

# IMPLICATION OF TENURE ON EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT: A REVIEW

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## Abstract

Association between tenure and engagement at the workplace has been experienced by all working groups, where lesser tenured people try to make their strong foot hold in the organization, the longer tenured people enjoy certain trustworthiness, credibility and advantage over lesser tenured people. These behavioral differences related to two dimensions of tenure i.e. longer and lesser tenured employees have implication on employee's engagement at their workplace. Job tenure is nothing but the measure of the length of duration, an employee has been working under a current employer. Job tenure of an employee is essential for the individual's career growth and is often considered as basis for recruitment and hiring of new employees by employers. While Employee engagement is more than that of mere participation in activities, games, and events in the organization, it is the degree to which employees feel enthusiastic and passionate about their employments, are focused on the association, and put optional efforts into their assigned task at work. Employee engagement foster organizational performance, highly Engaged employees consider the need of the organization and try to understand their purpose of existence, how, where they fit in. The Organizations having highly engaged employees has competitive edge over their competition. Such organization have more earning per share (EPS) and have tendency to recover more quickly after economical and financial crises. Also, employee Engagement plays a key role when organization needs to grow and innovate. The tenure curve shows a trend of an employee engagement with respect to their tenure, which is observed in various organizations, it is nothing but a U-shaped curve, which is found in every organizations, demonstrates changes in employee engagement over their work duration in a similar organization. According to tenure curve, it has been found that newest employees in the organization are initially highly engaged, takes a nosedive, decreases and levels off, and finally increases on achieving longer tenure of their work life. On the basis of literature review, this paper throws a light on different factors and psychological perspective related to tenure and, how it effects the employee's engagement at the workplace through tenure curve.

**Keywords;** Tenure, Employee engagement, Psychological safety, Tenure curve

## INTRODUCTION

Job tenure is nothing but the measure of the length of duration, an employee has been working under a current employer. While, Employee engagement is more than that mere participation in activities, games, and events in the organization, it is the degree to which employees feel enthusiastic and passionate about their employments, have focused on the association, and put optional efforts into their assigned task at work. The Association between tenure and engagement in the workplace has been experienced by all working groups, where lesser tenured people try to make their strong foothold in the organization, the longer tenured people enjoy certain trustworthiness, credibility and advantage over lesser tenured people. These behavioral differences related to two dimensions of tenure i.e. longer and shorter duration tenured employees have implication on employee engagement in their workplace. Through the in-depth literature review, this paper tries to explain the implication of tenure on employee engagement taking into account various psychological perspectives and tenure curve.

## RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN JOB TENURE AND EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

The Job tenure is nothing but the measure of the length of duration, an employee has been working under a current employer. The Job tenure of an employee is essential for the individual's career growth and is often considered as basis for recruitment and hiring of new employees by employers. According to Kahn's (1990) described employee's engagement as "the harnessing of organization members' selves to their work roles; in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances." While, employee disengagement is described as "the uncoupling of selves from work roles; in disengagement, people withdraw and defend themselves physically, cognitively, or emotionally during role performances" (p. 694). Following literature review will shed light on the relationship between job tenure and employee engagement.

According to Ferguson, (2007); Truss et al., (2006), factor like employee's experience with the current employer supposed to impact their work engagement. In the similar study it has been found that work tenure in similar

organization is inversely related to employee engagement in that organization, i.e. longer the duration of work in a similar organization, lesser will be the employee engagement.

The 2006 CIPD survey on employee engagement is also aligned with similar outcome of Truss et al., (2006), i.e. inverse relationship between employee engagement and work tenure. The findings of the survey emphasize the vitality of continually advancing and the understanding of employee engagement in the workplace.

Swaminathan and Ananth (2011), also confirmed the inverse relationship between employee's experience in the similar organization and their engagement in the organization, thus, supported the difference based on the experience of the employee.

Coffman and Gonzalez-Molina (2002) also found that employee engagement decreases with increase in the time duration of the employees. They stated that employees are highly engaged during the initial 6 months of their work experience, but tend to drop later, and take a significant dive in their engagement after ten years of work experience in a similar organization.

Avery et al. (2007) after analyzing data collected from 901 employees, finds that employee engagement is negatively correlated to work tenure with the similar organization, thereby, confirming the outcome of the above studies.

However, according to a study of Perrin (2003), employee engagement is a continuous process and increases with the support of organizations by providing meaningful and emotionally enriching work experience to their employees resulting in an increase in employee engagement in the workplace. Thus, employee experience or long tenure in similar organization has no significant impact on employee engagement.

Rice, J. K. (2009), the findings of the study suggests that job tenure does not moderates the association between the dimensions of job satisfaction and work engagement. In other words, dedication and vigor were influencing the satisfaction and work of the coworkers and regardless of any variance in job tenure.

