

The Relationship between Talent Acquisition Strategies and Employee Engagement

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Abstract

This study explores the relationship between talent acquisition strategies and employee engagement. In today's competitive business landscape, organizations must strike a balance between talent acquisition strategies and employee engagement to succeed. Attracting qualified candidates, effective talent recruitment practices lay the groundwork for significant employee engagement, which is crucial for achieving organizational goals. A company's ability to attract and retain top talent is dependent on its talent acquisition strategy. When the right talent was detected and suited to the company culture. Thus, employees are more likely easier to be engaged. The relationship between talent acquisition strategies and employee engagement is a key driver of organizational success. Talent acquisition involves not only attracting qualified candidates but also ensuring that these individuals align with the organization's culture and long-term goals. This alignment leads to higher levels of engagement, which in turn benefits the organization through increased productivity, better job satisfaction, and improved retention. Therefore, businesses must view talent acquisition and employee engagement as interconnected and strategic processes that, when executed effectively, can propel the organization to achieve its goals and maintain a competitive edge in the market.

1. Introduction

Employee engagement is essential for enhancing workplace efficiency, increasing motivation, and reducing employee turnover. According to Sun and Bunchapattanasakda (2008), employee engagement is defined as a strong emotional and intellectual connection that employees develop towards their work, organization, or colleagues, driving them to exceed expectations. Engaged employees are more focused, productive, and goal-oriented, positively impacting organizational success.

Similarly, talent acquisition plays a pivotal role in aligning organizational goals with business success. It involves identifying, recruiting, and retaining individuals whose skills align with the company's needs, thereby ensuring competitiveness. According to Santosh (2019) talent acquisition describes a strategic process for attracting and nurturing exceptional talent to fill critical roles and sustain a competitive advantage. Its proactive nature enables organizations to identify candidates with the necessary skills (Viswanathan & Surya 2022). Human Resources must implement a methodical approach to ensure the selection of talent aligns with organizational objectives. This study focuses on identifying the talent acquisition strategies for employee engagement. Thus, to

determine whether the talent acquisition strategies have a relationship with employee engagement. The significance of this research will deeply narrow down the relationship of talent acquisition strategies and employee engagement. Ultimately, this can help an organization be more compatible with other organizations and contribute to achieving the organization's objectives and targets.

The manufacturing sector is one of the key contributors to Malaysia's economic development. The manufacturing value sector increased by 1.4 per cent in March 2024, marking a positive year-on-year trend for the third consecutive month, reaching RM158.4 billion, while the last month was RM146 billion. On a month-on-month comparison, the sales value improved by 8.3 per cent compared to February 2024 (DOSM, 2024). Manufacturing sectors contribute 23.4% to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of Malaysia's economy. MATRADE, in addition to the sectors that also contribute to the Malaysian economy are the services sector, construction sector, and agriculture sector (DOSM, 2024). The manufacturing sector is associated with production that uses machinery, equipment, raw materials, and labor workforce. Based on the Statistics of Employment by Economic activities, it has provided an encouraging rate of increase in manufacturing workers from 2019 to 2023. The number of employees in this sector has increased from 2,501,00 people in 2019 to 2,811,000 people in 2023 (DOSM, 2024). This number continues to increase to 2,911,00 people in 2024 with 1.4 percent increase (DOSM, 2024). Engaging their staff to ensure they remain motivated and excited about their tasks to ensure they can contribute to the organization's target and achieve the objective of the firm. Employee engagement is the level of emotional and psychological dedication that employees have towards their work, team, and organization. It refers to the work which people have a strong emotional attachment to their jobs, are driven to go above and beyond in their work (Little & Little, 2006).

Lower motivation in the workplace can cause factors such as loss of passion and unfinished tasks, diminished productivity, poor morale, and a poor workplace atmosphere, which can lead to failure to achieve key performance indicators. This also led to individuals lack enthusiasm for their work and fail to complete assigned tasks effectively, it can significantly impact overall performance and organizational success (Robertson-Smith & Markwick, 2009). This issue stems from various underlying factors, including disengagement, and ineffective leadership. So, it's important for an organization to identify the right engagement to create a good environment between employees and the organization. Kaur (2016) found that there are three types of engagement: engaged, non-engaged, and actively disengaged.

