

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT STATUS AND DRIVERS IN NEPALESE CIVIL SERVICE



NEPAL ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF COLLEGE

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Abstract

This study assesses the status of employee engagement and its key drivers in Nepalese Civil Service. Data is collected from various ministries and federal organizations of the Government of Nepal. Employee engagement status is measured by using the following criteria: vigor, absorption and dedication. Correlation coefficient and linear regression were used to identify key drivers of employee engagement. Nepali civil service has an average level of employee engagement, while it varies between different groups of employees such as new versus old generation, employees having training versus employees who do not have pre-service as well as in-service training, male versus female, level of education among others. Personal factors characterized by learning attitude, locus of control and work ethics are significantly correlated with level of employee engagement followed by work environment and human resource practices.

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Introduction

1.1 Background of Study

Employees are regarded as the most important assets of any organization. They are not only resources but also minds of immense potential that can transform organizations and society when they engaged constructively and fully. Building committed and engaged workforce is a long-term and on-going process. Most of the studies point to the fact that employee engagement has a direct impact on productivity and increased value for money. That seems self-evident, but many managers still struggle to define, measure and improve engagement in their teams (Castellano, 2013).

Kahn (1990) defined job engagement as harnessing of the individual self with the work role and indicated that the more employees align themselves with work roles, the more they will be motivated toward achieving performance excellence. Also, the more employees are enthusiastic about their work, the more they are motivated and engaged to their organizations. He further underscored that employees who are personally engaged (cognitively and/or emotionally) are

more satisfied, and they are also more productive. Employee engagement is about connecting the hands, heads, and hearts of the employees with the vision and mission of their organizations (Rao, 2017). Rao further argued that identifying and enhancing the level of employee engagement becomes inevitable to increase the overall satisfaction of the service recipients. Gallup Incorporation (2013) has contributed by classifying workforce into three categories- Engaged, not engaged and actively disengaged. Engaged employees are loyal and emotionally committed to their organization; work with passion and feel profound connection to their organization. They drive innovation and move the organization forward. Not-engaged employees are essentially 'checked out'. They are sleepwalking through their workday, putting time- but not energy and passion- into their work. Actively disengaged employees are not just unhappy; they are busy acting out their unhappiness. Every day, these unhappy workers undermine what their engaged coworkers accomplish.

In many instances, job satisfaction and employee engagement are seen being used

interchangeably. Nevertheless, Schmidt et al. (1992) proposed a bridge between the pre-existing concept of 'job satisfaction' and employee engagement with the definition that 'an employee's involvement with, commitment to, and satisfaction with work, employee engagement is a part of employee retention'. This definition integrates the classic constructs of job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1991).

Employee engagement is more than just about feeling satisfied or happy at work. Staff may feel happy at work because of a light workload or good organizational benefits, but that does not necessarily mean that they are engaged. Engaged staff invest their full selves at work and are willing to do all they can to help their teams and organizations succeed (Macey et.al,2009). Therefore, while engaged staff is likely to be more satisfied and happier at work, the converse may not be true.

Employee engagement is strongly correlated with citizen satisfaction and trust (Stats, 2008) – something which matters to us in the public service. As reference in the corporate world, another study by Gallup (2013), employee engagement was found to correlate with the following business outcomes: lower turnover, lower absenteeism, higher productivity, higher profitability and higher customer metrics.

Taneja et.al (2015) explain that engaged employees work to improve the overall performance of the organization and uphold its values. Leisy (2012) postulates that global organizational leaders must understand the needs and motivations of their people. However, the global scenario of employee engagement seems less encouraging to the employee engagement. Gallup Employee Engagement Survey (2013) showed that only 13 percent of employees feel engaged at their workplace (Schwartz & Porath, 2014), meaning large majority of the workforce is not engaged to the desired extent.

