Impact of Leadership Development on Employee Engagement of Associates Working in National Capital Region in India

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ABSTRACT

Today's globalised organisations focus on leadership development practices wherein leaders are developed at all levels in the organisation. It is a systematic approach to expand the performance capability of individuals in leadership roles in the organisation. In this light the present study aimed to map the impact of leadership development practices on different parameters of employee engagement and overall engagement scores of employees in the organisation. A self administered questionnaire was used to collect primary data of 300 respondents from 20 organisations. The data collected was analyzed using SPSS and Smart PLS software. The results reveal correlation between leadership development and employee engagement (r = 0.71). Regression analysis revealed that leadership development contributes 50% to the overall employee engagement score. It is evident that organisation which invests in developing leaders at each level in the organisation structure are able to facilitate collaborative partnerships, adaptability, agility, communication, feedback, technology absorption, process innovation, productivity, financial performance and employee engagement. Senior Managers in the organisation can enhance employee engagement by identifying leadership potentials among employees and providing them with appropriate opportunities to take up leadership positions.

Keywords : *Employee Engagement, Leadership Development, Job Satisfaction, Organisational Commitment, Intention to stay.*

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INTRODUCTION

"Winning Companies win because they have good leaders who nurture the development of other leaders at all levels of the organisation."   – Noel Tichy

"Leaders don't create followers, they create more leaders."

– Tom Peters

In today's globalised economy where organizations are facing complex and challenging work dynamics, a striking shift from an industrialized model of work to more knowledge intensive communities of practice (Adler, 2001; Cho, Cho, & McLean, 2009); employees have higher anticipations about engaging in organizational decision making. Employee actively seeks work situations where they are dealt with respect and fairness in pursuance of dynamic association in organizational activities (Burke & Ng, 2006). The traditional legitimate and hierarchical models pertaining to power practices are challenged as the new Gen Y workers are entering into the workplace (Beck, 2003; Burke & Ng, 2006; Pink, 2001). Modern styles of leadership are required to practice, keeping into consideration the different and complex business environments.

Leadership development is one such practice, wherein leaders are developed at all levels in the organisation. It is a systematic approach to expand the performance capability of individuals in leadership roles in the organisation. It gives autonomy to employees working at different levels in the organisation to make decisions on their own keeping into consideration the overall goals and objectives of the organisation. Yates (2017) argued that the driving force of a successful organisation is its skilled leaders. These leaders motivate employees by setting and communicating the vision and tone for the organisational culture to flourish. The term leadership does not only refer to the top management rather a new approach is practiced these days, wherein each employee in the organisation is a leader. Every employee in the organisation should be able to communicate, innovate, plan, and work effectively with other employees. The skills of a leader should flow throughout modern business, so they need to be developed at every level. Thus, the workforce feels empowered to contribute to the success of the organisation and in turn feel engaged.

An effective leader should ensure that employees are engaged. According to Witt (2011), leadership practices have a strong impact on employee engagement, well being and productivity. Thus, it is rightly said that leadership and employee engagement are two sides of the same coin. Organisations may not be able to successfully achieve their goals and objectives without effective leaders and none of the employee engagement efforts are successful without leadership development.

Employee Engagement is the commitment of an employee to his or her organization and the eagerness to perform beyond expectations. Engagement is not just job satisfaction; it is much more than that. Highly engaged employees are more dedicated and motivated in making the organization a success. Engagement is "A feeling of psychological connect with the organization emerging out of pleasurable or positive emotional state leading to job satisfaction, commitment, sense of pride towards the organization, wanting to stay with the organization, forming emotional connect and recommending others also to work with the organization (Lather & Jain, 2014)". The world's top-performing organizations understand that employee engagement is an effort that stimulates business outcomes. Employee Engagement is arguably the most integral metric for organizations in the 21st Century.

Precisely, engagement is connected with the active collaboration and investment of a person, not solely parts in role performance. In the context of organizations, engagement has a more explicit meaning. Within the workplace these synergies clearly reveal themselves in the contract of employment wherein employees take a pledge to serve their employer, show responsibility towards their job, and assume the accountability of employment. Employees of the organization invest their energies to comprehend and embark these roles. And thus, they feel associated and involved in the roles and responsibilities they perform. It is precisely evident that whenever employees of the organization are mentally and emotionally engaged, they push the organization to unmatchable heights.

