

# Comprehending Employee Engagement: Insights from Employees' Perspectives-Evidence from Jordan

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**Abstract** Organizations value employees for a competitive edge in a changing and challenging business landscape, emphasizing factors like engagement. Understanding diverse viewpoints is crucial to promoting a wide comprehension of phenomena and related variables, including exploring employee engagement from the employees' perspective. By considering employees' views, organizations gain valuable insights into what motivates employees and fosters a sense of engagement, leading to a positive workplace culture and strategic advantage. This qualitative study employed semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions to examine employee engagement based on participants' experiences and insights. Two hundred seventy employees who work at consumer goods stores in Jordan were interviewed to discuss employee engagement. Results showed that employees view engagement differently and indicated that employee engagement is, among other issues, a matter of perception. The perceptual dimensions were apparent from the participants' responses, as results reveal that employee engagement is subjective, lacks a common definition, and varies based on individual perceptions. Consequently, the participants submitted six definitions and four related aspects based on their estimation and perception. However, it is noticeable that despite these differences, perspectives seem more interconnected than contradictory. Further research and extensive surveys are needed to generalize these insights on employee engagement. Given the perceptual nature of engagement and the crucial role of employees, the study recommends that fostering an effective and productive engagement environment requires considering employees' perspectives, interpretations, and understandings of engagement.

**Keywords:** *Employee Engagement, Perception, Employees, Business Organizations*

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## 1. Introduction

A growing number of businesses believe hiring people is pointless if necessary actions are not taken to inspire them and value their workforce to give their best effort and engage with their organizations. Building trust and full engagement between employees and their organizations is critical in the competitive market. Setting employee engagement as a top priority fosters a positive work atmosphere necessary for conquering obstacles, handling challenges, and advancing the prosperity and profitability of an organization [1].

Understanding employee engagement is a debated topic and challenging due to varying perspectives. Employees, even within the same field or organization, may have diverse views on what it entails and how it is defined, and interpretations can vary based on context. Creating a cohesive environment that connects employee engagement with organizational elements—such as leadership, culture, and objectives—is essential for effectively directing organizational resources. A clear understanding of engagement processes can prevent misdirected initiatives

and ensure that efforts are targeted appropriately to achieve the desired outcomes. Comprehending engagement principles and drivers from the employees' perspectives is vital for cultivating engaged employees and successfully reaching organizational goals [2].

Since employees are at the core of the employee engagement process, this study aimed to explore how they perceive and understand engagement. It also aimed to clarify the reasons behind the lack of consensus on the term and improve our understanding of employee engagement.

The paper is structured into four sections: the first covers literature reviews on employee engagement; the second outlines the research methodology; the third focuses on results and discussion based on findings from semi-structured interviews and is further divided into two parts discussing meanings of employee engagement and related aspects, in addition to the recommendations, practical implications and contributions of the study; and a concluding section wraps up the paper.

## 2. Theoretical Perspective

A brief examination of the theoretical underpinnings of

employee engagement is required to bolster the argument. Employee engagement influences various business aspects, leading to positive workplace environments that benefit employees and employers. Understanding and fostering employee engagement is key for organizations to retain talent, boost productivity, and create a supportive workplace culture that values, motivates, and empowers employees. This connection leads to reduced turnover, improved productivity, better customer service, and increased profits, with engaged employees showing dedication, alignment with organization goals, and a sense of pride that fosters a positive 'we' organizational culture [3,4]. Engaged employees surpass their job requirements and actively contribute to their organization's achievements.

Diverse views on employee engagement underscore its complexity and the significance of factors like cognitive, perceptual, and emotional attributes. Many organizations recognize employees as crucial assets but neglect to prioritize their engagement. Despite emphasizing the value of employees, executives frequently do not follow through on their commitments [5]. Some still use outdated methods like high pay as the key motivation for staff, which proves inadequate in the modern business landscape [6]. Employees are not always primarily influenced by monetary and materialistic rewards. A workplace that effectively engages employees is often a powerful motivator. Otherwise, as Reference [7] claims, disengaged employees are more likely to quit, which undermines the motivation and effort of those who remain and raises the possibility of losing employees who might take their acquired skills with them.

