

# Relationship between Employee Engagement, Job Satisfaction and Potential Turnover

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**Abstract** – High employee engagement (EE) is associated with high work performance therefore; it is in the center of attention of researchers and HR managers. The aim of the study was to determine the level of employee engagement in the exposed workplace and to verify whether there are relationships between employee engagement, job satisfaction and potential labor turnout. Based on a survey conducted with operators (N=257) in call centers, where the rate of fluctuation is high, these relationships were confirmed. It was found that the level of EE may not be low even at a demanding workplace. It was also verified that EE has a positive effect on job satisfaction and at the same time negatively affects potential turnover.

**Keywords** – employee engagement, job satisfaction, potential labor turnover, call centers, operators.

## 1. Introduction

The issue of employee engagement has been receiving attention for several decades and its importance is still growing. Engagement is often defined as dedication to the employer and the values preferred by the organization [1]. An engaged employee tends to be motivated and focused on achieving set goals and motivates his colleagues in a similar way. An engaged employee is positively emotionally connected with his/her work, his/her

performances which is naturally of high quality, and very often even beyond the set duties [2].

Many studies focus on identification of the factors that influence an increase in work exposure. Karasek [3] created the Job Demand-Control (JDC) model which is based on the assumption that the factors that affect the level of engagement are mainly the working environment and autonomy (freedom in decision making). The model was later further developed and extended by another important factor, the social support [4]. Within social support, the main variables were identified as relationship at the workplace, both between co-workers and between subordinate and superiors [5], [6]. Recent studies [7] point to the fact that, in the context of the human resources management process, there is a general need to look for practices that, as a system, will contribute to higher performance. These HRM systems of processes, commonly referred to as “High Performance Work Systems (HPWS)”, are considered to be the main sources of productivity. The pillar of these systems is the fair treatment of employees, which leads to development of positive work attitudes, sense of responsibility and employee engagement. The fact that organizational stimulation leads to the development of employee engagement is confirmed by other studies as well [8], [9].

On the other hand, stress can be a general factor that significantly reduces employee engagement. Elimination of the stressor intensity may increase the engagement rates [10], [11], [12].

A high level of employee engagement is desirable because it brings a number of positive effects. The main areas in which the benefit of a high degree of engagement can be observed are higher work performance, higher job satisfaction, lower potential turnover, and many others [13], [14].

In the services sector, high employee engagement is also reflected in the service climate and higher employee performance and it will subsequently be reflected in customer loyalty [15].

There is a relative consensus among researchers in this regard. There is no doubt about the positive effects of employee engagement. The only differences are in the number of variables and the extent to which they affect the employee

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DOI: 10.18421/TEM102-44

<https://doi.org/10.18421/TEM102-44>

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*Received:* 07 February 2021.

*Revised:* 07 April 2021.

*Accepted:* 14 April 2021.

*Published:* 27 May 2021.

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engagement. Given the benefits that employee engagement brings, it definitely is advisable to pay attention to the topic. The aim of this article will be to find out what the level of employee engagement is in the workplace, which can be generally described as a “stressful environment”, since the goals are usually high and the rules for achieving them are strict. Furthermore, it will be verified whether there are relationships between employee engagement, job satisfaction, and potential labor turnover, because it is the turnover that is high among the employees of the call centers.

**2. Methodology**

The research took place at the call centers of a large corporate company. These workplaces were chosen because here the employees work under the influence of a number of stressors. The theoretical background, therefore, suggests that employee engagement should be low.

A standard UWES questionnaire (abbreviated version) according to Schaufeli et al. [16] was used to determine the degree of involvement. The questionnaire items are listed in Table 1.

Table 1. UWES Questionnaire – abbreviated version

<b>Absorption</b>
1) When I am working intensively, I feel happy.
2) I get carried away when I am working.
3) I am immersed in my work.
<b>Vigor</b>
1) At my work, I feel bursting with energy.
2) At my work, I feel strong and vigorous.
3) When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work.
<b>Dedication</b>
1) I am enthusiastic about my job.
2) My job inspires me.
3) I am proud of the work that I do.