The progressively aggressive business environment has propelled the organizations to focus on the vital issue of employee engagement in an attempt to explain the underlying factors of employee motivation and performance. According to Gallup (2005) engagement was considered imminent, especially when the nature of the job is universal and persuasive part of an employee's well-being, which not only alters the life of the employee, but also one's mental and physical health (Wrzesniewski, Rozin, & Bennett, 2002).

Organisations which value the leadership development maintains a culture of rewarding leaders and invest its resources in maturing them. Organisations which are successful in today's turbulent business environment are those which value the need for developing leaders and are striving to systematically and deliberately produce them.

Leadership development at all levels is of utmost importance for any organization. Innovative ideas are the driving forces of an organization's success and understand that effective leaders, are required not just at the top, but all through the organization, from the CEO to the team members in each department, hold the key to the engines of creativity.

Trap (2014) highlighted the need for leaders at all levels in the organisation to become successful. Leaders develop conditions where employees have assurance in exercising their initiative and in grasping opportunities to share knowledge and assume responsibility. They recognize completing forms of leadership leads to job satisfaction and engagement and have a positive impact on the life of organization.

In this light the present study aimed to map the impact of

leadership development on different parameters of employee engagement and overall engagement scores of employees in the organisation.

ITERATURE REVIEW

Many researchers have conducted research across the globe to map employee engagement and to understand its linkages with other factors. Many international research and consulting firms such as Hewitt Associates, Gallup, BI Worldwide, and Tower Watson etc have undertaken research on engagement in Indian firms. Big corporations of private sector and a few public sector corporations are conducting this type of study with the help of international consulting and research organization.

The most important asset possessed by organizations is its employees. They are considered as the intellectual capital of the organization. Using, this intellectual capital has now become a major source through which organization's gain competitive edge in this dynamic business environment.

According to Lather and Jain (2014) Engagement is "A feeling of psychological connect with the organization emerging out of pleasurable or positive emotional state leading to job satisfaction, commitment, sense of pride towards the organization, wanting to stay with the organization, forming an emotional connect and recommending others also to work with the organization".

Although there is not much research supporting the relationship of leadership development and employee engagement and its parameters, but many researchers have conducted studies which support that leadership behaviour has a strong impact on employee engagement and its dimensions.

Xu and Thomas (2011) conducted a study in New Zealand to investigate linkage between leader's behaviour and follower's engagement. Their research confirmed that there exists a positive relationship between leadership behaviour and follower's engagement in the organisation. Papalexandris and Galanaki (2009) investigated to identify the impact of leadership on employee engagement. The findings of their study suggested that there is a positive impact of leadership on employee engagement. They also underlined the fact that good management and mentoring are essential in any kind of firm, in order to develop an effective, committed and motivated top management team, which will bring corporate success.

Penger and Cerne (2014) developed and tested a multilevel model of cross-level interactions between authentic leadership at the team level and job satisfaction and employee engagement at the individual level with the mediating role of perceived supervisor support. They analysed responses collected from 289 team members and 23 team supervisors. The results demonstrated that there exists a positive relationship among authentic leadership, job satisfaction and employee engagement. Also, it was observed that perceived supervisor support fully mediated the relationship between authentic leadership and job satisfaction, whereas partial mediation was observed in the relationship between authentic leadership and employee engagement.

H1: There is a significant relationship between leadership development and employee engagement.

H2: There is a significant impact of leadership development on employee engagement.