Learning about engagement from employees' perspectives is a proactive step that aids organizations in promoting effective engagement. However, the way that employees understand the concept of employee engagement is often overlooked in the theoretical work of both scholars and practitioners. Rather, they utilize a list-generation method to identify internal and external environmental variables associated with engagement. Despite engagement's broad appeal, there are many misunderstandings, as there is no single, widely agreed-upon definition. Reference [8] states that the engagement concept has obstinately remained muddled, conflated, and confused, making it difficult to find a consensus and clear definition. The following interesting definitions will be highlighted as examples supporting this argument.

Reference [9] came up with an intriguing definition of employee engagement by forming it out of three dimensions/angles. They assert that engagement occurs when employees relate to the organization and participate through three angles: Say, Stay, and Strive in their work. "Say" is for employees to speak favorably of the organization; "stay" is to demonstrate an interest in and inclination to collaborate with the organization and comprehend its goals and objectives; and "strive" is to put in extra effort to meet both personal and organizational objectives. Other researchers, like [10,11], offered more in-depth explanations of the employee engagement concept, even though they shared some similarities with this definition.

Employee engagement, as defined by Reference [11], incorporates both philosophical and psychological dimensions. It refers to the process of individuals fully

investing themselves in their work roles. In this state of engagement, people express and utilize their physical, cognitive, emotional, and mental capacities while performing their roles. Accordingly, Reference [10] claims that work engagement is a psychological state that is motivated by three factors: vigour, dedication, and absorption. Employee engagement, according to Reference [12], occurs when staff members are mentally focused, emotionally connected, physically energized, and feel in line with the organization's mission.

Research emphasizes that work engagement is a multifaceted idea influenced by various social, psychological, individual, and professional factors [13]. Employee engagement is a subjective and internal concept related to perception, so different people—or even the same people in various situations—may interpret and explain it differently, though not always dialectically. Given that perception is correlated with elements like emotions and attitudes, this emphasizes the significance of the individual's dimension in employee engagement [14]. It primarily relies on employees' readiness and perception based on their cognitive and emotional attributes. Variances in perceiving, recognizing, and interpreting things are rooted in individual differences due to perception components [15]. As a result, no universally accepted definition of employee engagement currently exists.

This study is designed to gather direct insights from employees to identify key themes related to the concept of engagement. Although it is not expected to offer a universal definition, it will effectively highlight employees' perspectives and understanding of engagement. This supports the leadership role in fostering the engagement process by understanding the viewpoints of employees in a way that ensures the implementation of consistent strategies with the organization's policies and objectives while attempting to attain effective employee engagement.

### 3. Research Methodology

Since this study aims to comprehend the participants' thoughts, feelings, and perceptions regarding employee engagement, it has adopted a qualitative methodology bolstered by quantitative analysis. In the social sciences, phenomenological interviews are commonly used to gather data to analyze participants' real-life and practical experiences, aiming to reveal detailed information about participants' experiences and reactions to the phenomenon under study without intervention from the researcher. Open-ended personal interviews were employed as the method of data collection. Open-ended questions are constructive because they give interviewees the freedom to respond in their own words. According to Reference [16], the primary objective of phenomenological interviews is to provide a direct description of a particular situation or event as it is experienced, free of any interpretations or explanations of causality.

The study utilized face-to-face, semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions to gather information from participants. This method allows researchers to focus on the study's main subject while participants can express themselves freely. Through face-

to-face interviews, observers can benefit from body language, which is crucial for individual variables like perception and experience. Reference [17] stresses that observation is inherent in face-to-face interviews, enhancing the depth of data collection. Furthermore, data from semi-structured interviews is richer and easier to code. Compared to open-ended questionnaires, Reference [18] found that almost all interview data could be coded, but only 42% of questionnaire data could.

The study was conducted using data collected from 270 employees working at consumer goods stores in Jordan who took part in a conversation regarding the concept of employee engagement and associated elements. As participating in the study required previous consent from employees' supervisors (i.e., participants' supervisors), supervisors were approached in person for permission. The recruitment strategy included personal contacts and a snowball technique. This technique (i.e., snowball) effectively got many participants nominated by supervisors and colleagues. Participants were asked to dedicate an hour for interviews and provided with research details. Initially, 285 nominated participants were invited, but 30 withdrew, resulting in a final count of 270 participants. A key question was developed and asked to interviewees: What does employee engagement mean to you? Can you give an example? To examine the validity of the questions in achieving the study's objectives, the researcher enlisted five pilot participants from the same field.