Source: Designed according to [16]

The processing and evaluation of questions took place according to the relevant manual [16], from which the standards were also used (see Table 2).

Table 2. Standards for evaluation of engagement level

EE*	Vigor	Dedication	Absorption	UWES
1	≤ 2.00	≤ 1.33	≤ 1.17	≤ 1.77
2	2.01 – 3.25	1.34 – 2.90	1.18 – 2.33	1.78 – 2.88
3	3.26 – 4.80	2.91 – 4.70	2.34 – 4.20	2.89 – 4.66
4	4.81 – 5.65	4.71 – 5.69	4.21 – 5.33	4.67 – 5.50
5	≥ 5.66	≥ 5.70	≥ 5.34	≥ 5.51

Note EE = employee engagement level  
1 = very low to 5 = very high

Source: Designed according to [16]

H1 assumes that the level of engagement of call center employees is low.

Given that the aim of the study is to find out what the relationships between employee engagement and other variables (potential turnover and job satisfaction) are, the questionnaire also included questions that are focused on these variables. The formulation of the questions was operationalized according to the study by Ro et al. [10]. The questions are listed in Table 3. For each question, respondents answered using a seven-point Likert scale (0 = definitely not to 6 = definitely yes).

Table 3. Questions to identify potential turnover and job satisfaction

<b>Potential turnover</b>
1) I am thinking about leaving my job.
2) I read various job offers.
3) If I received a job offer at another call center for the same salary, I would leave the current job.
<b>Job satisfaction</b>
1) I consider my work to be meaningful.
2) I like our company culture.
3) The employer values my work.

Source: Designed according to Ro & Lee (2017)

Subsequently, hypotheses were formulated:

H2 There are statistically significant relationships between the individual variables (employee engagement, job satisfaction and potential turnover).

The questionnaire was distributed to call center employees in electronic form. A total of 287 employees were contacted. Some of the questionnaires were discarded during their checking because not all questions were filled in and several employees did not complete the questionnaire. In the research, 257 completed questionnaires were included.

The data were processed and evaluated with use of MS Excel and statistical software SPSS. From statistical methods, Cronbach’s alpha and MacDonald’s omega were used to determine reliability, Pearson’s correlation coefficient was chosen to calculate the strength of the linear relationship between paired data, and finally ANOVA was used to verify the statistical significance of the ascertained differences.

**3. Results**

Before starting the calculations themselves, the internal consistency (reliability) of the components of individual factors was verified using Cronbach’s alpha and MacDonald’s omega. The values from 0.6 to 0.8 can be considered acceptable. The values from 0.8 to 1 are very good and show a very good consistency. It is clear from Table 4 that all three variables showed very good reliability.

Table 4. Evaluation of the internal consistency of the items in the questionnaire

	Alpha	Omega
UWES	0.916	0.919
Job satisfaction	0.749	0.776
Potential turnover	0.825	0.826

Source: Own calculation

Furthermore, the level of call center employee engagement was determined. For the calculation, a process according to the manual [16] was used. The results are shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Evaluation of employee engagement level

	Vigor	Dedication	Absorption	Employee engagement
Value	4.199	4.495	5.056	<b>4.583</b>
Level	low	medium	medium	medium

Source: Own calculation

H1 assumed that the level of employee engagement in the call center is low. However, the results show that the overall exposure rate is medium. The hypothesis was, therefore, not confirmed. From a deeper analysis of the results, it is evident that only one of the components of employee engagement, namely vigor, shows lower values. Values of dedication and absorption were found in the middle zone. It should be noted, however, that the level of employee engagement did not show a normal distribution, which is clearly evident from the histogram in Figure 1.