Keeping employees motivated in today's fast-paced, competitive workplace has become increasingly tough. This challenge originates from a variety of factors, including rising workplace demands, shifting employee expectations, and the influence of external pressures such as economic uncertainty. Employees usually demand more than just monetary compensation; they want meaningful work, recognition, growth opportunities, and a sense of community within their organizations. According to the Department of Statistics Malaysia (2024), the manufacturing sector employed 2.8 million people in 2023. This study is motivated by the need to address poor employee engagement within the organization.

Organizations must be cognizant of engaging their staff to ensure they remain motivated and excited about their tasks. This encompasses cultivating a constructive work environment, providing opportunities for professional growth, and ensuring transparent communication between management and employees. Organizations should prioritize cultivating an environment that appreciates employee contributions and well-being by providing flexible work arrangements, acknowledging achievements, and fostering a good work-life balance. By addressing these elements, organizations can raise employee motivation and improve productivity. The research conducted by the Malaysian E Commerce Journal (MECJ) on employee engagement refers to the emotional commitment and involvement of employees in their work and the organization, characterized by their motivation, satisfaction, and alignment with organizational goals (Budriene & Diskiene, 2020).

This research examines the relationship between talent acquisition and employee engagement. It also examines the criteria of talent acquisition strategies in organizations and the level of employee engagement in organizations. The scope includes the manufacturing sector, which applies talent acquisition and examines employee engagement in Johor Bahru. Quantitative research methods were employed to collect data, and SPSS was used to analyze the data. The questionnaire has been distributed to the employees involved in upper, middle, and lower management.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Employee Engagement

Employee engagement refers to the level of emotional and psychological commitment that employees have towards their work, team, and organization. It refers to the work where people have a strong emotional attachment to their jobs, are driven to go above and beyond in their work, and are committed to accomplishing the objectives and principles of the business (Little & Little, 2006). Employees who are engaged are ready to surpass their minimum job needs. Often seeking fresh challenges and ways to improve their performance, they

demonstrate excitement and initiative, contributing to company goals. Engaged employees support the purpose, vision, and values of their company. Their sense of purpose and fulfillment is enhanced by their obvious relationship with their jobs and the more general goals of the organization. Many advantages follow for companies from significant levels of employee engagement, including increased productivity, improved retention rates, enhanced customer service, and a more positive company culture. Organizations can enhance involvement and foster long-term success by cultivating an inspiring and supportive work environment.

2.2 Talent Acquisition

According to Viswanathan and Surya (2022), identifying and recruiting the right employees is a crucial element of an organization's business strategy and directly impacts its future performance. Thus, talent acquisition is important. Lack of suitable personnel is likely to result in decreased productivity, slow decision-making, and unmotivated staff for an organization. These components pose difficulties for an organization seeking to sustain stability in a highly competitive market. Talent acquisition is a strategic approach to recruiting that aims to identify, entice, select, cultivate, and retain exceptional personnel within an organization (Karunathilaka, 2020). Essentially, the process of recruiting exceptional individuals entails a systematized and meticulously orchestrated series of activities that the Human Resources department must undertake. Proactive talent acquisition is one of the most essential characteristics of the process. While it may appear challenging to fill critical positions within organizations, locating candidates with the aptitude and disposition to become leaders can be facilitated through a methodical approach to talent acquisition.