The study employed an inductive phenomenological approach to analyze the data, identifying and organizing emerging themes into categories. These categories were based on the participants' themes rather than pre-established ones, and some quantitative analysis was included to provide clearer illustrations and enhance understanding. In addition, hermeneutics was used to delve into participants' knowledge of issues related to employee engagement, revealing that some participants unintentionally viewed aspects, impacts, and related variables as definitions of employee engagement. In qualitative research, hermeneutics entails interpreting themes, concepts, ideas, texts, social phenomena, and contradictions or conflicting viewpoints that affect how literature and human behavior are understood [19]. It enables the researcher to examine and analyze interview data within its context.

## **4. Results and Discussion**

The participants showed diverse perspectives, insights, and interpretations about employee engagement yet did not contradict one another. The results reinforce the stance of the absence of a universally agreed definition and single consistent features of employee engagement, asserting that perception is the primary factor driving this issue. Perception, being inherently subjective and influenced by various factors, varies from person to person. This variability mirrors the variety of interpretations of the concept of employee engagement itself. Participants' responses showed variation, even though there was broad agreement that engagement is an internal feeling and emotion. This could be interpreted as the first station subtly indicating the relationship between

perception and employee engagement since internal feeling is a key component of perception. The participants provided six definitions of employee engagement and four associated aspects that show this engagement. The definitions or synonyms offered by participants include team engagement, professional identity and organizational engagement, employee involvement, ethical and moral engagement, a mixture of environmental and social elements, and employee engagement as organizational citizenship.

### **4.1. Employee Engagement Conceptualization**

Participants' responses showed variation, even though there was broad agreement that engagement is an internal feeling and emotion. This could be viewed as the first station subtly indicating the relationship between perception and employee engagement since internal feeling is a key component of perception. The participants showed diverse perspectives, insights, and interpretations about employee engagement yet did not contradict one another. They provided six definitions of employee engagement and four associated characteristics or aspects that show this engagement. The definitions or synonyms offered by participants include team engagement, professional identity and organizational engagement, employee involvement, ethical and moral engagement, a mixture of environmental and social elements, and employee engagement as organizational citizenship.

#### **4.1.1. Employee Engagement is Team Engagement**

The participants defined employee engagement as an internal sensation made up of the mental and emotional bonds employees have with their colleagues. According to them, the organization is a system comprising groups of workers. They therefore believe that true employee engagement is being a part of a team where employees feel at ease and consistent. One of the participants clarified this by saying that since they work in teams the majority of the time, it will be detrimental to all team members' emotional and mental well-being if there are frequent conflicts and a lack of integration. They believe this is the main reason people might become disengaged and decide to leave the company—or at least consider doing so—to avoid this toxic team. According to their viewpoint, team and employee engagement are two sides of the same coin. Consequently, they believe that symmetrical and consistent teamwork is the secret to obtaining employee engagement and fostering emotional and mental integration.

The participants in this perspective identified and agreed with two key points from the literature: the core definition of organizations and the social aspect in Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Many researchers view an organization as a group of people working collaboratively. It typically consists of a large team, which may include several sub-teams. According to research, when workers have the backing of a cooperative and collaborative team, they are more likely to be innovative, encourage personal involvement and communication, be more engaged and satisfied at work, cultivate a sense of trust and camaraderie, and experience less stress [20]. When employees feel connected and have a sense of belonging

in their team, it enhances job satisfaction and engagement with the organization. This connection makes employees feel valued and fosters deeper emotional ties with colleagues and shared goals. Research shows that a strong sense of team belonging can improve employee performance and is a key factor in retention [21]. This aligns with Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory when he emphasizes the importance of belonging and connection as an essential social need that ranked as the third requirement in the hierarchy [22].

However, some scholars, such as [23,24], disagree with this definition, arguing that while employee engagement is essential for overall team engagement and vice versa, the two concepts are not identical. An employee might be dedicated to their work and organization without being highly engaged with their teammates. Additionally, certain tasks are more individualistic and do not necessitate teamwork. Employee engagement, as they suggest, relates to an individual's connection with work and the organization, while team engagement emphasizes group cooperation and teamwork.

