as a conclusion of the research carried out by Crescenzi, Gagliardi, Iammarino, (2015): „domestic firms active in sectors with greater investments by Multinational Enterprises show a stronger innovative performance.

2.3 Originality/Value

Extraordinary value can be found in several levels. First of all, the pure originality consists in the fact that this is a brand new and well-proven reliable instrument to measure job satisfaction within corporate environment in Bulgaria. Another exceptional value shall also be demonstrated by the fact that this particular questionnaire is available for cross-cultural studies. Researchers of the study prioritize the ladder of categories of the questionnaire to statistically significant difference of job satisfaction and job engagement between both genders, male and female. The research study aims at an identification of gender finesse in employees' job satisfaction and engagement while confirming the researchers' hypothesis that women express more satisfaction than men, even if they carry out their jobs in predominantly male environment. So, the study provides insight into employees' perceptions of certain aspects of the nature of the power industry in Bulgaria (Bennett & Robinson, 2000). As another reference to support our premises, we have to take into account the following citation, as well: “The degree of autonomy-supportiveness of the work climate did predict overall need satisfaction in each culture, and need satisfaction in turn predicted both task engagement and wellbeing. Thus, by showing that satisfying these needs promotes motivation and mental health across cultures, results of the study are consistent with the view that these needs are universal” (Deci, Ryan, Gagne, Leone, Usunov, Kornazheva, 2001).

3 Empirical Research Part

3.1 Questionnaire and Data Collection

The questionnaire was used based on the sample questions of the example of the company Custom Insight (Custom Insight, LLC, 2015) for the purpose of examination of the employee job satisfaction and gender differences between male and female employees. This particular type of the questionnaire was selected due to its qualities fully covering overall categories of employee satisfaction and engagement used for the power company examination. A Bulgarian version of the questionnaire applied for the purposes of the research study may be gathered directly from authors of the research paper.

It was actually built up on basis of the well-known questionnaire of the Focal Employee Engagement, which has had more than twenty years history behind its operation. Questions were extracted from the web page known as Custom Insight (Custom Insight, LLC, 2015). The range of the evaluation scale identifies the limits from 0 to 10, where 0 stands for I fully disagree with the statement, 10 stands for I fully agree with the statement. The questionnaire uses a standard form of the scale from 1 – 5. For the reason of the research participants being technically educated employees, authors selected the scale ranging from 0 – 10, which simulates the analogy with percentages in a more effective way, thus it better corresponds to their mentality.

The questionnaire was structured into 14 specific categories. Each category consists of numbers of questions. The Sample Group consisted of male and female employees of the power company in Bulgaria. All sample group members work in non-managerial positions, mostly in the positions such as technicians, fitters, and meter readers, which form at least 85 % of all staff in the power distribution company. In terms of the time schedule of the whole research, the research procedure was administered from the end of October 2014 to the beginning of December 2014 by approximately 20 members of the power company employees. Power company employees are obliged to attend a regular training on each recipient's workplace organized twice a year. Each of the trainings takes a half of the workday, and the employees deal with the considerable output to reply to questions asked six months ago. The questionnaire was structured into 14 specific categories. The scope of the categories enumerates the following categories - see the Tab. 1 below.

Tab. 1: Questionnaire Categories

#	Category	No. of Items
1	Feedback	7
2	Teamwork	2
3	Opportunities for Growth	6
4	Work/Life Balance; Stress and Work Pace	6
5	Quality and Customer Focus	7
6	Fairness	6
7	Mission and Purpose	6
8	Respect for Management	6
9	Compensation	5
10	Respect for Employees	7
11	Workplace and Resources	6
12	Performance and Accountability	5
13	Communication	4
14	Personal Expression/Diversity	6

Source: Ultimate Data Analysis

The paper questionnaires were collected and sent to our colleague to the headquarters of the power company in Sofia, Bulgaria, for their further processing and computerization with the output transferred into Microsoft Excel. The further data processing and maintenance was executed in the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Testing the scales (criteria) was elaborated in SPSS Cronbach's alpha in order to find out the scales' consistency and questions. Means and standard deviation were used to rank satisfaction categories as well to define norms. T-tests were performed to explore the possible differences between men and women, and further to scrutinize norm boundaries. The "relative" aspect means that every scale is divided to the number of its items, so two goals were actually accomplished:

1. Instead of working with means and standard deviation, they were converted into the original scale of supplying answers. So, the results go between 0 and 10 for every scale.
2. Such a simple transformation enables to carry out the direct comparison between scales (categories) results.

Category shall identify the category itself. Herein, the category manifests its relevancy as there is a variety of categories equipped with an alternative quantity of questions. In order to achieve the Mean per each of the categories, it was necessary to average replies to questions by a diverse quantity of items. Thereinafter, it was possible to compare the scales among each other.