Nelson and Daniels (2014) conducted a study of individuals working for managers who were previously peers to highlight the relationship between perception, tenure, turnover intentions and job satisfaction. On analysing the data it was concluded that there is a significant correlation between job satisfaction and employee turnover; manager's perception and job satisfaction, while the other variables assessed depict no correlation amongst each other. Tsai (2011) conducted a study to understand the relationship amongst leadership behaviour, organisation culture and job satisfaction on hospital nurses in Taiwan. Responses collected from 200 respondents were analysed using correlation analysis. The statistical results revealed that there exists a significant positive correlation among culture of the organisation, leadership behaviour and job satisfaction. Also, it was observed that leadership behaviour has a significant positive correlation with job satisfaction. Thus, they concluded that organisation culture and leadership play a very important role in communication and collaboration and thereby improving the job satisfaction of the employees in the organisation. Kim (2002) argued that participative style of leadership enhances job satisfaction irrespective of the sector of employment. To affirm this relationship of participative leadership in strategic planning and job satisfaction this study was conducted in Government agencies. The results of the analysis revealed that managers use of a participative management style and employee's perceptions of participative strategic planning processes are positively related to high levels of job satisfaction. The study also found that effective supervisory communications in the context of the strategic planning process are positively related to high levels of job satisfaction. The study suggested that participative management, which incorporated effective supervisory communications, can enhance employees' job satisfaction. Yahaya and Ebrahim (2016) construed that there is a relationship between different dimensions of leadership, which are transformational, transactional and laissez-faire, and employee effort, employee satisfaction, leader effectiveness and organisational commitment. Mosadeghrad and Ferdosi (2013) also expounded that job satisfaction and organisational commitment are dependent on the style of leadership of managers. They collected responses from 814 employees of public hospitals of Iran to establish this relationship. It was found that the most of the hospital managers used participative style of leadership, but employees in the hospitals were only moderately satisfied with their jobs and commitment towards their organisation was also moderate. It was also observed that salaries, contingent rewards, fringe benefits, working conditions, promotions, and interpersonal

relationship contributed in the prediction of job satisfaction among the hospital employees. The results also revealed that leadership behavior contributed 20 percent and 28 percent of the variance explained in organisational commitment and job satisfaction respectively. They emphasized that there is a causal relationship between leadership behaviour and job satisfaction and organisational commitment. They also argued that participative style of leadership is not always the best way to lead. Managers should select the style of leadership depending upon the culture and employee maturity in the organisation.

Gillet and Vandenberghe (2014) conducted a research to further affirm the relationship of transformational leadership and organisational commitment through the impact of followers' perceptions of job characteristics. They collected and analysed the data from 488 respondents from different organisations in France. They found that the relation of transformational leadership and organisational commitment are partially mediated by followers' perception of task characteristics. Kleine and Weißenberger (2014) construes that the leadership styles practiced by top level managers affect the level of organisational commitment among the lower and middle level managers. This study was conducted to investigate the relationship among leadership styles, management control systems and organisational commitment. Structural Equation Modelling was used to analyse the data collected from 294 German organisations. The results indicate that informal control elements, such as personnel and cultural controls, act as hinges through which top management is able to positively transmit leadership behaviours and affect the development of organizational commitment. Mclaggan, Bezuidenhout and Botha (2013) conducted a research in mining industry to investigate the relationship between transactional and transformational leadership and organisational commitment. Responses were collected from 88 employees of a coal mine in Phola in the Mpumalanga province. On statistical analysis, it was revealed the there is a significant relationship between leadership styles and organisational commitment. They emphasized that line managers should follow transformation style of leadership to enhance commitment, satisfaction and engagement among their employees. Lo, Ramayah and Min (2009) also construed that organisational commitment has an important implication on employees and the organisation. To establish this they conducted a research in Malaysia to study the relationship of leadership styles and organisational commitment. They only focussed on two styles of leadership, that is, transactional and transformational leadership. They collected and analysed a sample of 156 Malaysian executives. The results of their study revealed that although the transactional and transformational leadership, both have a positive relationship with organisational commitment, but the impacts are much stronger for transactional leadership. Steyrer, Schiffinger and Lang (2008) also conducted a study to investigate the effect of leadership behavior on organisational commitment which in turn influences the performance of the organisation. They collected and analysed data from 78 organisations of Germanic cultural areas. The findings of their research concluded that leadership behaviour is positively related to organisational commitment of the subordinates and organisational commitment has a strong impact on the performance of the organisation.