#### 4.1.2. Employee Engagement is Professional Identity and Organizational Engagement

Employee engagement is a crucial aspect of organizational engagement, and the two concepts are closely linked. Some participants even view them as interchangeable. They argue that employees are integral to organizations and that feelings of belonging, commitment, and engagement are often equated with organizational engagement due to their connection to work. Conversely, other participants emphasized the distinctiveness of employee engagement, suggesting that it is more task-oriented and incorporates personal values. They believe it is driven by internal motivations, while organizational engagement revolves around the organization's values. The key distinction lies in the extrinsic and intrinsic attitudes toward the organization.

Proponents of employee engagement argue that it represents an inherent emotion that fosters a sense of unity and integration that extends beyond the organization. Engaged employees demonstrate loyalty in various ways within the organization, not solely to the organization itself. Those who viewed organizational and employee engagement as similar noted that both involve interaction with leadership. Engaged employees express loyalty through various avenues within the organization, not necessarily directed towards the organization itself. Their dedication often stems from team dynamics, personal values, and the quality of their work. As employee engagement deepens, transitioning into organizational engagement occurs as cognitive, emotional, and behavioral connections develop [25]. This alignment includes beliefs about the organization's culture, leadership, and overall mission, demonstrating a strong sense of unity. When individuals prioritize their involvement, commitment, and connection to work and organizational goals over personal interests, then this blend of employee engagement and organization engagement emerges to be one concept with a similar key focus.

Furthermore, employee engagement is cited by participants as a social identity in which they believe that their work and the organization are integral parts of who

they are and what makes them unique. According to their argument, complete employee engagement can only be achieved when their identities, as well as those of the organization and their line of work, are integrated and harmonious. Professional identity and organizational engagement, as they claimed, are two aspects of employee engagement.

Researchers, like References [26,27], concur with this perspective in the literature and propose that an employee's professional and organizational identity is how they are recognized in the community, making their organizations and/or professions one of their key personal characteristics. It is a social identity that encompasses employees' ideas and aspirations for their careers and how they understand and embrace the values, beliefs, and behaviors of their organizations. Employee engagement, as Reference [28] suggest, is a vital and intrinsic attitude that demonstrates employees' enthusiasm and commitment to their jobs and loyalty to the organization.

#### 4.1.3. Employee Engagement is Employee Involvement

"Engagement" and "involvement" are frequently used interchangeably in language dictionaries to mean the same thing. From a management standpoint, each of these terms has a unique meaning, despite their close relationship and similarities. In this context, many participants used "involvement" to refer to "engagement" and vice versa. According to them, employee engagement is the degree of dedication and involvement employees have for their organizations. It displays their commitment to accomplishing the aims and objectives of the company as well as their passionate investment in their work, where employees combine their obligations and duties in their positions with their sentiments toward the organization.

In this regard, researchers such as [29] and [30] agree with the participants and argue that workers are considered "engaged" when they have a positive attitude toward their organizations. They also stress that increased management-staff involvement on important issues and a true sharing of responsibilities are necessary for meaningful employee engagement. According to Reference [11], employees use their physical, mental, and emotional selves, among other aspects of themselves, in their work. When employees believe in themselves to perform their jobs, trust and feel a sense of belonging to their workplace, their performance is more affected. Engagement involves using the best aspects of self to enhance involvement and the relationship between the employee's self and the organization. As [11] added, employee engagement is actively being involved in tasks, maintaining cognitive focus, and building supportive connections.

While there is a thin line between employee involvement and employee engagement, many researchers, such as [31] and [1], differentiate involvement as an active contribution to goals and engagement as emotional connection and loyalty. They point to employee engagement as a motivational dimension that encourages employees to perform their best with a positive attitude towards their work. They comprehend and align with the organization's values and goals.

However, even though some participants admit that the concepts of employee involvement and engagement are

somewhat related, they still think they are somewhat different. They suggested that compared to employee involvement, employee engagement is more comprehensive and profound. They asserted that engagement includes involvement, viewing it as a deeper state of mind with practical involvement being a part of it. They contend that while employee involvement does not always imply or have engagement, employee engagement does require involvement. Therefore, while an involved employee is not always an engaged employee, an engaged employee is typically an involved employee. In essence, employee involvement is the active pursuit of the organization's objectives, while employee engagement is the acceptance of its values, goals, and overarching vision.

#### **4.1.4. Employee Engagement is Ethical and Moral Engagement**

Employee engagement is a broad concept that encompasses employees' moral commitment to an organization and their desire to support its growth and success. According to some participants, moral and ethical behavior at work that motivates staff to improve performance and promote organizational development is what is meant by employee engagement. From an ethical standpoint, when workers sign a contract to work for an organization, it indicates that they are committed to the company and its principles. Employee engagement ought to be a behavioral requirement that employees must adhere to.