Thus, in a context where employee engagement does not limit to itself, but rather supports the organization as a whole, the civil service may benefit from such employees to increase the overall performance of the organization. Civil service mechanism is spine of any country. The people of the country experience good governance if the civil servants perform as per the expectations of the people. Nepali civil service, as an organization, is looking for such engaged employees. The civil service is the actor of the state engaged in implementation of its policies and decisions and the accredited advisor of the political executive in policy-making (Maheswari, 2012). Civil service can achieve excellence by efficiently and effectively increasing

their employee engagement. Studies have found a positive relationship between employee engagement and organizational performance outcomes- employee retention, productivity and profitability (Cataldo, 2011). It also provides customer satisfaction and improves the organizational bottom lines.

Measuring employee engagement is necessary condition to proceed in the journey of enhancing employee engagement. It is not a once-a-year thing. In order to develop an impactful and effective engagement strategy, management teams must regularly check their employees and ask them not only about their feelings, their present situation, but also their past experiences and expectations of the future. Taking this more dynamic approach to measurement, trends can be identified more quickly and meaningful change in the organization can be made.

Studies conducted in the area of employees in public service generally focus on job satisfaction (Colan, 2009). However, an employee can be satisfied with a job without being engaged in the job. Employee engagement is much more than being content with pay and the ability to leave office early. Daley (2017) argues that job satisfaction assesses extrinsic and intrinsic motivation, leading

to productivity. Engagement allows internalizing an organization's mission. Engagement focuses on individual's efforts towards achieving meaningful results. In this sense, quest of studying the dimensions of engagement and its status in Nepali civil service is a crucial impetus of research. This study brings evidence on the premise to assess engagement of Nepali civil servants in their jobs and provide strategic recommendations. In the following subsections, we will present a summary of major constructs of employee engagement.

1.2 Employee Engagement

Employee engagement is a good tool to help every organization to strive to gain excellence. As a corporate notion, people is one factor that cannot be duplicated or imitated by the competitors and is considered the most valuable asset if properly managed and engaged. Baumruk (2004) has emphasized this point, in that employee engagement is considered the most powerful factor to measure an organization's vigor. Rao (2017) further scrutinized that engagement is the state in which individuals are emotionally and intellectually committed to the organization as measured by three primary behaviors: say, stay and strive. Rutledge (2009) described an engaged employee as

one who is committed to, fascinated by, and attracted to the work.

Employee engagement is how people play the role to varying degrees and how thoroughly they are psychologically present at particular moments of role performance. Kahn (1990) mentioned that, in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances whereas, in disengagement, people withdraw and defend themselves physically, cognitively, or emotionally during role performances. This idea of employee engagement is more related to role performance and how employees express themselves during particular role. Whereas, Shuck & Wollard (2010) defined employee engagement as an individual employee's cognitive, emotional, and behavioural state directed toward desired organizational outcomes. This definition of employee engagement argues more on organizational outcomes.

Schaufeli et al (2001) defined employee engagement as a psychological state of mind and it is antithesis of burnout. Engagement is a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption. This definition outlines vigor, absorption and dedication as dimension to measure the

status of employee engagement: serving as the guiding definition for this research.

1.3 Drivers of Employee Engagement

In the past organization relied on rewards such as pay increases, bonuses, or working hours for keeping workforce engaged. However, it has been discovered that positive psychological state has greatest influence on employee engagement (Carnegie, 2017). This psychological state was earlier precisely elucidated by Khan (1990). Khan proposed three psychological states- psychological meaningfulness, psychological safety, and psychological availability as key drivers of employee engagement.

Apart from psychological state, there are other factors, as put forward by different kinds of literature that contribute to employee engagement. Makhecha (2002), for example, used five drivers for measuring employee engagement in Global Virtual Team- cultural intelligence, communication, technology, trust, individual maturity. In addition, Cook (2008) identified well-being, information, fairness and involvement as drivers of employee engagement.

Agrawal (2015) used job engagement, organization engagement, locus of

control, work ethic, career development, interpersonal relationship, job characteristics, objectivity, pay and benefits, performance management system as drivers of employee engagement in public sectors. More and better employee engagement can help public sector workers not only cope in these situations but also enjoy their work. However, the question of how public sector managers can motivate to deliver high quality public service in the face of change is the core question of public management researches. Civil service, being one important part of public service thrives towards serving the citizens through employee engagement.