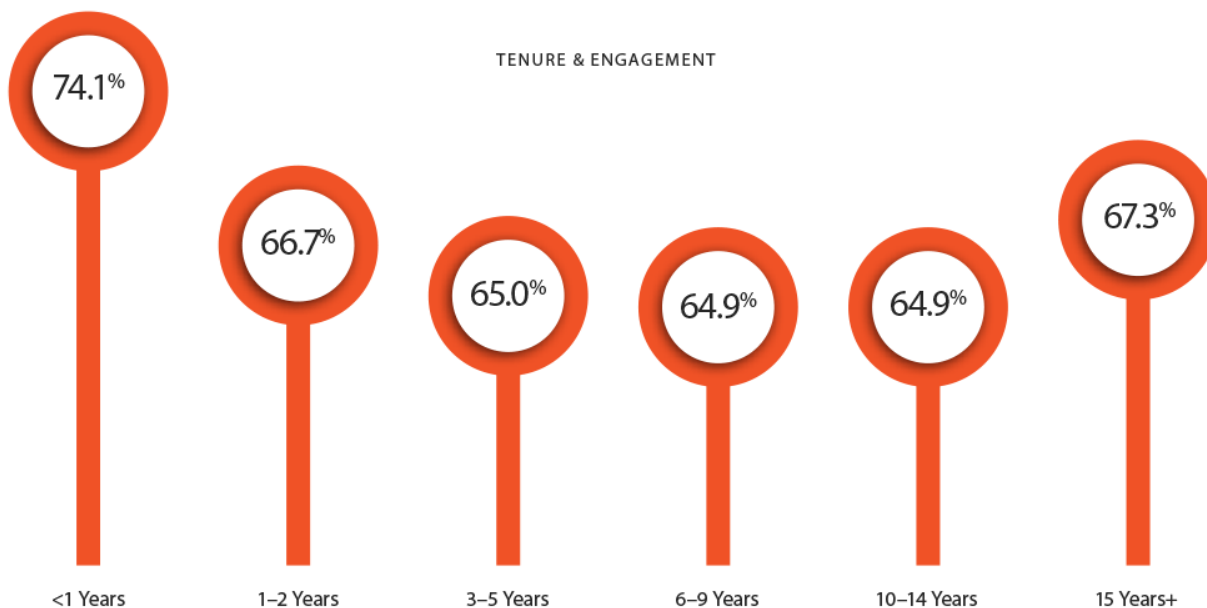
Chen & kao. (2013), the findings of the study confirmed that the association between job performance and burnout are moderated by tenure and employee engagement. The results of the study also proved that the job tenure and work engagement are significant positive relationship with the job performance

Baker, R.A. (2013), the findings of the study suggests that those who job tenure of five or less than five years is highly engaged in comparison to other groups. Employees with the tenure of more than 16 years in a similar organization were more likely to engage than the group of employees with tenure of 6 and 15 years in a same organization. The study also suggested that the employees with tenure of more than 16 years are more engaged because they consider the organization as a family and feel strongly associated with it.

On the basis of literature review, it has been found that the behavioral differences related to two dimensions of tenure i.e. longer and shorter duration tenured employees in the similar organization has significant implication on employee engagement in their workplace.

## TENURE CURVE

The tenure curve shows a trend of an employee engagement with respect to the duration of the time spent in the similar organization, i.e. their tenure, such relationships is observed in almost all the organizations. The tenure curve is nothing but a U-shaped curve, which is found in every organization, demonstrates changes in employee engagement over their work duration under a same employer or the organization. According to Harris, D. (2017), in tenure curve, it has been found that newest employees in the organization are initially highly engaged, takes a nosedive, decreases and levels off, and finally increases on achieving longer tenure of their work life.



**Figure.1. U- shaped curve showing relationship between job tenure and employee engagement at the workplace**

**Source: Harris, D. (2017)**

According to the figure.1, In the first year of the employment in a new workplace higher levels of employee engagement are observed, which is associated with optimism, novelty and limitless possibilities. This is popularly known as “the honeymoon phase”.

During first to second year of the employment is the phase where employees get the reality check about the growth, exposure, learning potential and work.

While, 3 to 14 years of the employment is a phase where, most of the employees are hitting the ceiling of promotion, advancement, learning or acquiring certain skills or knowledge and therefore, they are least engaged in the organization.

Employees in last stage ( i.e. 15 years or after) are organization itself. Most of the employees at this stage are working at the top most of the hierarchy and possess a great influence and power in the workplace. They consider themselves as a parent and likely to support, protect and lead the organization through thick and thin and hence, their engagement is high at this stage.

## CONCLUSION

Employee engagement foster organizational performance, highly Engaged employees consider the need of the organization and try to understand their purpose of existence, how, where they fit in. the Organizations with highly engaged employees has a competitive edge over their competition. Such organization have more earning per share (EPS) and have tended to recover more quickly after economic and financial crises. Through the literature review it has been found that employee engagement has a negative relationship with the number of years of employment in the similar organization. However, certain studies have found a divergent outcome which is also confirmed by the tenure curve analysis, i.e. employee’s engagement is not only associated with the job tenure, but also with the psychological perception of the employee’s growth, exposure, learning possibilities, power, and position.

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