



Does Employee Engagement Influence Innovative Work Behavior? A Study among Selected Food and Beverages Companies

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Abstract: Innovative work behaviour is one of the important factors in addressing emerging issues of sustaining competitive advantage. Innovative work behaviour consists of multistage processes of idea creation, promotion, and implementation. Employee engagement is seen as critical antecedent of innovative behavior as it motivates employees to find new ways to improve their works. As there are limited studies that identify the influence of employee engagement on innovative work behaviour, this study is to identify the relationship between employee engagement and innovative work behaviour among employees working in selected food and beverages companies. A total of 400 employees participated whilst being chosen via convenient sampling technique. Well-established questionnaires by De Jong and Den Hartog (2007) and Macey (2008) were used to measure employee engagement respectively. The data obtained was analyzed descriptively and using correlation analysis via IBM Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS). Consistent with previous studies, level of innovative work behaviour in Malaysia is not high. Employee engagement has significant influence on innovative work behaviour. This study strengthened the notion on the importance of employee engagement for organizational improvement and innovativeness.

Keywords: Innovative work behaviour, Employee engagement, Job engagement

1. Introduction

In the advent of Industrial Revolution 4.0 (IR 4.0), a need for creative and innovative employees could not be undermined. Innovative work behavior can be defined as an individual's deliberate actions to implement and/or adapt new concepts, goods, processes, and procedures to his or her task, unit or organization (De Jong, 2007). Individual innovation can be understood in various way such as personal characteristics, outputs and behaviors. However, most prevalent conceptualization of individual innovation is that it consists of two stages. The first stage is initiation which included idea exploration

and idea generation while the second stage is implementation which included idea championing and idea implementation (De Jong and Den Hartog, 2010). Several studies have shown the effect of employee engagement on the creative actions of employees. Employee engagement which comprised of psychological state engagement, behavioral engagement and trait engagement is said to facilitate idea promotion and implementation.

1.2 Problem Statements

In current technological era, almost every company is facing issues of insufficient number of innovative employees. To revolutionize the Industrial Revolution 4.0, the company need more innovative employee especially in food and beverages industry. From the previous studies by Hilmi (2012) and Ng Yu Seen (2012), it could be concluded that the level of innovative work behavior among Malaysian employees are only average. For example, Hilmi (2012) found that the average mean of innovative behavior among 454 Malaysian employee were 3.45 while Ng Yu Seen (2012), found an average of 3.46 from 249 people. As organizational innovation is strongly the accumulated strength of individual innovative behaviors of the employees, there is a need to further improve innovativeness at individual level especially in the context of food and beverages industry. Moreover, empirical evidence on the relationship between employee engagement and IWB has been limited especially in Malaysia.

1.3 Research Questions

- (i) What is the level of employee engagement?
- (ii) What is the level of innovative work behavior?
- (iii) Is there a correlation between employee engagement and innovative work behaviour?

1.4 Research Objectives

- (i) To determine the level of employee engagement.
- (ii) To determine the level of innovative work behaviour
- (iii) To determine the correlation between employee engagement and innovative work behaviour

1.5 Significance of the Study

The results of this study would reaffirm both the importance of both employee engagement and innovative work behavior in food and beverage companies, especially in the current era of Industrial Revolution 4.0 (IR 4.0). The greater value of innovative worker or employee lies in the product and process innovation. Furthermore, the companies that have more innovative employee would solve problems quickly and creatively. These employees would provide and implement ideas that could help the company to be more successful. As for the researcher, this study would help to uncover critical areas in innovation process that many researchers found as not important. Finally, the additional empirical evidence would fill in the existing knowledge gap.

1.6 Scope of the Study

This study was conducted among employees working in food and beverages companies located in Johor, Melaka, Penang, Kuala Lumpur and Selangor. Inclusion of these three states are based on fact that these states have among the highest concentration of food and beverage companies.

