

Ageing, mid-career concerns and organizational citizenship across employees in pre-retirement perspective: A study on employee engagement hassles and implications for leadership style mediation in Indian middle-sized IT firms

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Abstract

“Age inclusive Employee engagement” as a research construct foresees an extensive research background. The HR practices and their probable mediation in shaping the work environment and respective sustainable engagement in Indian IT firms is a novel construct and needs extensive dimensional and theoretical exploration. Age derived employee engagement as organizational resource is a research attribute of latest intellectual discourses. The study explored the ageing, mid-career concerns and organizational citizenship across employee in pre-retirement perspective and examined the employee engagement hassles and implications for leadership style mediation in IT companies. The sample frame comprises the 722 employees working across middle sized IT companies in age group 20-40. The study is based on the perceptions of the individual who were part of software delivery team with aid of laptops, desktops or other similar digital assets. The study concluded statistically

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significant impact of leadership style on the age inclusive employee engagement in middle sized IT firms.

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1. Introduction

Ageing and seniority are a boon for employee talent maturity. The aged and mature work force is the premium talent inventory if tapped appropriately and effectively across the talent life cycle. The aged workforce has been viewed as irrelevant yet the talent coefficient is often ignored altogether. It has been found that the dimension of competence (knowledge, skills, and work attitude) has positive impacts on employee performance and commitment in IT companies (Vijh et al (2022)). The exploitative work culture could involve the focus on accomplishing more with exploitation of existing departmental, monetary and human resources. "Age inclusive Employee engagement" as a research construct foresees an extensive research background. The HR practices and their probable mediation (Alshabani (2019) in shaping the work environment and respective sustainable engagement in Indian IT firms is a novel construct and needs extensive dimensional and theoretical exploration (Chawla et al., 2022). The study findings suggests that technological, organizational and environmental factors play crucial role in IT companies for adopting HR Analytics (Jana & Kaushik (2022)). The present paper hence explores the research construct across contextual and contingent framework and considerations across age bound and age derived employee inclusion and engagement. Though this is complex to quantify yet the age bound differences prevail and age derived leadership driven engagement apparatus could be fruitful in unraveling the potential benefit of this newly discovered organizational resource.

2. Literature Review

The benefits and challenges from mid-phase career in academics are numerous. The middle life phase identifies as the quiescent period after the completion of the demanding probation period in career trajectory. The middle phase (Baldwin et al (2008)) illuminates as a phase when concerned person has learnt the ropes and capable of demonstrating the immense

levels of competence, enthusiasm and skillfulness (Saks and Gruman (2014)). The phase often identifies as involving the largest phase of time from the probation to career maturity. As per studies (Biemann (2020)) the middle phase of adult development and posturing across academics often seem to overlap each other. The middle adult years (Gladka (2022)) classify as the stable periods of achievement, advancement and transitional phases categorized by the questioning, assessment, reassessment and direction (Afiouni et al (2020)), redirection and renewal of potential and capabilities in academic perspective (Alshabani et al (2019)). The benefits reflect in terms of skill prowess, the vocational supremacy, vocation-institution fit (Haar (2018)) and professional dexterity. The ownership and control of IT professional's careers has traditionally been observed as external (Mayrhofer et al (2007)) rather than been internal in nature (Auster and Choo (1994)). The work place thriving challenges are immensely important for understanding sustainability of thriving and coping up with uncertainties. The organizational (departmental contexts in particular) perspective has been observed to the dominant factor (Mayra et al (2021)) that elevates or diminishes the individual capabilities to earn and secure a worthwhile work experience and makes sense about the resultant satisfaction. The literature review (Mossholder et al (2006)) on the career formulation across aged population hence emphasizes the embedment of career influences from across the social contexts (Furr and Eggers (2021)). However, there is no consensus on definition and interpretation of the internal and external contexts (Bamber et al (2017)) and general's perceived and observed social contexts (Gunz and Mayrhofer (2011)). The delegative and participative styles of leadership and management are yielding to transformational as the results need to be accomplished on team basis not on sole basis. Leadership styles exhibit the impetus to shape the age bound inclinations (O'Driscoll and Roche (2015)) (Driscoll, 2017) to adapt and to yield age specific influences.

Thus, the study proposes these hypotheses:

H1: There exists significant impact of leadership style on the age inclusive employee engagement in middle sized IT firms

H2: There exists a significant difference in employee engagement across aged employees with regard to transactional, transformational and autocratic leadership styles.

H2A: There exists a significant difference in employee engagement across aged employees with regard to transactional leadership styles.