AbuAlRub R.F. & Nasrallah M.A. (2017) conducted a study on Jordanian nurses to investigate the impact of leadership behaviour and organisation culture on intention to stay in private, public and university hospitals. They suggested that leadership behavior and orgaisational culture are prime factors to enhance the intention to stay of the nurses. They collected and analysed a sample of 285 nurses. The results of their study revealed that leadership behavior and organisational culture have significant positive correlation with intention to stay. Also, leadership behavior and organisation culture together contributed to 43 percent of the total variance explained in the intention to stay of the nurses. Cowden, Cummings and Profetto-McGrath (2011) also conducted a research on nurses to examine the relationship between leadership practices followed by managers and the intention to stay. The results of their study revealed that relational leadership, transformational leadership and supportive work environment have a positive relation with the intention to stay of the staff nurses. The managers, leader managers and leaders who practice relational leadership and ensure quality workplace environments are more likely to retain their staff. Ndoye, Imig and Parker (2010) conducted their study in American schools in North Carolina which were facing a challenge of teacher attrition and migration. Their study focused on the relationship of school leadership, teacher empowerment and intention to stay or leave. The findings of the study indicated that the teacher's intention to stay or leave or to migrate is strongly predicted by leadership.

H3: There is a significant relationship between leadership development and parameters of employee engagement, i.e., job satisfaction, organisational commitment, intention to stay, pride, advocacy and emotional connect.

H4: There is a significant impact of leadership development on parameters of employee engagement, i.e., job satisfaction, organisational commitment, intention to stay, pride, advocacy and emotional connect.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of conducting this study are:

• To study the relationship between leadership development practices and employee engagement.

• To test a model to predict that leadership development practices impacts employee engagement.

Sample

A causal study was conducted on the working professional of different organizations in National Capital Region of India. A self administered questionnaire was used to collect primary

data of 300 respondents, using systematic sampling, from 20 organisations. These organisations were from different sectors of the economy like manufacturing, automobile, hospitality, aviation, banking, etc. The respondents were managers working at different levels in these organisations. The sample was collected and analyzed using Correlation analysis and Partial Least Square Method. There were 208 males and 92 females whose age group range from 23 years to more than 55years. The sample was collected from employees at different levels of management. Hence, the sample included responses from 139 entry level managers, 125 middle level managers and 36 senior level managers (Table 1).

TABLE 1. RESPONDENT PROFILE

Gender	Male	Female	
	208	92	
Marital Status	Single	Married	Divorced
	164	135	1
Age Group	Young adults: (23-35 years)	Mid. Age adults (36-55 years)	Senior adults (55years and above)
	248	45	7
Level of Management	Entry level Manager	Middle level Manager	Senior level Manager
	139	125	36
Sector of Employment	Public	Private	
	80	220	

Tools Used

- Leadership Development: An 11 item questionnaire was constructed to measure the Leadership development practices in the organization. These items are formed on the supporting individual growth through leadership development practices, frequent leadership development sessions, assessment of leadership potential, continuous review of leadership development practices by top management, well defined and documented policies for leadership development, and arranging adequate resources for leadership development. The validity of the questionnaire was established by confirmatory factor analysis. The cronbach alpha reliability score was calculated as 0.917.

- Employee Engagement Scale: A 26 item employee engagement scale developed by Lather and Jain (2015) was used to measure Employee Engagement. The scale had six dimensions of employee engagement, that is, organizational commitment, job satisfaction, advocate, intent to stay, pride and emotional connect.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Correlation coefficients were calculated for various factors of Employee Engagement of the overall sample. The results reveal that there is a significant positive correlation between Leadership Development and Job Satisfaction, Organizational Commitment, Advocacy, Pride, Intent to stay and overall employee Engagement (Table 2). It is evident that organisations which follow a culture of leadership development at all levels have more engaged employee. It is also evident that there exists a very strong positive linear correlation between leadership development and job satisfaction. Thus, to increase the level of satisfaction among employees, organisations need to invest in leadership development.

TABLE 2. PEARSON CORRELATION OF LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT WITH VARIOUS FACTORS OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT.

	LD	Sig.
Job Satisfaction	0.950	0.000
Organisational commitment	0.766	0.000
Advocacy	0.716	0.000
Pride	0.636	0.000
Intent to stay	0.670	0.000
Employee Engagement	0.710	0.000

The leadership development score of the respondents was regressed with an employee engagement score using the partial least square method (PLS) in Smart PLS 3 software.

Partial Least Squares is a regression technique that reduces the predictors to a smaller set of uncorrelated components and performs least squares regression on these components, instead of on the original data. PLS regression is especially useful when your predictors are highly collinear, or when you have more predictors than observations and ordinary least-squares regression either produces coefficients with high standard errors or fails completely. Smart PLS software was used to test the model shown below. As the sample size used for the study was small, the researchers were not sure whether the respondent data will be normally distributed. Since Smart PLS is suitable for non-normally distributed data the model testing method was adopted for this study. The model was evaluated through Smart PLS.