Acquiring and engaging great talent has been one of the typical issues faced by organizations (Preethi & Goud, 2024). Acquiring, attracting, selecting, and retaining exceptionally qualified individuals is referred to as talent acquisition. Consequently, talent acquisition constitutes a substantial proportion of the employee's experience. A job-related analysis of the factors of employee influence, talent acquisition, and negotiation. (Viswanathan & Surya 2022). The process of identifying, attracting, and employing the most qualified candidates for job positions within an organization is referred to as talent acquisition. This encompasses tasks such as candidate sourcing, interview facilitation, and providing job offers. The human resource manager is responsible for identifying prospective employees to fill vacant positions. This is a crucial matter to ascertain that the candidate satisfies the established criteria. Furthermore, apart from fulfilling the requisite criteria, it is imperative for the organization to highlight the candidate's aptitudes and knowledge that align with the organization's position. Individuals who fail to meet the organization's expectations will impede the organization's progress towards its goals and prevent the employee from realizing and contributing their full potential in their respective field.

2.3 Past Studies Relationship between Talent Acquisition Strategies and Employee Engagement

The relationship between talent acquisition strategies and employee engagement has garnered growing attention in both organizational research and practice. Efficient talent acquisition strategies are essential for both attracting and employing suitable individuals. They also have a significant impact on promoting high levels of employee engagement, which is associated with improved performance, increased retention, and enhanced overall organizational success.

According to Budriene and Diskiene (2020), it is essential to note that employees who align with the values and norms of their organization are more likely to be actively involved and efficient. Follow-up research has further supported this idea, indicating that when recruitment techniques target cultural compatibility, newly hired individuals assimilate more smoothly, experience a better sense of inclusion, and demonstrate increased levels of involvement. For instance, Hermina & Yosepha (2019) found that person-organization fit is a significant predictor of job satisfaction and engagement, suggesting that employees are more engaged when their values align with those of the organization.

Talent acquisition strategies and employee engagement have been extensively studied. Effective talent acquisition practices, such as prioritizing cultural fit, providing positive candidate experiences, implementing comprehensive onboarding programs, strong employer branding, promoting diversity and inclusion, continuous feedback, aligning skills and competencies, and communicating career development opportunities, all contribute to increased employee engagement. As firms navigate an increasingly competitive employment landscape, incorporating these methods into their talent acquisition processes will be vital to developing a dedicated, motivated, and engaged workforce.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

To fulfil the study's purpose, the researcher employs a quantitative approach. The study design is also aimed at eliciting the proper responses to the proposed study question (Jilcha, 2019). This is because the quantitative approach is more reliable and prepared for multiple-choice questions. Quantitative methods primarily involve statistical, numerical, or mathematical analysis of data collected through polls, surveys, questionnaires, or by modifying case study data using computing techniques. Quantitative research methods use numerical data and calculations to describe and quantify occurrences. The goal of study design is to provide researchers with a systematic approach to developing a thorough understanding of the relationship between talent acquisition and employee engagement.

3.2 Population and Sampling

The research population refers to all individuals or entities relevant to the study, including employees, organizations, and products. In this study, the target demographic is employees in the manufacturing sector in Johor Bahru, Johor, with a total population of 17,046. A simple random sampling method was employed, ensuring that each member had an equal chance of being selected, thereby yielding a representative sample. The study's main objective is to explore the relationship between talent acquisition strategies and employee engagement. The sample size, based on Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) table, is estimated at 375 respondents with a 95% confidence level.

A simple random sampling method was used in this study. Random sampling is defined as selecting subjects at random from a prospective pool of subjects, ensuring that each member of the population has an equal and independent chance of being included in the sample. Randomly selected individuals from the general community were chosen as a sample to be distributed and invited to complete questionnaires (Rudestam & Newton, 2014).

3.3 Research Instrument

Table 1 shows details of the instruments used in this study. There are three sections in the instruments, which refer to demographics from section A, independent variables from section B, and dependent variables from section C. The reliability of all the items was valid and acceptable.

