WHISTLE WHILE YOU WORK: PROFESSIONAL ENGAGEMENT

Professional engagement (also referred to as employee engagement) is a psychological state in which an employee demonstrates both a willingness to go above and beyond their normal job responsibilities to assist in organizational outcomes and to develop an emotional connection to their work. The concept of employee engagement has been studied by numerous researchers in recent years. One recent study has shown that the concept can be better understood when broken down into three subdimensions: (1) behavioral engagement, (2) emotional engagement, and (3) cognitive engagement (Shuck et al., 2017). In addition, researchers have demonstrated that (4) job satisfaction is another positive outcome that results when employees are engaged in the workplace (Ogbonnaya & Valizade, 2018).

1.   Behavioral Engagement

Behavioral engagement occurs when employees behave in a manner that they believe will have a positive effect on their job performance (Shuck et al., 2017; Macey & Schneider, 2008; Rich et al., 2010). It is a psychological state that is "forward moving" or "proactive." The behaviorally engaged employee often expresses a willingness to put in extra effort at their workplace prior to completing specific actions that benefit their organization (Macey & Schneider, 2008). If you were to ask a behaviorally engaged employee how they felt about their job, they would tell you that they are willing to push themselves beyond what is expected of them (Shuck et al., 2017).

2.   Emotional Engagement

When an employee experiences emotional engagement, they feel emotionally invested in the work that they do and are committed to ensuring that their organization and coworkers are successful (Macey & Schneider, 2008; Shuck et al., 2014, Shuck et al., 2017). The emotionally engaged employee feels an emotional connection to the people with whom they work and is a strong believer in the mission of the organization for which they work. They derive a great deal of personal meaning from the work that they do. They are typically eager to tell others that they take great pride in working for their organization and care deeply about its future.

3.   Cognitive Engagement

The third subdimension of employee engagement is cognitive engagement. This is the "intensity of mental energy" that is used by an employee to help an organization achieve positive outcomes (Rich et al., 2010; Shuck et al., 2014; Shuck et al., 2017). Cognitively engaged employees are capable of remaining attentive and focused while performing various activities in the workplace. Researchers have theorized that someone who is cognitively engaged is able to remain vigilant as they work so that they are able to complete the tasks they have been assigned successfully (Kahn, 1990; Shuck et al., 2017). They also have the ability to recognize when they should question their coworkers' decisions or provide their coworkers with

constructive criticism. This ability has the potential to enable everyone at the organization to achieve a common goal (Kahn, 1990).

4.   Job Satisfaction

A recent study determined the important role that high-performance work practices (HPWP) play in enabling employees to be both engaged in the workplace and satisfied with the work that they do (Ogbonnaya & Valizade, 2018). HPWP are HR practices that are designed to boost morale in the workplace (Appelbaum et al., 2000). Examples of HPWP include staff training sessions, performance evaluations, and team collaboration (Jiang et al., 2012; Zhang & Morris, 2014). When HPWP are implemented by organizations, employees often recognize that their employers care about their welfare. This sparks in them a sense of job satisfaction that keeps them engaged in the workplace. Job satisfaction is defined as "…the positive emotional state arising from one's assessment of one's workplace experiences" (Barling et al., 2003; Ogbonnaya & Valizade, 2018). An employee who experiences job satisfaction will tell you that they are satisfied with the recognition and support they receive from their colleagues and direct supervisors. They also feel valued by their organization and are satisfied with the opportunities they have been given to use their skills (Ogbonnaya & Valizade 2018).

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