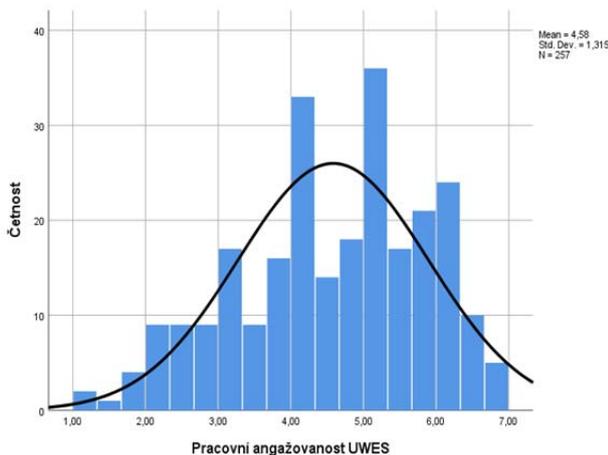


Figure 1. Histogram – found results of the distribution level of engagement

Table 6 shows the elementary description of each variable.

Table 6. Descriptive data of individual variables

	UWES	Job satisfaction	Potential turnover
N	257	257	257
Average	4,5831	4,5577	2,9858
Median	4,78	4,67	2,67
Standard error	0,08202	0,08624	0,0988
Standard deviation	1.31486	1,38254	1,58387
Dispersion	1.729	1.911	2.509

Source: Own calculation

In the next part of the research, the relationship between employee engagement, job satisfaction, and potential turnover were verified with the use of Pearson’s correlation coefficient. It is evident from Table 7 that employee engagement has a strongly positive correlation with job satisfaction (0.734) and, at the same time, negative correlation with potential turnover (-0.529).

Table 7. Correlation between individual variables

Factors	Employee engagement	Job satisfaction	Potential turnover
Employee engagement	1	0.734*	-0.529*
Job satisfaction	0.734*	1	-0.560*
Potential turnover	-0.529*	-0.560*	1
* p = 0,01			

Source: Own calculation

H2, which assumed the existence of relationships between these variables, was thus confirmed. For completeness, it should be added that the higher the employee engagement rate, the higher the job satisfaction rate (positive correlation) and, at the same time, the higher the employee engagement rate, the lower the potential turnover (negative correlation). Therefore, an engaged employee is also more satisfied employee who is less likely to leave his or her employer.

As part of a deeper analysis of this issue, the individual variables were subsequently tested separately. Table 8 shows the results of the ANOVA test, based on which it is clear that there is a statistically significant effect between employee engagement and job satisfaction.

Table 8. Relationship between job satisfaction and employee engagement

	Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F	Significance
Regression	263.541	1	263.541	297.642	0.000 <sup>b</sup>
Residuals	225.785	255	0.885		
Total	489.326	256			
a = Dependent variable: Job satisfaction b = Predictors: Employee engagement					

Source: Own calculation

In a similar way, the relationship between employee engagement and potential turnover was investigated. The results are shown in Table 9.

Table 9. Relationship between potential turnover and employee engagement

	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Significance
Regression	179.711	1	179.711	99.084	0.000 <sup>b</sup>
Residuals	462.501	25	1.814		
Total	642.212	25			
a = Dependent variable: Potential turnover b = Predictors: Employee engagement					

Source: Own calculation

It is clear from the results that the independent variable (employee engagement) statistically significantly predicts the dependent variable (potential turnover).