1.4 Statement of Problem

Knowing the status of employee engagement is crucial in taking necessary initiatives for improving service design and delivery in public sector governance. As general notion, employee engagement involves the willingness of employees to help their organization achieve its goals, objectives and long-term sustainable advantage (Little & Little, 2006). This asserts that an engaged work force is an asset to the organization as a whole.

Nepal entered into new era with promulgation of the new constitution and implementation of federal system of

governance in September 2015. Role of civil service is enlarged to meet aspirations and expectations of people in this changed context. Civil servants are entrusted with responsibility to serve citizens with greater degree of professionalism within regulatory frameworks and spirit of the new constitution. The concept of employee engagement is largely applicable, as all-time requirements, in Nepali civil service to enable civil servants to fulfill this responsibility.

Actively engaged workforce is the need of the day in civil service that drives service delivery and development delivery as envisioned by the government. The link between employee engagement and organizational performance is powerful and well documented. Ruyle (2009) argues that engagement is an imperative, not just a nice thing to do. It is an important lever that management can use to achieve organizational goals. You can choose to pull the lever or not, at your own judgment.

There are global studies in the area of engagement, but there remains paucity of academic literature regarding status of employee engagement and its drivers in the context of Nepali public sector. Since the public sector is characterized by job security, bureaucratic style and strong chain of command, it is imperative

to know the state of drivers of employee engagement and the factors that drive employees to more engaged with the organization. We believe, findings of this study would bear contribution to the policy makers, managers, and administrators, researchers and all concerned, knowing the status of employee engagement and thinking on ways to improve it further. In the backdrop of literature assessment, this study considers ‘to what extent Nepali civil servants are engaged and what factors drive their engagement?’

1.5 Objectives of Study

The research aimed to identify the state and drivers of employee engagement in Nepali civil service. The following are the specific objectives of the study:

- a. To measure level of employee engagement in Nepali civil service.
- b. To identify drivers of employee engagement in Nepali civil service.

Framework and Methodology

2.1 Study Framework

This study uses following summary of framework based on five major sources of literature. Relevant factors considering the Nepalese context have been chosen from these frameworks to adapt in our study.