Other participants emphasized ethical standards as a foster factor and a means for employee engagement, but not necessarily a component of employee engagement. They also believe that ethical measurement is important when dealing with the organization. They clarified that working toward the organization's goals and objectives is an ethical issue. However, this does not mean that the employee engages with the organization. They believe that employee engagement is a multifaceted and far more complex issue that is tied to employees' attitudes, values, cultures, mindsets, and ways of thinking rather than just procedures and actions. Whereas, ethical commitment, as they see it, is behavior that stems from fulfilling the employment contract, complying with organizational mandates, striving as a moral obligation to achieve goals, and upholding its standards.

Research indicates that engaged workers are more likely to have an exceptional work ethic and attitude toward their positions and the organization than disengaged employees are. Their moral and emotional dedication to their organizations is the reason for this attitude, as their sense of ethics makes them more productive and respectful of their work and the goals and regulations of their organizations [32,33].

#### **4.1.5. Employee Engagement is a Combination of Environmental and Social Elements**

Some participants defined employee engagement as a unique combination of two key aspects. From their perspective, these aspects/elements together create a comprehensive understanding of what employee engagement entails. These elements include the following: environmental aspects, which encompasses a supportive environment characterized by encouragement, an open-door policy, and cooperation between employees and

management. Social atmosphere refers to the collaborative spirit and strong relationships that exist among teams and employees within the organization.

In this regard, Reference [34] has demonstrated how corporate social responsibility along with environmental and social initiatives contribute to an organization's favorable reputation and are positively associated with the meaning of employee engagement. Furthermore, they emphasize the significance of environmental and social dimensions in shaping employees' perceptions and interpretations of sustainability, involvement, and engagement.

#### **4.1.6. Employee Engagement is An Organizational Citizenship**

Some participants claimed that employee engagement is a typical example of organizational citizenship, which is the voluntary behavior of an employee who feels a sense of unity with the organization, management, and objectives. They believe that when employees are engaged with their organization, it becomes more like a home than just a workplace, giving them a sense of organization belonging rather than belonging to a job.

In this context, Reference [35] support this perspective when they describe employee engagement as a sense of citizenship where employees carry out duties or responsibilities beyond their call of duty for the good of their organization as part of their feelings of citizenship. This involves prioritizing the organization's interests over their own and embodying qualities like conscientiousness, benevolence, and generosity, acting as good citizens willingly.

## **4.2. Aspects Associative and Interconnected with Employee Engagement**

Some participants (188 participants) inadvertently highlighted various factors that contribute to the concept of employee engagement while trying to define it. By adopting a hermeneutic approach, it seems that these insights are more representative of the influences, aspects, or related variables that lead to employee engagement and some intrinsic outcomes (i.e., job satisfaction) rather than precise definitions of the concept itself. Although variables such as happiness, satisfaction, self-esteem, and well-being are distinct, they are interconnected and exhibit relationships that range from causal to associative with employee engagement. Clarifying these responses is crucial as misunderstanding these variables and treating them as synonymous with employee engagement could lead to misdirected efforts, ultimately influencing the organization's initiatives and priorities in achieving employee engagement.

### **4.2.1. Engagement versus happiness: A durability issue**

Engagement among employees does not equate to happiness; despite both being crucial, they are not synonymous. While happiness is vital, it does not guarantee employee dedication or a goal-driven work ethic. Managers often focus on employee happiness, yet this does not always translate to sustained commitment. It fluctuates rapidly and is not indicative of long-term

commitment. For example, a raise might momentarily increase happiness, but true engagement reflects a deep, enduring connection with the company beyond fleeting emotions. According to Reference [36], engagement is closely tied to an employee's positive mental health and well-being, which includes emotions such as happiness, pleasure, and enthusiasm. However, while happiness can motivate engagement, it does not define it.

#### **4.2.2. Employee Engagement and Employee Satisfaction: A Matter of Fulfilling Needs and Requirements**

Some participants view employee engagement as a result of job satisfaction, asserting that without job satisfaction, there can be no engagement. In contrast to this viewpoint, Reference [12] demonstrated that engagement encompasses more than just job satisfaction. Employees, who are physically active, emotionally invested, mentally focused, and feel a sense of alignment with the agency's mission are said to be fully engaged, regardless of whether or not they are fully satisfied.