2. Literature Review

This section discusses general overview about innovative work behavior and employee engagement. Furthermore, the past research on the innovative work behavior and employee engagement presented as a basis for hypotheses development. Lastly, the research framework is presented.

2.1 Innovative Work Behavior

Innovative working behavior can be characterized as an individual's behaviour, which attempts to initiate and deliberately implement new and useful concepts, methods, products or procedures (De Jong, 2010). De Jong (2010) had mentioned that this study is based on outlined that innovative work behaviour typically includes exploration of opportunities and the generation of new ideas, but could also include behaviours directed towards implementing change, applying new knowledge or improving processes to enhance personal and business performance

According to Khodakorami (2016), the meaning of the innovation can be defined as changes which produces something new. It can be translated into new or improved products and processes. Innovation has been divided into three categories according to Zaltman et al (year) which are invention, process and product. Innovation also can be defined as overview of two ideas and concepts of being newness and an advantage or a positive change (Khodakorami, 2016). Innovating means creating new ideas and applying them to an appropriate approach. New ideas can include technology innovation, process innovation and administrative (Khodakorami, 2016).

Innovative work behavior also defined as employee's action addressed to the generation, application and implementation of new ideas, products, processes, and methods (Contreras, 2017). This study used conceptual definition proposed by De Jong it has been empirically tested more often compared to another definitions proposed

2.2 Employee Engagement

According by Storey (2008), employee engagement can be described as 'encouraging the members of the company to play their roles in engagement, employing and expressing themselves physically, cognitively and emotionally during role performance. Storey (2008) It also claimed that the commitment of employees can be characterized as a mechanism by which the company increases the commitment and consistency of its employees towards the achievement of superior results.

Employee engagement is the common intuitive sense that people, particularly organizational leaders, have an understanding of work motivation (Macey, 2008). According to Macey (2008) employee engagement can also be defined as a favorable state, has an organizational intent, and connotes participation, devotion, zeal, excitement, concentrated effort, and energy, so it has components of both attitude and actions.

According to Li Sun, (2018), employee involvement can be defined as a combination of dedication, commitment, efficiency, and ownership. Li Sun also claimed that not only cognition, but also the flexible application of emotions and behaviors were involved in employee engagement. Therefore, the model chosen in this study is Macey (2008) since the model is widely used in most recent studies. The model is also understandable as compared to another model.

2.3 Model of Innovative Work Behavior

There are many models available in the literature, however, only two models from De Jong (2010) and Janssen (2004) were discussed based on its dominance in literatures.

(a) Janssen (2004)

According to Janssen (2004), innovation begins with idea generation, that is, the production of novel and useful ideas in any domain. Perceived work-related problems, incongruities, discontinuities, and emerging trends are often instigators of the generation of novel ideas.

As mentioned by Janssen (2004), the next task in the process of creativity is to promote the concept to potential allies. That is, he or she has to participate in social activities to find friends, backers, and

sponsors once a worker has created an idea, or to create a coalition of supporters. The final task of the innovation process concerns idea realization by producing a prototype or model of the innovation. Janssen (2004) also said that an individual employee may need to invest significant and challenging efforts in the development, promotion and realization of creative change.

(b) De Jong (2010)

According to (De Jong, 2010), innovation process is divided into two phases which are initiation of creative idea phase which include opportunity exploration and idea generation and also implementation of creative idea phase which include idea championing and application.

At the starting of the innovation phase is opportunity exploration. According to De Jong (2010), opportunities exist in seven diverse areas which are unanticipated successes, failures or occasions, differences between 'what is' and 'what should be', fluctuations in demographics such as taste of preference, fluctuations in perception, work process needs in respond to identified problems, changes prospect in market structures, changes in perception and new knowledge.

The generation of ideas is the next elements proposed in innovative work behaviors. The key to idea generation appears to be the combination and reorganization of information and existing concepts to solve problems or to improve performance (Jong, 2010). According to Jong (2010), idea implementation also includes making innovations part of regular work processes and behaviors like developing new products or work processes, and testing and modifying them. Idea championing becomes important once an idea has been generated.