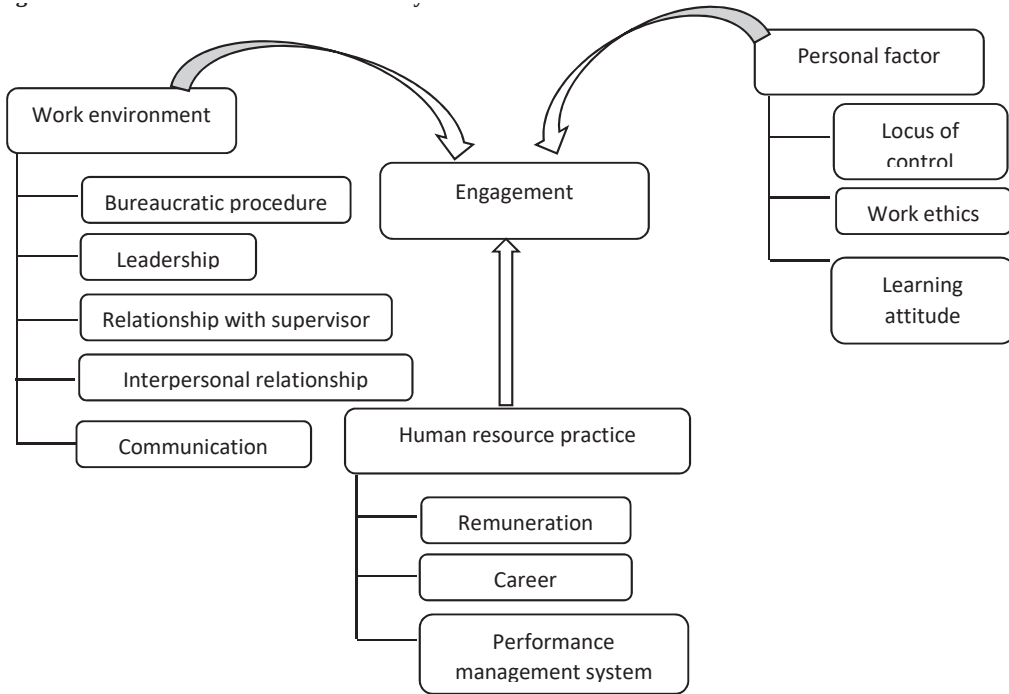
Table 1 : Summary of the framework

Sources	Drivers of employee engagement	Selected drivers
Mani (2011) Employee Engagement	Employee welfare Empowerment Employee growth Interpersonal relationship	Employee welfare Interpersonal Relationship
Borowski & Daya (2014) Factors Affecting the Employee Engagement in Public Sector	Communication Organization of work Relationships with supervisor Career development Human relationship Remuneration	Communication Relation with supervisor Career development Human relation Remuneration
Agrawal (2015) Predictors of Employee Engagement: A Public Sector Unit Experience	Locus of control Work ethic Career development Interpersonal relationship Job characteristics Objectivity	Locus of control Work ethics Career development Interpersonal relations
Bedarkar & Pandita (2004) A Study of the Drivers of Employee Engagement Impacting Employee Performance	Communication Work life balance Leadership	Leadership Communication

2.2 Theoretical Framework

Based on review of literature selection of study variables as shown in Table 2.1, we have proposed following theoretical framework in this study.

Figure 2.1: Theoretical framework of study



Source: Authors (based on review of literature)

The framework above is derived based on the literature review. The researchers have looked upon the factors and where employee engagement is measured using the vigour, dedication and absorption and supposed to depend on work environment, personal Factor and human resource practice. Work environment can be measured using bureaucratic procedure, leadership, relationship with supervisor, interpersonal relationship and communication and human

resource practice can be measured using remuneration, Career and Performance management system. Personal factor is measured using Locus of Control, work ethics and learning attitude.

2.3 Propositions

The theoretical framework allows us to make following propositions that explain relationship between dependent and independent variables.

Proposition 1: Work environment has positive relation with employee engagement.

Proposition 2: Human Resource Practice has positive relation with employee engagement.

Proposition 3: Personal Factor has positive relation with employee engagement.

2.4 Research Design

Quest of the study is to assess present status of employee engagements in civil service and its determinants. For this research, scope has been limited to Federal Ministries of Government of Nepal and constitutional bodies for the researcher's convenience. The study was used quantitative approach and follows descriptive design. Researchers have made attempt to see if the above-mentioned drivers have a relationship with employee engagement in Nepali Civil Service.

2.5 Population Size and Sample

This study is limited to the federal ministries of government of Nepal and constitutional bodies. Population of the study is officers' of government of Nepal working under different ministries of federal government and constitutional bodies. There are (total)

employees in 21 ministries of federal government and 6 constitutional bodies and (officers) were the total population of the study. Sample size for this study is 139 based on convenience sampling Out of them 139 responses were collected from respondents. self-administered questionnaire was used. The respondents' were reached via personal and professional contact and questionnaire were distributed personally.

2.6 Data Collection Technique

Data were collected using structured questionnaire. The questionnaire has four different sections. Section 1 has demographic variable such as age, organization, level, work experience and education. Similarly, section 2 has 9 questions (3 questions each for vigor, absorption, and dedication) for measuring status of employee engagement and section 3 has 27 questionnaires for drivers of employee engagement. Section 4 has questions for measuring civil servants' time taken by different activities during office hours. Status of employee engagement section was adapted from the work of William Schaufauli and these questionnaires were customized and translated into Nepali. All the items for measuring status and drivers have

7-item scale as adapted in original work of William Schaufauli. All the items for measuring status and drivers of employee engagement is presented in Annex 1

2.7 Methods of Data Analysis

. All data from questionnaire were digitized using CS Pro, and they were exported for analysis in SPSS. Then, reliability of data was tested using Cronbach alpha. Similarly, relationship between independent and

dependent variables were identified through correlation, linear regression, and finally, the propositions were tested.