Participant engagement may not always be reflected in employee satisfaction, which is frequently predicated on fulfilling individual needs and demands. Unlike satisfaction, which is frequently superficial, engagement is more profound and reflects a sense of belonging and commitment to the workplace. Engaged employees go beyond mere satisfaction by feeling like citizens and valued members of the organization. Comparing working conditions can sometimes lead to satisfaction, but it does not necessarily drive employees to go above and beyond. Satisfied workers may not be as motivated to excel, while engaged employees are productive and take responsibility. For example, a raise can momentarily boost satisfaction and happiness but doesn't guarantee lasting engagement with the company. In general, [37] found that when organizational goals align with employees' desires, satisfaction, and aspirations, employee engagement results.

#### **4.2.3. Employee Engagement and Well-being: Commitment Versus Privileges**

While employee engagement focuses on how workers feel about their role, their work, and their value within the organization, employee well-being deals with how workers feel about themselves. Employee happiness and satisfaction may rise as an outcome of improved well-being, but engagement is not always the outcome. It is more about the comfort and privileges of the employee than it is about their involvement and relationship with the company. Although engagement is not always the result, increased well-being may lead to an increase in employee happiness and satisfaction. Furthermore, employee engagement is associated more with the ability for employees to be present, focused, and energized while feeling connected to them. Businesses that embrace engagement take on an energy level that results in consistent improvement and growth and ultimately.

Many organizations focus on measuring and evaluating their employees' engagement, while others focus on improving their workers' well-being, happiness, and satisfaction. However, when companies improve both sides by combining satisfaction, happiness, self-esteem, and well-being with engagement, it is a powerful

combination that, in many cases, creates exponential outcomes. Furthermore, this combination highlights the causality and mutual relationship between engagement and other variables. According to [38]. Employee engagement and other associated outcomes, including productivity, retention, absenteeism rates, and general organizational citizenship behavior, are strongly correlated with employee well-being.

#### **4.2.4. Engagement and Self-esteem: A Matter of Self-actualization**

Unlike engagement, self-esteem may result from dynamic variables that are more malleable. Getting a promotion, advancing in your career, and getting some incentives can help employees feel better about themselves. However, engagement exceeds self-esteem feelings to the level of self-actualization where employees unite with their organizations as one entity. As engagement is more closely linked to work values than work status, self-esteem and job satisfaction are more closely related and have a clear situational relationship than self-esteem and engagement. Employee engagement is a state that frequently persists after they quit their jobs for retirement or any other legitimate reason. Organizations through employee engagement recognize the importance of the workforce, as the most successful companies understand that their people are their greatest asset that fuels sustainable business growth. Employee engagement, according to Reference [24], is a steady and joyful motivational and emotional state of fulfillment marked by high levels of achievement and activation.

An explanation of employee engagement from a motivational standpoint has been attempted by numerous scholars. They argue that employee engagement is closely linked to content motivation theories, particularly Maslow's hierarchy of needs. This theory emphasizes the significance of morale and non-material incentives in the workplace. By prioritizing social and moral factors over material rewards, organizations can promote long-term engagement instead of merely achieving short-term gains that address basic needs [9]. To inspire and motivate employees effectively, organizations should focus on satisfying higher-level needs, such as social connections, self-esteem, and self-actualization. Additionally, they should tailor their strategies to meet the diverse needs of their employees [39].

Regarding the four aforementioned aspects, the Towers Watson Engagement Model provides a useful example to comprehend how participants linked different elements to employee engagement. This model outlines three crucial components for sustained engagement: Employee Willingness, Enablement, and Energy. Employee willingness refers to the desire, self-motivation, and readiness of employees to exceed expectations. Enablement emphasizes the importance of providing the necessary tools and support to enable optimal performance. Energy reflects the need for a supportive work environment that promotes well-being and encourages full engagement [40]. Participants' definitions of employee engagement were associated with these three components from the Towers Watson model, describing them as aspects and manifestations of engagement rather than strictly formal definitions.