Therefore, in this study, the researcher choose Jong (2010) models because the model is widely use by variety of previous study. The explanation about the model also easy to understand and the questionnaire design also easy for the respondents to understand and answer.

2.4 Model of Employee Engagement

This section presents two models of employee engagement by Macey (2008) and Shuck (2011).

(a) Shuck (2011)

According to Shuck (2011), there three variables that included in employee engagement which are job fit, affective commitment and psychological climate.

As mentioned by Shuck (2011), job fit was defined as the degree to which a person feels their personality and values fit with their current job. Also stated by Shuck (2011), researchers researching job fit indicate that good fit provides workers with opportunities to be involved in productive individual work. According to Shuck (2011), good fit provides the cognitive stimulus for employees to engage in behavior directed toward positive organizational outcomes.

Shuck (2011) defined affective commitment as a sense of belonging and emotional connection with one's job, organization, or both. As mentioned by Shuck (2011), Such emotive qualities can stimulate employees to willingly engage in behavior directed toward desired organizational outcomes. As defined by Shuck (2011), psychological climate is the interpretation of an organizational environment in relation to an employee's perception of well-being. As mentioned by Shuck (2011), psychological climate is operationalized as including flexible, supportive management, role clarity, freedom of self-expression, contribution toward organizational goals, recognition, and challenging work.

(b) Macey (2008)

According to Macey (2008), employee engagement had divided in three categories which are psychological engagement, behavioral engagement and trait engagement. One or more of several similar ideas have been adopted by engagement as a psychological state, each in turn representing some sort of absorption, attachment, and/or enthusiasm, Macey (2008). Macey had composed the item into four categories which are job satisfaction, organizational commitment, job involvement and psychological empowerment.

Another definition of behavioral engagement by Macey (2008) is giving it their all and by combining effort with commitment. Behavioral engagement is reflecting to effort and it has been known as comprising duration, intensity and direction. Macey (2008) had also state that there are three major thread of research which are Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB), role-expansion and proactive behavior and personal initiative.

According to Macey (2008), trait engagement can be defined as tendency to experience work in positive, active, and energetic ways and to behave adaptively. Macey (2008) had categorized trait engagement into four dimensions which are Positive Affectivity (PA), proactive personality, trait engagement and autotelic personality. Therefore, the model chosen in this study is Macey (2008) since the model is widely used in most recent studies. The model is also understandable as compared to another model.

2.5 Previous Studies

De Spiegelaere (2014) found that job insecurity and autonomy are both directly and indirectly, through work engagement, are related to IWB. Agarwal (2014) examine the effects of contextual variables – organizational justice (procedural justice, interactional justice and psychological contract) and trust – on work engagement and IWB. Survey was taken among 323 managers working in manufacturing and pharmaceutical organizations based in western India. Results suggest that procedural justice, interactional justice and psychological contract fulfillment are positively related to work engagement with trust as the mediating element. Engagement significantly influences employees' innovative work behaviour.

Rasheed (2016) found the mediating impact of work engagement on the relationship between servant leadership and employee's innovative work behavior. 350 structured questionnaires were sent to 25 commercial banks of Pakistan through cross sectional survey. Convenience Sampling Technique was used for this purpose. The results is the relationship is found to be related between innovative work behavior and employee work engagement. Similarly, Hanif (2016) collected data from 177 employees, using questionnaire. The findings disclosed the significant positive relationship between psychological contract and innovative work behaviour.

Next, the previous studies that related to employee engagement and innovative work behavior was done by Seong Kim (2017). The purpose of this study is how the quality of LMX helps hotels to achieve desirable outcomes, such as innovative behavior and job performance. Survey was taken among 290 full-time customer-contact employees and assistant managers of 18 five-star hotels agreed to participate in the research since these hotels have a well-structured HR management system. The results show that LMX significantly influenced job engagement and innovative behavior. It can be concluded that majority of the previous study have the consistent findings which indicate positive relationship between employee engagement and innovative work behaviour.