2.8 Reliability Testing

All of the variables for this study were taken from previous study. Reliability of the questionnaire was tested using Cronbach's alpha , which depicted that since the Cronbach's Alpha of all the variables are above 0.7, the variables are reliable.

Table 2 : Reliability Test

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
Engagement	0.821	9
Work Environment	0.92	15
Human Resource Practice	0.91	9
Personal Factor	0.72	3

Analysis and Findings

3.1 Sample Profile

The respondents are from 18 different offices including different ministries and constitutional bodies. A total of 139 responses were collected where 51.8 percent of respondents are in civil service for more than 10 years. Similarly, 63.8 percent of respondents are working at current position for more than 6 years. There are only 23 percent female respondents and rest of them are male. In terms of their journey into civil service, 56.1 percent of respondents started their service from gazetted positions while the rest had started from a non-gazetted level. Among the respondents majority are between 30 to 50 years old and it constitutes 75.5 percent of total sample. In addition, 60 percent of respondents are from non-technical service and rest are from technical services such as engineering, economic planning, education administration, etc. Similarly, majority of the respondents are experienced in their job with more than 10 years of experience in civil service and majority of them also

have more than 6 years of experience at current position. 88.5 percentage of respondents have master degree as their highest qualification and less than two percentage have certificate level as their highest qualification.

3.2 Status of employee engagement

3.2.1 Overall level of employee engagement

The employee engagement of civil servants is 'average' whose mean score is 4.66. This score explains that employees demonstrate just average level of emotional, physical and psychological presence at their workplace. This presence is characterized by the average level of enthusiasm that they have while going to work every day and getting immersed in his/her work throughout and see the job to be meaningful in the big picture. If employee engagement score is between 2.89 and 4.66, it is considered average engagement (Table 3.1).

Table 3 :Scoring categories for employee engagement

Qualification	Score
Very High	≥ 5.51
High	4.67-5.50
Average	2.89-4.66
Low	1.78-2.88
Very Low	≤ 1.77

3.2.2 Employees' age and level of engagement

Employee engagement seems to increase with the age except for age group 31-40 years. Employee engagement was 'high' for age group 20-30 years which decreases slightly to 'average' category for age group 31-40 years. However, for remaining age group employee engagement is greater than preceding age group.

Table 4 : Mean score of employee engagement by age group

Age Group	Mean	Std. Error	Engagement Qualification
20-30 Years	4.7427	.12518	High
31-40 Years	4.3732	.12221	Average
41-50 Years	4.8056	.12193	High
51-60 Years	5.0952	.15091	High

3.2.3 Service period and level of engagement

Employee engagement seems to increase with the increase in years of service in the current position except for the service years of 11-20 years. Employee engagement was 'high' for employees who have 0-10 years of service in the current position which decreases slightly to 'average' category for employees who have been in the current position for 11-20 years but again increases to 'high' for employees who are in the current position for 21-30 and 31-40 years.

Table 5 : Mean score of employee engagement by service years

Years of Service	Mean	Std. Error	Engagement Qualification
0-10 Years	4.7214	.10293	High
11-20 Years	4.4363	.14142	Average
21-30 Years	4.8693	.14203	High
31-40 Years	4.7778	.23411	High

3.2.4 Education and level of engagement

Employee engagement seems to increase with the increase in educational qualification. For instance, those having Bachelor's degree have higher opportunities in comparison to those having a Certificate degree. However, Employees with the qualification of masters have the highest level of employee engagement.

Table 6 : Mean score of employee engagement by education level

Education level	Mean	Std. Error	Engagement Qualification
Certificate Level	4.4444	.33333	Average
Bachelor Level	4.5000	.14443	Average
Master Level	4.6829	.07907	High

3.2.5 Nature of Job and Engagement

Employee engagement is higher for technical employees as compared to the non-technical ones. As we can also see that the engagement level is however high for only the technical employees leaving the non-technical ones with average employee engagement.

