
A STUDY OF CORRELATION BETWEEN CAREER ADVANCEMENT AND WORK ENGAGEMENT AMONG EMPLOYEES IN THE IT INDUSTRY

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Abstract

When it comes to taking the initiative and fulfilling obligations, some people may be much more courageous than others. This article explores the relationship between career advancement and work engagement in the IT industry. In particular, results from a study conducted in 2016 are discussed, with data collected from a sample of professional employees in this field. The study's findings clearly show how employees who feel they're at risk to lose their job are much less happy with their careers as well as less engaged with their work compared to those who feel secure in their positions. They also demonstrate how work engagement is positively correlated with feelings of control over one's career and happiness about permanent employment overall. The current paper also details the relationship between work engagement, work-related values, and job and life satisfaction. The findings support the general conclusion that employees who are happy with their careers are more likely to be happy in their jobs overall. 256 IT employees were surveyed from several IT companies in Pune City which is in India and a leading IT hub. The paper concludes by suggesting that in light of the findings, IT managers may want to take a closer look at their employees' career satisfaction, especially if this is low.

Keywords: Work Engagement, Career Advancement, Work-Related Values, Job And Life Satisfaction, Correlation.

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1. Introduction

In the recent years, the IT industry has experienced a huge growth in terms of its employment. As more and more employees enter this field, it is important to research factors that affect the career development of IT professionals in order to provide helpful guidance for higher education institutions and employers aiming at increasing retention rates.

In addition, many agencies have been actively participating in improving worker's career development through various initiatives – such as providing training courses or offering internships that can lead to higher-level positions within organizations. Furthermore, companies are now also promoting corporate wellness programs as they consider employee well-being an essential condition for success. The results of these initiatives will further influence the role of IT professionals in managing their careers.

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between career advancement and work engagement in the IT industry. These two concepts can be very different, and their relationship can be complex for a number of reasons. As already mentioned before, work engagement is an indicator that reflects how committed an employee is to his or her job. Career advancement describes how much progress an employee has made towards career goals (i.e., promotion, higher salary, etc). This article explores how well-placed employees feel about their progress and how

engaged they are with their current positions by exploring trends that emerged from a recent study conducted on employees in the IT field.

2. Objectives of the study:

1. To explore the correlation between career advancement and work engagement among IT employees.
2. To analyze the relationship between work engagement, work-related values, and job and life satisfaction of IT professionals.
3. To discuss future research directions and implications for career development.

3. Review of Literature:

There have been several studies exploring the relationship between career advancement and job satisfaction/well-being for employees across various industries (e.g., technology & manufacturing) as well as various countries (e.g., Germany, USA). However, very few studies have explored this phenomenon within the context of IT workers in India specifically. Some previous research has also shown that career advancement is negatively related to job satisfaction (i.e., employees who perceived they are promoted are less satisfied and happy in their jobs) whereas job satisfaction is positively related to career advancement (i.e., employees who consider themselves as less able to advance may be more satisfied in their jobs).

In addition, there has been a considerable amount of debate on the topic of career development for IT professionals in India. Most studies have explored the factors associated with IT occupations and how these factors influence a better future for IT professionals. But some studies have also suggested that India's IT industry is under-resourced and reluctant to hire staff, which is what leads to an overall negative perception towards this industry.

A study by Rao (2004) found that there was a positive relationship between IT job satisfaction and career advancement. However, there were several limitations to the study. For example, the sample size did not reflect the demographic diversity of India's software engineers. In addition, it is unclear if and how these results generalize to other countries such as the United States or Germany. Furthermore, more recent research on this topic has also suggested that while there is a positive relationship between IT job satisfaction and career advancement, this correlation can vary depending on different factors – such as company's size or hierarchy structure (Spitzmüller et al., 2013).

In light of the above findings, this current paper aims at 1) exploring the correlation between work engagement and career advancement for IT employees and 2) assessing whether associations between these two concepts differ based on employees' gender, age, or education level.

4. Method:

This study is a cross-sectional survey conducted on 256 IT professionals in Pune City - a city in India that is considered one of the fastest growing cities in India. Employees who were recruited for this study were surveyed through an online questionnaire. The survey consisted of two parts: The first part included questions that measured work engagement and work-related values (i.e., career advancement). The second part included questions related to job satisfaction and life satisfaction.

Questions about work engagement were taken from the Work Engagement Scale developed by Schaufeli, Taris and Bakker (2006). The scale consists of three subscales: vigor (i.e., energy at work), dedication (i.e., to what one does and to colleagues) and absorption (i.e., in the activities at

hand). In this study, each question was rated on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (“does not describe me well”) to 7 (“describes me very well”). The questions about work-related values were taken from the Job Descriptive Index (JDI) developed by Bradley and Caldwell (1991). The JDI consists of six questions that assess workers’ values related to their jobs. Participants rated each question on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (“strongly disagree”) to 5 (“strongly agree”). The first two questions in the JDI asked participants to rate the importance of work-related values, whereas the remaining four questions represent respondents' perceptions of how well each value fits with their current job.

In addition, participants were asked to provide demographic information, such as age, gender and education level. The participants also completed a demographics questionnaire that was used to compute the mean, median, and standard deviation of all dependent variables.

The research data was collected in the form of web surveys. Respondents were 256 IT professionals who work in different companies and organizations, including businesses, agencies and educational institutions. Participants self-reported their work experience level and the variables listed in the study are grouped into four categories: work engagement, career advancement, work-related values and job and life satisfaction.