H2B: There exists a significant difference in employee engagement across aged employees with regard to transformational leadership styles.

H2C: There exists a significant difference in employee engagement across aged employees with regard to autocratic leadership styles.

H2D: There exists a significant difference in employee engagement across aged employees with regard to participative leadership styles.

H2E: There exists a significant difference in employee engagement across aged employees with regard to delegative leadership styles.

3. Methodology

The research objectives hence necessitate the adoption of exploratory and empirical impetus. The study concentrates on the ascertainment of the impact of leadership style on the age inclusive employee engagement in middle sized IT firms. In addition, study seeks to determine if there is a significant difference in employee engagement across aged employees regarding transactional, transformational and autocratic leadership styles. Hence the study delved on the empirical approach. The sample frame comprises the 722 employees working across middle sized IT companies in age group 20-40. The study is based on the perceptions of the individual who were part of software delivery team with aid of laptops, desktops or other similar digital assets. Secondly these individuals must have and daily work count of more than six working hours. Further the sample frame comprises the middle-sized information technology related enterprises that operate in any of the pre decided sectors or the clusters spread across modern India. Various criteria were used to segregate the most suitable for the research study (Arya and Ujlayan (2021). The study relied on convenient sampling and attracted a valid sample size of 722 respondents.

4. Analysis

The linear regression was used to analyze the data using SPSS 23.0 to predict of n respondent's perceptions of 'transformational', 'participative', 'transactional', 'autocratic' and 'delegative' on 'Overall OCB'. The significant regression equation was observed [$F(\text{Overall OCB}) = \text{'transformational', 'participative', 'transactional', 'autocratic', 'delegative'}$] with an observed value of R to be 0.527. The empirical results thus obtained point towards the degree of freedom as 1 and equation was found [$F(1(\text{degree of freedom}) = 41.5(F), p < 0.000)$], with an R of 0.527. The respondents

predicted the weight as equal to $2.470 + 0.123$ (transformational) $+ 0.084$ (participative) $+ 0.215$ (transactional) $- 0.090$ (autocratic) $+ (0.001)$ delegative. The multiple correlation coefficient R is regarded as a reliable measure of the quality of the prediction of the dependent variable (Overall OCB in this case). The coefficient of determination R^2 represents the proportion of variance explained in the dependent variable due to independent variables. The observed R^2 of 0.278 depicts suggests that the 27 per cent variance in dependent is on account of independent variables in determining the Overall OCB perceptions concerned. The reported value of 0.527 is a satisfactory measure of the multiple correlations. This was observed with regard to respondents in age bracket who were less than 20 years in biological age. The VIF measures were observed as 1.059, 1.041, 1.013, 1.199, 1.202 signaling satisfactory collinearity assessment.

Regression equation involving 'Overall OCB' = $2.470 + 0.123$ (transformational) $+ 0.084$ (participative) $+ 0.215$ (transactional) $- 0.090$ (autocratic) $+ (0.001)$ delegative

Regression equation involving 'Overall OCB' = $1.536 + 0.178$ (transformational) $+ 0.153$ (participative) $+ 0.267$ (transactional) $- 0.004$ (autocratic) $- (0.009)$ delegative

Regression equation involving 'Overall OCB' = $2.369 + 0.028$ (transformational) $+ 0.041$ (participative) $+ 0.274$ (transactional) $- 0.033$ (autocratic) $+ (0.059)$ delegative

Regression equation involving 'Overall OCB' = $1.497 + 0.121$ (transformational) $+ 0.064$ (participative) $+ 0.329$ (transactional) $- 0.038$ (autocratic) $+ (0.049)$ delegative

Regression equation involving 'Overall OCB' = $2.698 + 0.091$ (transformational) $- 0.061$ (participative) $+ 0.248$ (transactional) $- 0.001$ (autocratic) $+ (0.020)$ delegative

It is evident that the transactional and transformational leadership styles dominate the tactics and policy usage in managing and engaging the employees across the age spectrum. The age bound controls were established in linear regression modeling (Table 1) and following significant differences were noticed. In overall terms, the age bound differences were also evident. The respective regression assessment illustrated the prevalence of significant relationship across overall organizational citizenship behavior and overall leadership style as shaping the employee

engagement prospects. Across the age groups, the following R and R squared values were observed.