Table 7 : Mean score of employee engagement by nature of job

Nature of Job	Mean	Std. Error	Engagement Qualification
Non-Technical	4.6265	.09752	Average
Technical	4.7123	.10410	High

3.2.6 Service entry level and engagement

Employee engagement is higher for employees who have entered into the civil service from the non-gazetted level. However, the level of engagement is high only for entry through “non-gazetted”

Table 8 : Mean score of employee engagement by service entry level

Service Entry level	Mean	Std. Error	Engagement Qualification
Gazetted	4.6553	.09557	Average
Non Gazetted	4.6862	.11518	High

3.2.7 Sex and engagement

Employee engagement is higher for the male employees than their female counterparts. Females have only average employee engagement while the employee engagement status of male is high.

Table 9 : Mean score of employee engagement by sex

Sex	Mean	Std. Error	Engagement Qualification
Female	4.5243	.17584	Average
Male	4.7020	.07680	High

3.2.8 Years of Total Service and Engagement

Employee engagement seems to increase with the increase in years of total service except for total service years of 11-20 years. The engagement for employees with 11-20 years in service is the lowest among all. The highest level of engagement is depicted by the employees who are in 21-30 years of service.

Table 10 : Mean score of employee engagement by Table 11 Total years of service

Years of total service	Mean	Std. Error	Engagement Qualification
0-10 Years	4.7214	.10293	High
11-20 Years	4.4363	.14142	Average
21-30 Years	4.8693	.14203	High
31-40 Years	4.7778	.23411	High

3.3 Drivers of Employee Engagement

This study uses work environment, personal factor and human resource practices as independent variables and tries to examine their relationship with

employee engagement as a dependent variable. In order to examine this relation, Pearson correlation and Linear regression is used. SPSS is used to analyze the data.

Table 12 : Pearson Correlations Coefficient and coefficient of linear regression

		Work Environment	Personal Factor	Human Resource Practice
Engagement	Correlation coefficient	0.438	0.559	0.314
	Unstandardized Coefficient (B)	0.343	0.209	0.611
	Adjusted R Square	.186	.307	.092

Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Table 12 summarizes and represents Correlation and Regression results. Correlation is used to measure the relation between the independent and dependent variables. The adjusted R Square score of each predictor explains the variability caused by them on dependent variable. The beta explains the unit of influence on employee engagement and explain how much leverage the independent variables have on dependent variable. From the table, it can be seen that:

Work environment and employee engagement

Work environment which shows how an employee perceives the bureaucratic procedure, leadership, relationship with supervisor and interpersonal relationship

as present as a supporting factor in the organization has a positive correlation with employee engagement, Also, 18.6 percentage of the variance in engagement can be accounted from the work environment. This further depicts the impact work environment has on employee engagement. Also, as depicted by The Beta coefficient, for a unit increase in work environment, employee engagement will increase by 0.343. All of these findings suggest that Work environment is a driver in case of employees of Nepali civil servants.

Based on the statistical analysis Proposition (P1) is accepted. Therefore, it is inferred that the work environment positively drives employee engagement.

Human Resource Practice and Employee Engagement

Human Resource Practice which shows how an employee perceives positively the remuneration, career and performance management system of the organization where s/he works positively is positive correlated to employee engagement at 0.314. Also, 9.2 percentage of the variance in engagement can be accounted from the Human resource practices Which further depicts the impact human resource practice has on employee engagement. In addition, as depicted by the Beta Coefficient, for a unit increase in work environment, employee engagement will increase by 0.611. Based on the statistical analysis Proposition (P2) is accepted. Therefore, it is inferred that the human resource practice positively drives employee engagement.

Personal Factor and Employee Engagement

Personal factor, which shows the positive self-assessment of employees in terms of their locus of control, ethics and learning has a positive correlation with employee engagement at 0.559, also, 30.7 percentage of the variance in engagement can be accounted from the work environment. This is the highest impact of the three factors presented in the study. In addition, as depicted by the beta coefficient, for a unit increase in work environment, employee engagement will increase by 0.209. All of these findings suggest that Personal factor is a driver in case of employees of Nepali civil servants and the one that is found to have the highest impact among the drivers that exist Based on the statistical analysis, proposition (P3) is accepted. Therefore, it is inferred that the personal factor positively drives employee engagement.