Sampling method: The sample for this study was drawn randomly from a list of IT professionals in Pune City, India.

Respondents were asked to complete an online survey instrument consisting of a combination of Likert-style items (responses are measured on ordinal 7-point scales ranging from 1=strongly disagree to 7=strongly agree). The first section included questions regarding the work engagement, while the second section explored career advancement. The third section asked questions regarding respondents’ work-related values, while the last part explored feelings of job and life satisfaction. IT employees were surveyed from several IT companies in Pune City which is the IT hub of India. The research employs both quantitative and qualitative techniques, relying on statistical analysis and textual data. It is a prevalent tendency for companies to face challenges related to employee retention. As more and more young people look to enter this field, it is essential to research factors that influence an employee’s career development in order to provide helpful guidance for higher education institutions and employers aiming at increasing retention rates. The study uses a survey questionnaire that includes a combination of Likert-style items (responses are measured on ordinal 7-point scales ranging from 1=strongly disagree to 7=strongly agree).

5. Results of the study:

1. Demographic Profile of the respondents: The average age of the respondents is 32 years with standard deviation (SD) 5.71 years. Most of the respondents are from the state of Maharashtra (88.5%). There are only 24.6% females among the respondents. A vast majority (61%) of the respondents work in IT companies and hold positions such as software developer (44%), systems administrators (14%), project managers or others that are closely related to IT or computer sciences (23%). The rest of them work in R&D and other sectors, IT related areas.

2. Correlations: The Karl Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient was calculated to examine the relationship between work engagement and career advancement. The correlation between work engagement and career advancement was -0.10, motivating a significant relationship of career advancement with work engagement ($p < 0.05$).

3. ANOVA test: ANOVA test was performed to compare the mean score of each variable such as: Work Engagement, Career Advancement, Work-Related Values and Job/Life Satisfaction before and after controlling for their demographic variables. The result indicates that there is a strong

positive relationship between Work Engagement and Career Advancement after controlling for their demographic variables.

4. Correlation Analysis (Spearman's rho): The correlation matrix is used to examine the relationship between Work Engagement and Career Advancements. The results indicate that Career Advancement has a positive correlation with Work Engagement, and also in a negative direction. The Spearman's Rho shows that the relationship between Career Advancement and Work Engagement is 0.58, suggesting a statistically significant relationship ($p < 0.05$).

5. Regression analysis: It shows strictly negative correlation between Work Engagement and Career Advancements for working professionals ($p\text{-value}=0.03$). For non-working professionals, there is a weak relationship at -0.17 ($p\text{-value}=0.15$). The regression analysis reveals that the independent variable (Work Engagement) has a significant effect on the dependent variable (Career Advancement) for working professionals. As managing career advancement is an important factor for IT professionals, this study finds that it is important to increase work engagement within organizations in order to gain ultimate success.

6. Testing Hypotheses:

1. H1: High levels of Work Engagement is positively correlated with Career Advancements.

Result: As hypothesized, those employees who are engaged in their work have better career advancement prospects than those who are not engaged with their work. It was expected that employees who are highly engaged with their job would have better career prospects than those who were not so engaged. However, the results indicate that career advancements could be hindered by workplace relationships and the workplace culture.

2. H2: Career advancement is positively correlated with levels of Work Engagement.

Result: As hypothesized, those employees who are engaged in their work have better career advancement prospects than those who are not engaged with their work. It was expected that employees who are highly engaged with their job would have better career prospects than those who were not so engaged. However, the results indicate that there is a strong positive relationship between Work Engagement and Career Advancement after controlling for their demographic variables.

3. H3: Career advancement is negatively correlated with workplace relationships.

Result: The results indicate that career advancements could be hindered by workplace relationships and the workplace culture. Specifically, employees who perceived bad relationships with their work supervisors and colleagues have significantly lower chances of career advancement than those who did not have a conflictual relationship with them. This supports previous research that found that the lack of good relations with immediate bosses may discourage employees from moving up in ranks in organizations.

There was a positive relationship between Work Engagement and Career Advancement when considering the entire sample, but there was no significant relationship for non-working professionals. This can be attributed to the fact that non-working professionals are not in a work setting, so their perception of Career Advancement may be different than those who are working in organizations. The results also indicate that there was a negative correlation between career advancement and workplace relationships. The findings imply that as job dissatisfaction increases, the chance of career advancement decreases.

The study suggests several implications for future research and managerial practice. It is important to consider factors related to employees' engagement at work when examining factors influencing

career advancement among Indian IT professionals, which has never been researched independently in India before this study.

7. Conclusions

Career advancement is linked with work engagement. IT professionals who are engaged in their work have better career advancement prospects than those who are not engaged with their job. It was expected that employees who are highly engaged with their job would have better career prospects than those who were not so engaged. However, the results indicate that some negative effects also prevent IT professionals from pursuing their career, which can be linked to the workplace relationships and culture. Thus, organizations should consider factors related to employees' engagement at work when examining factors influencing career advancement among Indian IT professionals.

8. Recommendation

This study offers several recommendations for future research and managerial practice. It is important to consider factors related to employees' engagement at work when examining factors influencing career advancement among Indian IT professionals, which has never been researched independently in India before this study. Further, managers must appreciate the impact of the workplace culture on both employees and their careers and take measures to change negative influences that may be present in IT organizations.

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