The relationship between the constructs are statistically analysed using partial least square path modelling algorithms. Latent variables are used to estimate the path models in PLS Algorithms. The PLS alogorithms does not require normally distributed data.

Partial Least Squares (PLS) model was analyzed to interpret the model. The model estimates the relationship between observed variables and unobserved variables (latent variables). The model was tested through assessment of validity and reliability of the construct measures in the model. This ensured that only reliable and valid constructs' measures were used for assessing the nature of relationships in the overall model (Hulland, 1999).

The quality of the model was assessed by determining the individual item reliability and scale reliability followed by convergent and discriminant validity of constructs. PLS algorithm was applied to the relationships between the leadership development, behavior and employee engagement, coefficients and values of loadings.

In PLS, loadings of the respective factors on their respective latent constructs are examined to assess the reliability of the factors (Hulland, 1999). Since the final model was decided
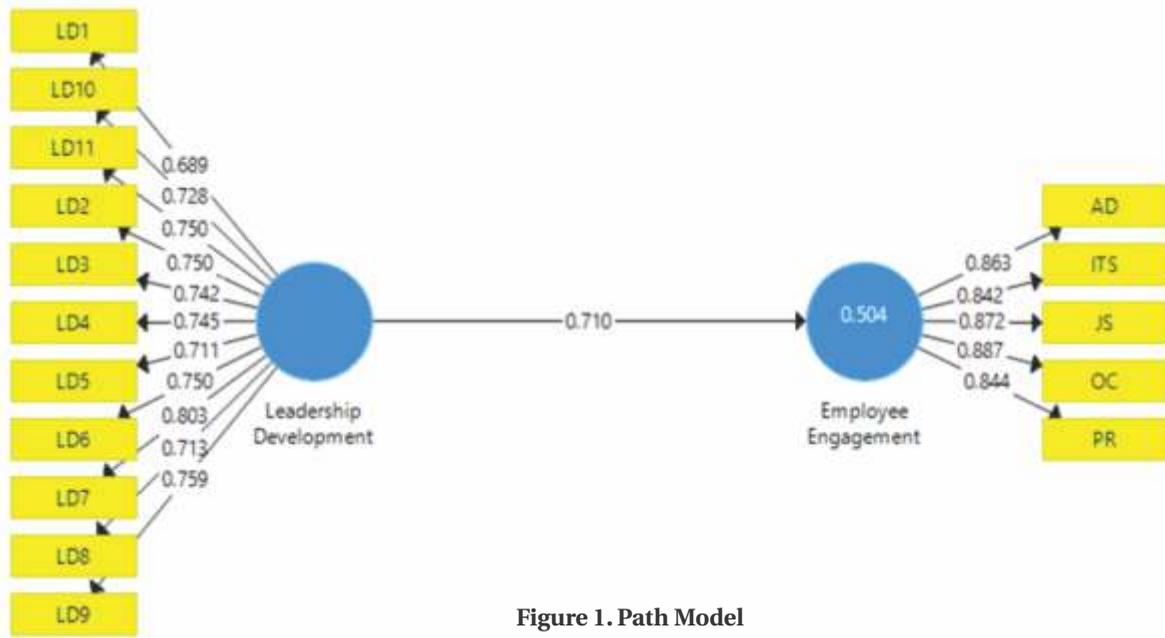
Figure 1. Path Model

after dropping out insignificant factors having factor loadings of less than 0.5, the model was analyzed by using Smart PLS 3.0 software. The loading for Emotional connect was negative, so, it was removed and the final model is displayed below in figure1.

ELIABILITY

In PLS, individual factor reliability was assessed by examining the loadings of the respective factors on their respective latent constructs (Hulland, 1999). A higher shared variance between construct and its measures is implied by higher loadings. In this study the criteria of 0.50 recommended by Hulland (1999) was adopted for the retention of factors.