Discussion and Conclusion

4.1 Discussion

Measuring the status of employee engagement is thus a milestone in the journey of achieving aspired level of employee engagement. In this research, level of employee engagement has been measured through a framework comprising nine items of employee engagement and the mean score of the responses on those items has been calculated to measure mean level of engagement. The drivers of employee engagement were measured through twenty-seven items and opinions expressed through the open-ended question. The relationship between the employee engagement and its drivers was calculated using correlation coefficient and linear regression to identify the key drivers of employee engagement. The tested questionnaire for each type of driver from where they are adapted (see framework) was consulted and contextualization was done as to selection of drivers through the authors' own knowledge and discretion.

The research finds out that employee engagement of Nepalese civil servants largely stands at an 'average' level yet it is scattered among different groups such

as male versus female, service entry at gazetted versus non-gazetted level, age group, cumulative service tenure and service tenure at current position. The average level signifies just satisfactory level of connection, enthusiasm and sense of meaningfulness towards his/her job. When employee engagement was compared on the basis of 'age', it stands the highest (mean 5.0952) for the employees between 50 to 60 years age group followed by the employees of 40 to 50 age group (mean score 4.8056). Employees between 20-30 age groups who represent younger generation and new comers of civil servants also have high level (mean score 4.7427) of engagement. But engagement of employees in 30-40 years age group is slightly lower than any other group (mean score 4.3732), clustered around 'average'.

These findings commensurate with the study of Boswell, Shipp & Payne (2009). They found that employee satisfaction reached a peak following the organizational entry and decreased thereafter. As newcomers begin to experience and gain more knowledge about the job, organizational culture, values, terms, and conditions of employment, there will likely

emerge differences between what was anticipated versus experienced (Boswell, 2009). It is dependent on perception of whether organization commitment is fulfilled. The unfulfilled commitments will lead to negative reactions whereas full filled commitment helps to inculcate an individual against unpleasant job elements, facilitating adjustment and more favorable reactions towards the job (Louis, 1980; McGuire, 1964; Wanous 1973, 1977). Yet, as age increases, level of employee engagement is slightly higher and there is consensus among the responses. Similar trend is observed among employees with varied years of experience.

The average employee engagement is higher among the employees with higher level of education. This may be due to higher job satisfaction among high qualified employees. This also further suggests managers should find new methods to increase education level of their staff and develop work context parallel to education level (Gurbuz, 2007).

Employees who entered civil service through non-gazetted levels have higher level of employee engagement than employees who begin their careers from gazetted level. Similarly, level of engagement among male employees is higher than female counterparts. This may be attributed to work-life balance the

working-women have to maintain. The dynamics of the work environment have exerted enormous pressure on working women, as they need to cope with virtually two full time jobs – one at the office and the other at home (Sundaresan, 2014).

Employee engagement in the technical employees reflecting higher than their non-technical counterparts may be because the self-perceived fit between individuals' career anchors and their jobs and occupations significantly influences their subjective experiences and motivation towards job. Coetzee, Bergh & Schreuder (2010)

It is clear from the study that employees are engaged when work environment such as supportive leaders, participatory decision making, having clear and practical laws and rules, and communication of decisions are prevalent in the organization. Moreover, this level of employee engagement is positively influenced by human resource practices such as remuneration, performance evaluation system and its linkage with career development as well as personal factors such as learning attitude, locus of control and work ethics of employees. Slightly over six-tenths respondents feel that improvement in human resource practices such as objective performance evaluation system based on key performance indicators,

performance based incentive system and facilities, reward and recognition for performing employees, compatible pay with responsibility and performance, non-monetary incentives along with monetary incentives, fair opportunities for employees' capacity development, etc. will lead to engaged work force. Work life experiences like control, rewards and recognition have long been found to influence vigour, absorption and dedication (Koyuncu & Fiksenbaum, 2006). Similarly, around 35 percent of respondents feel that components of work environment such as adequate human, financial and other resources, good interpersonal relationships, mutual respect, cooperation and healthy competition among team members shall lead to an engaged work force.