Table 1 *Research instrument*

Variables	No. of Items	Sources
Demographics	5	-
Talent acquisition strategies	9	Hamza <i>et al.</i> (2021)
Employee engagement	7	Shee-Mun <i>et al.</i> (2012)

3.4 Data Collection

Researchers employ a variety of methods to collect data, including quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods, for conducting a study. However, for the purpose of this research, quantitative methods have been employed by the researcher as a means to collect data from a large number of respondents. Quantitative research emphasizes collecting and gathering numerical data and generalizing it across groups of people. It also explains a specific phenomenon. For instance, to determine the strategies of talent acquisition towards employee engagement. Moreover, findings based on the quantitative method have high validity and reliability because they use statistical measurements to validate and test results for reliability. An online questionnaire has been distributed to respondents to collect data for this study, as it is considered the most suitable and cost-effective method for gathering primary data from a large number of respondents. The questions designed for this questionnaire are based on the information gathered during the literature review to ensure that they were representative of talent acquisition strategies and employee engagement. This questionnaire consisted of three sections, which are demographic, talent acquisition strategies, and employee engagement. All the questions are closed-ended and adapted from published journals.

3.5 Data Analysis

Data analysis is the process of evaluating data using systematic and logical reasoning to look at each element of the given data. Data analysis in this research aims to identify the research results and determine whether the research meets its objective. SPSS is an abbreviation for Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, and it is used by various types of researchers for analyzing complex statistical data. The SPSS software package is made for the management and statistical analysis of social science data. Questionnaire data were examined, coded, and entered

into the SPSS software program after the data collection process was completed. Data collection from the main sources that informed the questionnaire was analyzed using descriptive and correlation analyses.

4. Results and Discussions

The researcher distributed the sets of questionnaires as e-forms to the manufacturing company that operates in Johor Bahru, Johor, Malaysia. This distribution strategy was in accordance with the guidance of Krejcie & Morgan (1970), who recommended a sample size of 375 for the study, as the population is a total of 17,046 manufacturing companies in Johor Bahru, Malaysia. As a result, the researchers received 267 successfully completed questionnaires. This indicates that the study's response rate was 71.02%.

4.1 Demographic Profiles

Table 2 reports demographic profiles, including gender, age, education qualification, ethnicity, and years of experience in the current company. As illustrated in Table 2, the majority were male (64.4%), 25 to 34 years old (46.1%), Chinese and Malay (41.9%), bachelor's degree (47.6%), and Years of experience with the current company 2-3 years (32.6%).

Table 2 Demographics profiles

Demographics	Classification	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	172	64.4
	Female	95	35.6
Age (years)	Below 25	25	9.4
	25 – 34	123	46.1
	35 – 44	50	18.7
	46 – 54	48	18.0
	55 and above	21	7.9
Education qualification	SPM	21	7.9
	Diploma	46	17.2
	Degree	127	47.6
	Master	50	18.7
	PhD	23	8.6
Ethnicity	Malay	112	41.9
	Chinese	112	41.9
	Indian	43	16.1
	Others	0	0
Years of experience with the current company	Less than 1	64	24.0
	2 – 3	87	32.6
	3 – 5	77	28.8
	More than 6	39	14.6

4.2 Descriptive Analysis

Table 3 presents the descriptive analysis of talent acquisition strategies and employee engagement. Firstly, the results show that the overall mean score for talent acquisition strategies is 3.80, indicating a high level of tendency. For the dependent variable, which is employee engagement, the overall mean is 3.84. Thus, it shows a high level of tendency. As a result, the descriptive analysis of employee engagement presents a strong and positive picture of employee engagement in manufacturing companies in Johor Bahru, Johor.

Table 3 Demographics profiles

Variables	Mean (μ)	Level
Talent acquisition strategies	3.80	High
Employee engagement	3.84	High

4.3 Correlation Analysis

Table 4 shows the overall result of Spearman's correlation analysis. Firstly, the result of Spearman's correlation coefficient, r is 0.663 and the p -value is <0.001 . This result presents a statistically highly significant and strong positive relationship between talent acquisition strategies and employee engagement.

Table 4 Result of Spearman's correlation analysis

	Talent acquisition strategies	
Employee engagement	Correlation coefficient	0.663**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<0.001
	N	267

5. Conclusions

The first objective of this study was to identify the talent acquisition strategies used in organizations to understand the strategies used to attract the right talent. As stated by Kotler and Keller (2019), a comprehensive analysis of these factors is crucial for developing effective strategies. It can be concluded that talent acquisition is a suitable method for attracting talented candidates. The high mean scores for the strategies provide strong evidence for additional investigation in the goals of future study. Thus, research objective 1 was achieved.