Table 1
Regression summarized

	R Values	R Square Values
Less than 20	.731	.535
20-30	.773	.598
30-40	.777	.604
40-50	.699	.489
More than 50	.771	.595

This categorically points to statistical interaction Vis a Vis the age, the leadership style and outcomes across Indian mid-sized IT firms. The research hence concludes the evidence of age-bound differences as prevalent across the organizational employee engagement initiatives. The transformational and transactional leadership styles were observed as inclusive of age-bound workforce involvement and spelled the prospects for age-inclusive resource leverage plans. The research concludes that the ageing and age can be leveraged as a resource and that reverse mentoring and reverse engineering in terms of skill dissemination and knowledge transfer from across generations. The ageing can be leveraged as a critical organizational resource and could be effective in generating ideas for organizational competitiveness if tapped effectively and efficiently in an organized manner (Figures- 1, 2, 3, 4, 5). Similar outcomes were evident in structural equation modeling outcomes as illustrated here:

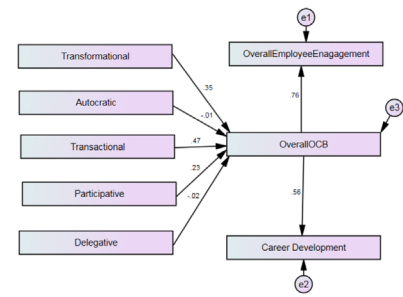


Figure 1
Less Than 20 years

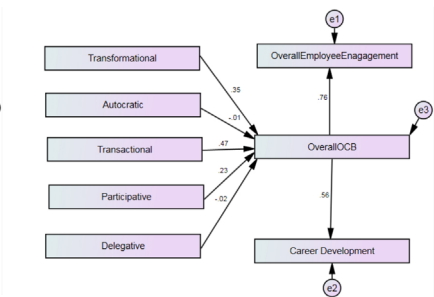


Figure 2
20-30 years

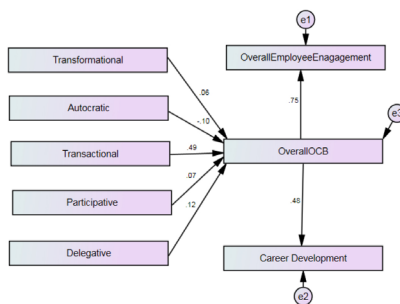


Figure 3
30-40 years

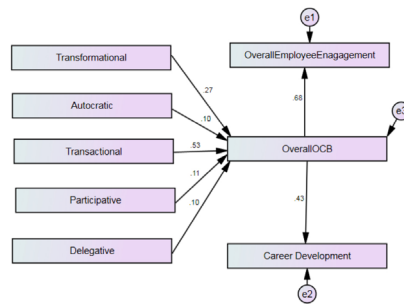


Figure 4
40-50 years

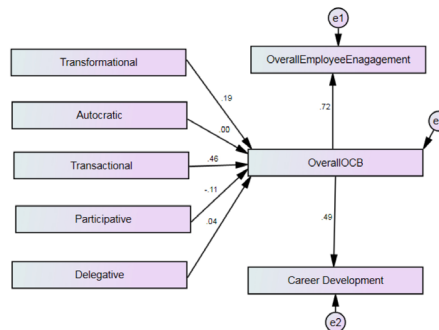


Figure 5
Above 50 years

Source: AMOS

5. Conclusion and Scope of future research

“Age inclusive Employee engagement” as a research construct was explored with focus on leadership style, age inclusiveness and implications for extent of age leverage in work place. The leadership style as such is under transition and new dimensions are cropping up with regard to operationalization and conceptualization of leadership styles as perceived by employees. The traditional and outdated autocratic way of doing things has given way to transactional and transformational styles. The delegative and participative styles of leadership and management are yielding to transformational as the results need to be accomplished on team basis not on sole basis. The study concentrated on the ascertainment of the impact of leadership style on the age inclusive employee engagement in middle sized

IT firms. In addition, study figured out if there is significant difference in employee engagement across aged employees with regard to transactional, transformational and autocratic leadership styles. Hence the study delved on the empirical approach. The transformational and transactional leadership styles were observed as inclusive of age bound workforce involvement and spelled the prospects for age inclusive resource leverage plans. The research concludes that the ageing and age can be leveraged as a resource and that reverse mentoring and reverse engineering in terms of skill dissemination and knowledge transfer from across generations. The organizational knowledge repository can be leveraged and enriched with aid of "Age inclusive Employee engagement" and could prove vital in business negotiations, dealing with business problems and could offer respite in turbulent business environments especially when phenomenon of moonlighting is on the rise. The ageing can be leveraged as a critical organizational resource and could be effective in generating ideas for organizational competitiveness if tapped effectively and efficiently in organized manner.

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