# An Experiential Study on Drivers of Employee Experience

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*Abstract: Managing expectations of talent is a continuous and on-goingchallenge in the world of employee engagement. The definition of the engagementand its attractiveness to retain talent is ever dynamic and rapidly changing across every decade. This means the way engagementis experienced by the employees is also rapidly undergoing a change.Post pandemic a new paradigm towards motivation and retention of talent is evolving. The "employee is an asset" approach is moving to next step as employee is a customer. Every business makes an investment in the customer experience It is believed that customer is the king, and a differentiating experience attracts and retains the customer and the same is being extended to the employees in the form of employeeexperience. Organizations are experimenting different approaches to address the needs of employee engagement in a new economy called experience economy.Some of the organisations have evolved work roles and departments to focus only on employee experience. We think it is vital to understand and prioritise the employee experience and its link to engagement and performance - now more than ever.We believe that engagement will change across industries and sectors and so the experience of the employee will be also different in those industries or sectors. The purpose of this study is to conduct an empirical investigation on identifyingthe variablesthat make up an employee's experience and how those variablesshape the experience of an employee in a specific service industry. The methodology used to develop the suggested framework has been provided, along with an explanation of each variable that contributes to an enhanced employee experience framework. The Hypothesis is formulated accordingly. The suggested framework's data is being statistically analysed using approaches such as reliability analysis, bivariate correlation, and multiple linear regressions. Data was collected from 179 employees working from various information technology-related firms in Pune .The findings of the study state that perception of empowerment, involvement and enablement enhances the employee experience in the IT Sector. The model proposed in the study can be adapted in the other organisations of the service sector or the manufacturing sector to design employee experience. There is possibility of addition of more pillars based on the specific need and changing context of the organisations. There is also scope to apply this model to specific target segment of the employee as per the need of the research.*

*Keywords- Employee Experience, Engagement, Involvement, Empowerment, Expectations*

## I. INTRODUCTION

The notion of productivity of an employee is centered around happiness of an individual in each environment. In case of employee as an individual, the environment is an organization where he is employed with. Happiness of a human being is an abstract concept and intangible. It is a state of mind of an individual which drives every action of the individual. When we look at individual as an employee, his or her happiness is also an abstract concept and intangible in its nature. Opposite of happiness is un-happiness which also becomes intangible. The focus of every organization is productive utilisation of a resource, in this case employee is a resource, the happiness in organization context is called as engagement. There is a lot of literature and research studies which are focused on identifying the drivers of happiness or engagement of an employee. As happiness or highly engaged is end state of mind the researchers have focused on identifying these drivers. There are plenty of human resource consultants like Gallup, who have invested years of effort in helping organizations to drive engagement using these drivers in an environment of organization. The assumption in all these years of work is that these drivers of employee engagement are universal and can be applied in any environment for all types of employees. This has helped organizations to increase employee engagement levels to increase the productivity of individuals and teams in the organizationin order to achieve organizational objectives. Many researchers have proved through their research that there is a direct linkage between employee engagement of groups and performance of those groups. The universally identified drivers in each environment results into engaging the members of the group so that the group achieves the desired level of performance. The concept of employee engagement has enabled increasing or enhancing performance of organizations, the question of how to move to next level of engagement or how to move to next level of productive employees is the next challenge in the space of employee engagement. This can be achieved either by using these drivers of engagement or something other than these drivers. This has prompted the researchers to dive deep at interactions or relationship of these drivers with the employee in an organizational context or outside the organization context. This has led to a new area of attention called experience of an employee with the organization. A new human resource constructhas emergedcalled "employee experience".

Over the last few years the interactions or relationships of the drivers of engagement with individual called an employee in an organizational context is being studied as employee experience. Unlike universal drivers of engagement of an employee, experiences are highly personalized. This results into complexity of using experience of an employee as a determinant of productivity. Experience is of shorter duration with high impact unlike engagement which is a long-term concept. Many such events of experience or series of experiences will define engagement for an individual. The evolution off employee experience is aligned with evolution of organization. Organizations evolve along with business growth and this is accompanied by evolution of processes, systems, practices and culture of the organization. Experience of employee will also evolve in line with evolution of organization. The amount of effort and attention by the organizations to enhance experience of the employees inside and outside the organization will have a direct relationship with the need to attract talent to meet the business growth of the organization. Overall, the industrial activity is divided into two broad segments- Manufacturing sector and service sector. Across both the sectors there are many similarities and equal number of differences in the way the business is carried out by organizations. The driver for these differences is different customer expectations across the sectors or organization across these sectors. As customer expectations are different which are served by employees in the respective sectors or organizations, expectations of employees across the sector are also significantly different. Also expectations of employees will also be significantly different across the sectors. This results in different employee experience design across organizations in these two sectors. At macro level employee experience design in the service sector would focus on use of technology, flexible workplaces, customer centric culture etc. At macro level employee experience design in manufacturing sector would focus on physical environment, efficiency and productivity driven workplace, internal and external customer satisfaction etc.Thus a design of employee experience would be influenced by characteristic of a specific industry or sector.