Ultimately, as the results indicated, the interpretations and definitions demonstrated by the participants reaffirm the link between perception and the multifaceted insights and nature of employee engagement and the lack of a universal definition of engagement. Quantitatively speaking, the results yielded the following statistical data about the meanings and aspects of employee engagement:

**Table 1. The employee engagement concept as revealed by participants**

Themes (Employee Engagement Conceptualization)	Frequency (X=270)	Percentage
Employee Involvement	91	33.7%
Professional Identity and Organizational Engagement	60	22.2%
Team Engagement	48	17.8%
Organizational Citizenship	29	10.7%
Employee engagement is ethical and moral engagement	24	8.9%
Mixture of Environmental and Social Elements	18	6.7%

**Table 2. Aspects associated with the concept of employee engagement as reported by the participants**

Themes (Aspects Related to Employee Engagement)	Frequency (X=188)	Percentage
Employee Engagement and Employee Satisfaction	96	0.51
Employee Engagement and Well-being	49	0.26
Engagement versus happiness	30	0.16
Engagement and self-esteem	13	0.07

The variety of perspectives on employee involvement challenges our comprehension of the topic. The findings indicate that this perceptual feature is the fundamental cause of such complexity. Employees' opinions of the importance of engagement have a direct impact on their level of involvement and reaction to engagement activities. Consequently, employers must consider employee perspectives when striving to create a meaningful work environment that fosters engagement. Understanding what enhances employee engagement is crucial, as a one-size-fits-all approach to motivation is ineffective. This variability is partly due to differing perceptions among employees. Leaders should be aware that engagement strategies that are effective for some individuals might not have the same impact on others.

Psychological literature provides clear evidence about how individual differences—shaped by aspects such as culture, values, and background—affect engagement levels. Reference [11] suggested that these individual differences influence a person's nature, which, in turn, affects their propensity to engage or withdraw. Additionally, perception and personality are significant factors that influence how individuals respond, thereby shaping their engagement.

The results make it clear that employees' readiness to engage is closely linked to the presence or absence of certain key factors. Recognizing and prioritizing these factors as perceived by employees is essential for fostering effective engagement strategies.

## 5. Recommendations, Practical Implications, and Limitations

### 5.1. Recommendations

Employee engagement is a subjective concept, interpreted based on individual perception. Understanding perception components helps recognize the reasons behind differences in identifying the concept. Organizations should prioritize the human element to foster an effective engagement process. To enable organizations to implement successful initiatives for full engagement, it is essential to consider and value employees' opinions and their comprehension and definition of the employee engagement concept.

### 5.2. Practical Implications

The results offer organizations a framework to grasp employee perceptions of engagement that is vital for creating a conducive engagement atmosphere. They highlight the diversity in how engagement is understood and underscore the importance of incorporating employees' viewpoints for successful engagement strategies. First, the results highlighted the perceptual dimension of engagement, thus the key role of the human element in the engagement process. Second, based on the perceptual dimension of engagement, results explain why there is no universal definition of the employee engagement concept.

### 5.3. Limitations

Comparing engagement results across different contexts is challenging due to variations in individual perceptions and environmental factors. Due to time constraints and the particular nature of this study, which tackled perceptions and thus required conducting in-depth personal interviews, the sample size (i.e., the number of participants) was slightly limited; hence, a larger sample is needed for generalizability. In addition, perception is a wide variable with multiple components, such as context and culture; tackling all these variables requires extensive time, expenses, and effort. This highlights the need for further investigation, as perception is vital to employee engagement. More research is necessary to expand the study with a larger sample size, requiring additional time and resources.

## 6. Conclusion

The study highlighted the subjective and perception-influenced nature of employee engagement while presenting a range of opinions on the topic. Based on their estimations and perceptions, participants outlined six definitions and four related aspects of employee engagement, stressing the perceptual dimension of employee engagement. These multiple interpretations underscore how crucial it is to consider all perspectives to promote a conducive atmosphere for full engagement. The leadership's awareness of employees' perspectives facilitates the application of successful strategies for fostering a cohesive engagement environment that takes into account employees' perspectives and helps

organizations align these perspectives with the organization's policies, goals, and objectives.

The results demonstrated that divergent opinions do not always equate to and are not necessarily synonymous with inconsistency. The participants displayed varying definitions and viewpoints on employee engagement, which were distinct but compatible. In some instances, they appeared to complete one another rather than have entirely distinct meanings.

Perception is a deep, individualistic, subjective, and culturally constructed issue. Relevant research considering different contexts, employee levels, or geographic locations may offer new insights into employee engagement. This includes enlarging the sample size for greater generalizability.

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