#### 4. Discussion

The issues related to employee engagement, the possibility of its measurement, and especially the possibilities of its subsequent influence have been in the focus of attention in the field of human resources management for a long time. Employee engagement is sometimes even referred to as a key indicator of an organization’s health [16]. Burnout syndrome is considered the opposite of employee engagement. Burnout syndrome occurs primarily at workplaces with demanding working conditions (time stress or other disproportionate workload, limited autonomy, high pressure on results which the employee can, however, affect only partially or not at all, etc.). The consequences of burnout syndrome are low work performance and high turnover. Such a risky work environment can be considered, for example, the position of operator at a call center, where this research took place. However, the range of possible occupations where there is a potential threat of burnout is very wide. A lot of research in this area has been carried out, for example, in health care, where demanding working conditions are accompanied by a high degree of responsibility [17]. The level of employee engagement, nevertheless, affects productivity in other sectors, such as education [18]. In this context, education can be also considered a risky environment. The occurrence of burnout syndrome (which can also arise from the initial very high EE) is relatively common there. Positive effects of EE on performance have been reported in the area of public administration [19], [20], but also in a number of other sectors [21], [22].

An interesting finding was that even though the call center can be considered a risky workplace (in terms of high demands on the goal fulfillment and strong time stress), and therefore a rather low level of engagement is expected, a medium level of EE was found. At the same time, however, it was clear from the histogram that the EE values did not show a normal distribution. It would certainly be appropriate to make a deeper analysis and address the question of whether it is among the people who have been working here for a very short time (and have not yet managed to “burn out”) that a higher level of engagement exists, or whether it might be among the people who have been working here a long enough time but show a high degree of tolerance to these stressors. It would also be interesting to use a longitudinal survey to find out whether in the long run a higher level of engagement would negatively correlate with a low rate of real turnout (not just potential turnout, i.e. declared turnout).

Questions of the tightness of the bonds between employee engagement and other variables are the subject of a large amount of research. Given the definition of employee engagement (see the introduction), the positive correlation with job satisfaction is probably less surprising. Surprisingly, however, despite the fact that these connections are repeatedly demonstrated – in different work environments – from the point of performance management, job satisfaction of the employees is often neglected or underestimated. Employers generally consider the EE of their employees to be higher than it actually is [23]. The complexity of this phenomenon is due to the fact that EE and job satisfaction are both affected by a wide range of different factors which differ not only according to the nature of work and job position but also according to personality traits, value hierarchies, and preferences of each individual. This diversity is confirmed by a number of studies [24], [25].

Job satisfaction is also sometimes confused with EE. These variables are related but they are two different factors. Djoemadi et al. found that job satisfaction is one of the factors that positively influence employee engagement and that the most important items in job satisfaction are working conditions, employment relationships, and possibility of promotions [26]. The results of this study show that it is always necessary to clarify the terminology and operationalization within the methodology because the same items that were declared here in the category of “job satisfaction” can be elsewhere classified in the category “employee engagement”. However, it is clear that all these variables are very important for human resource management.

From the point of view of employers, the relationship between the level of employee engagement and potential turnover seems to be a fundamental issue. The financial costs of recruiting and selecting new employees, as well as the costs associated with the process of their adaptation, are considerable. With managerial positions, direct financial losses can be exacerbated by the loss of know-how. The fact that employee engagement has a positive effect on potential turnover has been found both in this study and in a number of others [27], [28], [29]. However, studies on the relationship between EE and real turnover are not very widespread, which can be seen as a challenge for further research in this area.

## 5. Conclusion

The aim of this study was to determine whether there is also a low level of employee engagement at a workplace with a higher level of stress and whether this level of engagement shows relationships with other variables. Based on the research, it was found that even in a workplace that has significantly unfavorable working conditions; the level of EE may not necessarily be low. On the other hand, it is evident that the detected values are in the lower average range. The question remains whether these findings are not affected by the limitations of the study that were mentioned in the discussion section.

The relationship between employee engagement and job satisfaction was proven to be clearly positive and at the same time the correlation between EE and potential turnover was verified as negative. These findings, which are in concord with the findings of a number of other studies conducted in different types of workplaces, confirm to employers and HR managers the importance of addressing employee engagement issues if they are to achieve high productivity and prevent undesirable employee turnover.

## Acknowledgements

*This research was supported by the Jan van Elst Purkyně University in Ústí nad Labem, Czech Republic [grant number UJEP-SGS-2019-45-009-2].*

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