3. Research Methodology

This study used quantitative method as the main methodology. In conducting this research, the process that went through was described in the research methodology. The reason for the research design, research instruments, the technique of data collections and other details were explained briefly.

3.1 Research Design

As mentioned by Cresswell (2008), research can be classified either as quantitative, qualitative or mixed methods research. Grinnell (2010) define quantitative method as a logical technique and its grounds can be distinguished in positivist worldview. This technique is to gather information in agreement to the issue from location that has large population and examination of the information ignored a person's feelings and sentiments or ecological setting. On the other hand, qualitative method is used to gather insightful empirical data. This method values subjectivity and individualism which limits its finding inference to larger context. Likewise, mixed method seeks to use both quantitative and qualitative design to enhance the value of its findings. In this study, quantitative research design was used to gather information and data.

3.2 Research Sampling

There are two major types of sampling strategies which are probability and non-probability sampling. Probability sampling is a sampling approach in which every unit has an equivalent possibility to be chosen meanwhile non-probability sampling is the testing approach in which the likelihood of every unit to be chosen is not known or affirmed. In this study, the researcher used non-probability sampling as the number of employees in each company cannot be determined. The quota sampling would be further used to approximate the number of samples to be taken from each participating company.

3.3 Pilot Study

Before finalizing the research design and questionnaire, a set of questionnaire was distributed to 30 employees working in food and beverage company for a purpose of pilot study. Researcher improved questions/items that were found dubious and confusing. This is to make sure that respondent could answer the questionnaire easily and increase its reliability.

3.4 Data Collection

Data collection is the process of how the data will be gathered. The process begin with a personal contact with the authorities of the company to obtain the personal information and list of employee. The questionnaire distribution were done through Google Form link questionnaire which distribute by e-mail.

3.5 Data Analysis

Data analysis is the evaluation process of the data by using analytical and logical reasoning to examine the component that had been collected. The data would be analyzed to determine whether the study had achieved the research objective or not.

(a) Descriptive Analysis

According to Churchill and Iacobucci (2005), descriptive research can be defined as to examine utilizing measurable apparatuses. In spite of being a descriptive research, an illustrative report is orderly, fixed arrangement and organized. The data for descriptive analysis was analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics Version 23.0 to calculate frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation.

(b) Correlation Analysis

According to Boyd *et al.* (2004), correlation analysis is an attempt to identify patterns of variation comes to a dependent variable and an independent variable. This results in an objectively arrived at correlation coefficient, which indicates how strongly the few variables share a common pattern of change and whether the pattern is positive or negative. If there is perfect positive correlation $r = + 1.00$; perfect negative correlation it is indicated by $r = -1.00$; no relationship is shown by $r = 0.000$

4. Data Analysis and Results

Four hundred completed questionnaires from the respondents had been collected from F&B employees located in Johor, Kuala Lumpur, Penang, Selangor and Perak. Data were cleaned, processed and analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Science Version 20.0 (SPSS) to answer the objective of this research.

4.1 Reliability Analysis

According to Tavakol (2011), The Alpha Cronbach Reliability test had been used to provide a measurement of the internal consistency of a test or scale. In this research, Cronbach's Alpha was utilized to assess the reliability of the dependent and independent variables. It indicated as not strong if the range was between 0.5 to 0.6. If the range exceeds 0.7, it indicates as strong consistency strength. Finally, it indicates as excellent if the range exceed 0.9.

The Cronbach's Alpha for Pilot Study for Innovative Work Behavior was 0.893. The respondent for pilot study were 30 respondents. The values showed for the internal consistency of innovative work behaviour is good. Meanwhile, for actual test, the values of innovative work behaviour is 0.807 which was slightly lower.