In addition to Cronbach's (1951) alpha, the reliability of each variable was estimated through Fornell and Larcker's (1981) measure of composite reliability. This measure is adopted over Cronbach's alpha because it attempts to provide a better estimate of variance shared by the respective indicators and because it uses the item loadings obtained within the nomological network (Hair et al., 2006). In this study the composite factor reliability coefficients of the constructs are above 0.90 (see Table 3), which meet the standard of 0.70 as suggested by Fornell and Larcker (1981).

ONVERGENT VALIDITY

Convergent validity refers to the degree of agreement in two or more measures of the same construct (Camines and Zeller, 1979). Evidence of convergent validity was assessed

by inspection of variance extracted for each factor (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). According to Fornell and Larcker (1981), convergent validity is achieved, if the variance-extracted value is greater than 0.50. Results depict that the variance extracted all the variables ranged from 0.689 to 0.887 (Table: 4).

TABLE 4: VARIANCE EXTRACTED FOR EACH VARIABLE OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

	Employee Engagement	Leadership Development
AD	0.863	
ITS	0.842	
JS	0.872	
LD1		0.689
LD10		0.728
LD11		0.750
LD2		0.750
LD3		0.742
LD4		0.745
LD5		0.711
LD6		0.750
LD7		0.803
LD8		0.713
LD9		0.759
OC	0.887	
PR	0.844	

ISCRIMINANT VALIDITY

Discriminate validity is the degree to which any single construct is different from the other constructs in the model (Carmines and Zeller, 1979). Discriminant validity was assessed by the test provided by Fornell and Larcker (1981) in which the

TABLE 3: CRONBACH'S ALPHA, COMPOSITE RELIABILITY AND AVE

	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Employee Engagement	0.914	0.922	0.935	0.743
Leadership Development	0.917	0.918	0.930	0.549

TABLE 5: SHOWING THE DISCRIMINANT VALIDITY

	Employee Engagement	Leadership Development
Employee Engagement	0.862	
Leadership Development	0.710	0.741

pairwise correlations between factors obtained were compared with the variance extracted estimates for the constructs making up each possible pair. The Discriminate validity is adequate when constructs have an AVE loading greater than 0.5 meaning that at least 50% of the measurement variance was captured by the construct (Chin, 1998). In addition, discriminate validity is confirmed if the diagonal elements are significantly higher than the off-diagonal values in the corresponding rows and columns. The diagonal elements are the square root of the AVE score for each construct (i.e., Employee Engagement and Leadership development). These values are shown in Table 5. The result revealed that all the constructs possess Discriminant validity.

ODEL EVALUATION

On regressing the leadership development scores with employee engagement, it was evident that leadership development contributes to 50.2% of the variance explained in the employee engagement. This means that managers who invest in developing the leaders at all levels are able to successfully engage the employees in the organisations who in turn can successfully work towards the achievement of goals and objectives of the organisation. (Table 6)

TABLE 6: R SQUARE AND ADJUSTED R SQUARE

|	R SQUARE	R SQUARE ADJUSTED
Employee Engagement	0.504	0.502

ONCLUSION

The importance of employee engagement in helping to create resilient organisations that thrive in challenging conditions and are equipped to take advantage of more buoyant circumstances when they present themselves. Todays turbulent business environment calls for bold leadership. The role of managers and leaders continues to be the area of focus. Leadership has always played an important part in building employee engagement, we have observed that their role is even more crucial. The results of the study conclude that organisations which practice leadership is able to engage their employees more in comparison to those who do not follow. It is evident that there is a strong positive relationship between leadership development and employee engagement. Also, the causal model was tested in the paper which represents that leadership development impact employee engagement.

ANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

The results of the present study clearly depict that managers can enhance the employee engagement in their organisation by supporting a culture of leadership development at all levels. Organizations shall support individual growth of employees through leadership development practices, every employee must be informed of leadership development programmes in the organization, such sessions should be organized on regular basis. Top management should ensure that continuous leadership development takes place at each level and adequate resources are made available to augment the process. Such activities should be reviewed periodically and should be improved for better results. If organizations practice all this diligently then engagement will never be an issue to them.
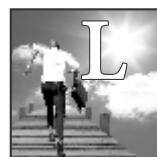
IMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

The study is limited to a sample of 300 employees of Delhi/NCR. The finding of this study, therefore, may not have universal applicability to other organizations. Also, since the study is conducted in India, its applicability is limited to other countries.

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