Items shall provide a number of questions per the category. To evaluate satisfaction data for the submitter, mean was designated to be applied, including the Standard Deviation

for the norm. Whereas the statistical difference occurs between men and women, it is necessary to use differentiated scales for both genders.

Alpha – explaining alpha, or the Cronbach’s alpha, it shall verify an internal scale consistency and should be reaching values within the range of 0.7 – 0.95. All scales stipulated high and very high reliability reflects that the questionnaire indicator displays certain fair psychometric qualities and the questionnaire is applicable in Bulgarian cultural settings, i.e. within the organizational context. Some differences between men and women sporadically emerged, yet the scales are considered sufficient.

T-test is regarded to be a classical test by means of which the differences between two groups were examined in each scale.

P-probability is regarded to be a test of significance. When the probability value amounts to the value lower than 0.05, then the study would result in a more significant difference achieved between both genders, i. e. between men and women.

Tab. 2: Means, Standard Deviations, Cronbach’s alpha, t-test, Probability of Satisfaction Questionnaire Categories

Category	Item	Gender	Mean	Stand. Dev.	α	t	p
Feedback (relative)	7	Overall	5.78	2.60	0.94	1.79	0.07
		Men	5.81	2.60	0.94		
		Women	6.17	2.69	0.95		
Teamwork (relative)	2	Overall	6.45	2.73	0.88	1.32	0.19
		Men	6.48	2.71	0.87		
		Women	6.75	2.63	0.91		
Opportunities for Growth (relative)	6	Overall	6.05	2.43	0.91	2.53	0.01
		Men	6.07	2.41	0.91		
		Women	6.54	2.39	0.90		
Work/Life Balance; Stress and Work Pace (relative)	6	Overall	6.45	2.14	0.86	4.20	0.00
		Men	6.41	2.13	0.86		
		Women	7.09	1.96	0.85		
Quality and Customer Focus (relative)	7	Overall	7.64	1.92	0.91	7.26	0.00
		Men	7.59	1.94	0.91		
		Women	8.42	1.39	0.88		
Fairness (relative)	6	Overall	6.13	2.43	0.93	2.77	0.01
		Men	6.13	2.42	0.93		
		Women	6.66	2.43	0.93		
Mission and Purpose (relative)	6	Overall	7.69	1.83	0.88	6.25	0.00
		Men	7.64	1.85	0.89		
		Women	8.36	1.41	0.84		
Respect for Management (relative)	6	Overall	6.96	2.36	0.93	3.20	0.00
		Men	6.93	2.35	0.93		
		Women	7.67	2.03	0.88		
Compensation (relative)	5	Overall	6.36	2.37	0.89	4.98	0.00
		Men	6.30	2.37	0.89		
		Women	7.22	2.08	0.87		

Category	Item	Gender	Mean	Stand. Dev.	α	t	p
Respect for Employees (relative)	7	Overall	6.76	2.23	0.92	4.24	0.00
		Men	6.73	2.23	0.92		
		Women	7.41	1.97	0.90		
Workplace and Resources (relative)	6	Overall	6.69	2.25	0.90	6.50	0.00
		Men	6.61	2.26	0.90		
		Women	7.64	1.97	0.86		
Performance and Accountability (relative)	5	Overall	7.12	1.98	0.87	5.35	0.00
		Men	7.07	1.98	0.86		
		Women	7.82	1.68	0.85		
Communication (relative)	4	Overall	6.52	2.33	0.89	3.90	0.00
		Men	6.47	2.34	0.90		
		Women	7.19	2.21	0.90		
Personal Expression/ Diversity (relative)	6	Overall	6.35	2.40	0.91	3.44	0.00
		Men	6.31	2.38	0.91		
		Women	6.95	2.33	0.89		

Source: Ultimate Data Analysis

Conclusion

The test demonstrates satisfactory psychometric values and shall be suitable to testing employees' satisfaction in Bulgarian companies. The test in its particular form can be applied and compared to tests executed in other countries, as well.

All scales indicate a high, or a very high internal consistency, which acknowledges the fact that the questionnaire as the whole displays a very arguable reliability.

Twelve out of fourteen scales demonstrate significant gender differences (only in categories identified as the "Teamwork" and "Feedback" were the results achieved not significant enough). Therefore, it is necessary to frame dissimilar norms for them depending on the gender.

The range of scales at men and women appears to be approximately identical see the Fig. 1 below, Sequence based on Satisfaction Aspect Significance given by Overall Mean. The principle difference appears merely in scales tagged by an exclamation mark.

It is not recommended to approach women in the manner different from men in the framework of the HR strategy.

Female are more satisfied in their jobs. As a matter of fact, we confirm that the difference revealed in the job satisfaction between men and women causes them to think of why they achieved such an output. Our hypothesis is being proven, hereby.

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