The research depicts that personal factors consisting of locus of control, learning attitude and work ethics has highest degree of correlation with employee engagement making it the key driver of employee engagement for the civil servants of Nepal. This finding is supported by the opinions expressed in the research that presence of personal factors like work ethics, zero tolerance against corruption and intention of holding a person accountable for his/her deeds shall increase the enthusiasm to work rigorously. Personal factor is followed by work environment and later

by human resource practices as the drivers. This should better be taken care by the recruitment agencies of civil service. Selecting and recruiting human resources with internal locus of control and robust work ethics is inevitable to increase employee engagement.

At the same time, since the results portray positive relation between employee engagement and all the three drivers which are personal factor, work environment and human resource practices (arranged in order of descending correlation with employee engagement) due consideration should be given to supervisory role in engaging employees: as a component of sound working environment. The role of relationship with supervisor and performance management as a driver of employee engagement is also best complimented by the opinions expressed in the survey where participation in decision making, fair treatment and opportunities for career development are opined to be improved to increase employee engagement. As the result of the open-ended opinion question further confirms that improvement in the predictability of career development and growth, and use of technology as enabler for bureaucratic navigation and process simplification shall drive employee towards relatively higher level.

The level of employee engagement in Nepali civil service is not enthusiastic yet not depressing as it stands at the ‘average’ level of employee engagement.

There are ample areas of improvement, whether by inculcating engagement drivers into the work environment and human resource practices or more importantly, as the correlation of drivers depicts, by demanding firm quest to learning attitude, work ethics and internal locus of control from the civil servants. At the same time the difference in the engagement level of employees from different age groups should not remain unnoticed.

4.2. Conclusion

Employee engagement having strong correlation with citizen satisfaction and trust, high level of employee engagement can lead to efficient civil service characterized by higher productivity, innovation, satisfied workforce, and ultimately higher citizen satisfaction. As discussed in the discussion section, at the entry period, the expectation is higher and the reality shock forces the employees for underperformance, this must be considered in the days ahead. As a suggestion in the survey properly articulates this concern saying pre-service training and similar other strategies or as employee

engagement is involving feelings of deep commitment, pride, honor and pioneering about the organization’s brand (Ahmad, et. al, 2014), any promises given during the recruitment process must be delivered by the employer or otherwise they will soon stop working or be gone (Prokopeak, 2013). The recruitment and selection should be very careful in shaping up the expectation of the new generation employees and consequently, human resource professionals should design performance management systems that provide continuous feedback to the new generation and coaching more along with goal setting and appraisal (Cascio, 2014).

Though there are many studies in employee engagement and its drivers, this study finds out that personal factor such as learning attitude, locus of control and work ethics are highly correlated with employee engagement. Employees having these attributes have a better chance of being engaged when supported by other drivers such as work environment and human resource practices. All three drivers of employee engagement taken into consideration in this study indicate positive correlation with employee engagement. Thus, employee engagement of Nepalese civil service is directly influenced by the presence of personal factor characterized by learning attitude,

locus of control, work ethics; work environment characterized by bureaucratic procedure, leadership, supervisor support, interpersonal relationship, communication; human resource practice such as performance evaluation system, remuneration, and career development. Policy makers should focus on making civil service as transparent as possible by implementing fair and transparent performance evaluation system linking it with career development and placement. Similarly, culture of participatory decision making, among others could make civil service innovative and efficient. Moreover, recruitment process should also consider personality traits such as learning attitude, locus of control, and work ethics to make civil service engaged and ultimately efficient and innovative.

4.3 Generalization Limits and Future Avenues

- The contextualization of the instrument is limited to the researchers' knowledge based on literature review. As the sample is not large, generalization is limited to context of sampled civil service units. This research serves as a novel initiative, first in its kind to the best knowledge of the researchers, in the context of civil service of Nepal. The study presents avenues for building insights for further researches in the matter with larger scope.
- The study suggested that except for personal factors, environmental and organizational factors accounted for lesser variance in employee engagement; it opens the door for other researches on other such factors that might have contributed to other such variability.

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