4.2 Respondent Demographic Background

Respondents who participated was required to provide answers of the five questions regarding on the demographic profile, which consists of gender, age, race, highest educational level and working experience. In terms of gender, 166 respondents were female respondents. Meanwhile, 234 respondents that answer the questionnaire were male respondents. For age, the majority of the respondents were below 25 years old respondents. Meanwhile, 125 respondents were in between 26 until 35, 61 respondents were in between 36 to 45 and the lowest was the respondents who were higher than 45 years old. Malay respondents were the highest to participate which were 165 respondents. Chinese respondents came second with 124 respondents. Meanwhile India and Others came third and fourth with 84 and 27 were answer the questionnaire respectively. For highest educational level, the result shows that Bachelor Degree qualified employee were the highest respondent with 178 had answer the questionnaire. Meanwhile, pre-university/diploma educational level came second with 128 respondents. Secondary school came third with 71 respondents. Master and PHD came fourth and last with 17 and 6 had answers the questionnaire respectively. Finally, majority of the employee had working experience from 4 to 6 years with 114 respondents. 91 respondents had been working more than a decade and lastly, 7 to 9 years working experience had share the same amount of respondents with respondents that had working experience less than 3 years which were 57 respondents.

4.3 Mean Analysis

(a) Level of Innovative Work Behavior

Table 1: Mean of IWB

	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)	Level of Tendency
Independent Variable			
Idea Exploration	3.57	0.99913	Medium
Idea Generation	3.6058	1.00946	Medium
Idea Championing	3.661	0.9641	Medium
Idea Implementation	3.664	0.9773	Medium

(b) Level of Employee Engagement

Table 2: Mean of EE

	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)	Level of Tendency
Dependent Variable			
Need Satisfaction	3.6142	0.72453	Medium
Job Demand Resources	3.5775	0.70846	Medium
Social Exchange	3.6392	0.70765	Medium

4.4 Correlation Analysis

Pearson Correlation coefficient was used to test whether there is significance relationship between innovative work behaviour and dimensions (need satisfaction, job demand resources, and social exchange) of employee engagement. All dimensions of employee engagement were significantly correlated at $p < 0.001$ as follows.

Table 3: Correlation analysis

	IWB	<i>p value</i>
Need Satisfaction	$r = 0.550$	0.001
Job Demand Resources	$r = 0.562$	0.001
Social Exchange	$r = 0.529$	0.001

5. Discussion and Conclusion

The objective of the study was to identify the level of innovative work behavior among the Enterprise Food and Beverages Industry employees. Based on the findings, the idea implementation had received the highest mean which is 3.664 among the dimensions of the innovative work behavior. This result is not consistent with the study conducted by Jong and Hartog (2007), which he stated that idea generation appears to be the most important factor in the dimension of Innovative Work Behavior. Next, the subsequently highest mean score was followed by idea championing, idea generation and idea exploration. Oukes (2010) had indicated that the innovative work behavior of employees increases the

ability of an organization to innovate and create sustainable competitive advantages in the workplace. In conclusion, the findings indicate the level of innovative work behaviour among employees in Enterprise Food and Beverages Industry in Malaysia is at medium level, consistent with other studies in Malaysia albeit different sector.

In terms of employee engagement, the mean of employee engagement was also moderate for all the dimensions indicating the need for further improvement. This finding is further supported by a report indicating that although employee engagement in Malaysia is slightly above average at 54%, it is distinctly lower than India at 79% and Thailand at 72%.

Significant correlations between employee engagement and IWB signify the importance of employee engagement to move forward towards innovative nation. It is important to note that employee engagement is always linked with performance and thus strategies to improve employee engagement could be two-pronged tackling both IWB and performance of employees.

In order to improve the study, it would be beneficial to expand the studies to include other states to reduce the bias and enhance the reliability and accuracy of the data. Other data collection method could be used to overcome limitation of correlational study.

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