The second research objective was to determine the level of employee engagement within organizations. Using SPSS for data analysis, the mean and standard deviation were calculated based on the survey responses, which were part of the descriptive statistics for the dependent variables. According to Rogers (2003), employee engagement is essential because it reflects the degree to which employees feel connected to their roles and the organization, ultimately influencing organizational performance and outcomes. A high mean score in this context suggests that employees are highly engaged in their work and feel a strong sense of connection and commitment to their organization. This finding is significant because engaged employees tend to have better job satisfaction, are more productive, and are likely to remain with the company, reducing turnover rates. This high level of engagement could be attributed to various factors, such as the organization's effective communication practices, recognition systems, opportunities for growth and development, or the alignment between employees' values and the company's goals. Engaged employees are also likely to demonstrate higher levels of creativity, innovation, and problem-solving skills, all of which can contribute to an organization's success and competitive advantage.

The relationship between talent acquisition strategies and employee engagement is central to understanding how recruitment and hiring practices can influence employees' motivation and connection to their work. The result suggests that as organizations implement effective talent acquisition strategies, there is a corresponding increase in employee engagement. The Spearman correlation coefficient measures the strength and direction of the association between the variables. A value of $r = 0.663$ signifies a moderate to strong positive relationship, indicating that a more effective talent acquisition process leads to higher levels of employee engagement. The positive relationship between these variables can be explained through several factors. Effective talent acquisition strategies focus not only on identifying candidates with the right skills and experience but also on selecting individuals whose values, goals, and cultural fit align with the organization's mission. When candidates believe that their values and skills align with their job roles and the organization's culture, they are more likely to feel engaged in their work.

Additionally, when organizations take a thoughtful and strategic approach to talent acquisition, they often provide a more positive and structured onboarding experience, which can increase an employee's sense of belonging and connection to their role. A well-executed onboarding process can help new hires feel welcomed, supported, and empowered to contribute meaningfully to the organization, leading to higher engagement levels. Several researchers have explored this connection. For instance, Alansaari *et al.* (2014) emphasized that the right recruitment process, which focuses on hiring candidates who are not only skilled but also motivated and culturally aligned, can significantly enhance employee engagement. When employees perceive that their employers are invested in finding the right fit for their organization, they are more likely to feel valued and committed to their roles.

Moreover, employees who find meaningful work because of well-executed talent acquisition strategies tend to have a greater sense of purpose and fulfillment in their jobs. This, in turn, fuels higher levels of engagement, as employees feel their work is making a positive contribution to the organization. Engaged employees are more likely to be proactive, take ownership of their tasks, and remain committed to their roles, which benefits the organization in terms of productivity, morale, and retention.

In conclusion, this study supports the hypothesis that talent acquisition strategies have a positive relationship with employee engagement. The findings suggest that organizations that focus on effective recruitment and hiring practices, which emphasize the alignment of skills, values, and culture, are more likely to foster higher levels of employee engagement. This relationship underscores the importance of not just selecting qualified candidates but also ensuring that these candidates are a good fit for the organization, which can lead to a more motivated, satisfied, and productive workforce.

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Conflict of Interest

Authors declare that there is no conflict of interests regarding the publication of the paper.

Author Contribution

This journal requires that all authors take public responsibility for the content of the work submitted for review. The contributions of all authors must be described in the following manner:

*The authors confirm contribution to the paper as follows: **study conception and design:** Mohamad Shafie Yahcob; Shazaitul Azreen Rodzalan; **data collection:** Mohamad Shafie Yahcob; **analysis and interpretation of results:** Mohamad Shafie Yahcob; Shazaitul Azreen Rodzalan; **draft manuscript preparation:** Mohamad Shafie Yahcob. All authors reviewed the results and approved the final version of the manuscript.*

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