## II. CONCEPTUAL MODEL OF THE STUDY

Every organization needs different designs of employee experience based on different characteristics of organizations; the basic conceptis same for design of employee experience. This universally applicable concept is concept of whether employer wants the employee to work to meet the needs of the employment or employees want to work in that organization to meet their own priorities and expectations. Building on this universally applicable concept we propose a 4 pillar model off employee experience design. These four pillars are as below-
1. Perception of empowerment
2. Perception of inspiration
3. Perception of involvement
4. Perception of enablement

An employee experience built around these four pillars will enable organizations to attract and retain a talent and develop an organization where employees want to make

their career. The focus of perspective which is employer centered believes that employees work to meet their own needs and they will continue to work as long they are satisfied with variables which support meeting these needs. The employee centered perspective believes that employees would want to work at such a workplace or organization where they are happy about everything at the workplace. The four pillar model proposed here would deep dive into employee centered perspective and help organizations to design an employee experience which provides perception of empowerment, engagement, enablement and inspiration.

### A. Perception of Empowerment - employee experience design which provides employees empowerment

The manager and the organization shape the perception of the being empowered for employee. The empowerment is result of on time support to achieve the goals of an employee by organization systems and polices, manger support to execute on the goals to achieve desired level of performance. Setting clear expectations by manager in line with goals of the organization is key to drive perception of empowerment through the work. Similarly allowing employee freedom to choose the goals and execute the same with ownership will drive experience of empowerment among employees.

### B. Perception of Inspiration - employee experience design which inspires employees

Driver of perception of inspiration is vision of the organization. The aspirational vision represents the trust in the leadership and growth of the organization. Employees believe that with growth of the organization they can sees an opportunity to grow themselves. A sense of inspiration to give your best at the work is driven by the collaboration across groups and commitment of colleagues. Own wellbeing taken care by the organization along with wellbeing of the community inspires employees demonstrate a longer commitment toward organization.

### C. Perception of Involvement - employee experience design which builds highest level of employee involvement

Involvement refers to driving ownership among the employee. The various elements of driving this ownership include values of the organization, the goals of an employee, feedback on the performance, peer and manager support. In addition to this employee perception of his own career growth , opportunity to take up challenging assignment, participation in decision making process drive design of engaging experience for the employees.

### D. Perception of Enablement - employee experience design which enables employees to perform and grow

Achieving expected performance with engagement to the work drives satisfaction of achievement. As sense of achievement leads to perception of being enabled. There are number of elements which help in enablement.

2

The employee needs to have necessary information, continuous communication on performance and well supported organization structure of roles and responsibilities. Enabling work environment with agile ways of working driven by the polices and performance management supportdrive perception of enablement among employees. Providing opportunity to the employee to acquire and enhance the skills required to perform the job makes him more productive and drives sense of achievement.
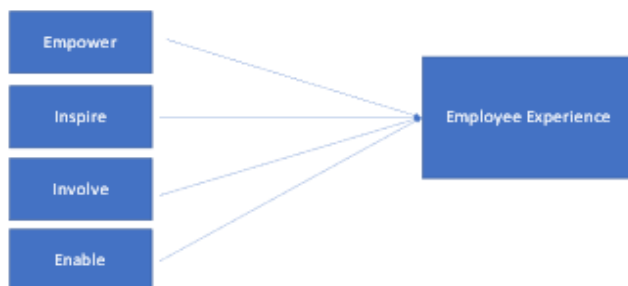


**Figure-1: Conceptual Model: 4 Pillar Model of Employee Experience Design.**

Source – Author's Own Compilation

## III. LITERATURE REVIEW

Employee experience is defined by the Employee Experience Index, IBM Smarter Workforce Institute, and Work human® as "a collection of views that workers have about their work experiences as a result of their contacts with the business." It continues, "an employee experience is a positive and powerful – and ultimately human – encounter in which individuals are able to commit more of their entire selves in the workplace". Employee experience is a broader and more holistic concept than engagement. It examines and uses the variables that contribute to a pleasant working experience and long-term performance. It assists in defining the role that leaders and managers play in ensuring that workers have a great experience. And it demonstrates how leaders may transform their company into a more relational one – instead of a transactional one. People Insights (2000) states that employee engagement is a workplace strategy that creates the conditions necessary for all members of an organization to perform at their best each day, dedicated to the organization's goals and values, driven to contribute to organizational success, and with a greater feeling of personal well-being. While employee engagement typically focuses on the workplace and productivity, employee experience involves the worker as a human being. On the other hand "employee experience" is a considerably broader and more nuanced term than "employee engagement." Additionally, all definitions agree that when discussing employee experience, the employee comes first—and the business comes second. Increased employee engagement may be viewed as the final aim, while improved EX can be viewed as a means to that purpose. It demands a culture in which leaders and managers put themselves in the shoes of their people. A strong employee engagement strategy gives a solid foundation for evaluating EX. An engaged employee is happier with their job than just getting paid. It's more than just a pay check. It's the dedication they have to the company and job that makes them excited about the work and also contributes towards a positive employee

experience. A 2021 employee experience survey across sectors and countries by Willis tower Watson revealed that employee experience has become a priority especially post pandemic. Pandemic created unanticipated level of stress among employees on many of the well being variables. Employee experience is one of the solutions in order to address the level of stress by taking care of employee anxiety. Many employers experimented variety of actions to mitigate the unexpected stress on employee groups. 90% of the employers expressed that employee experience is number one priority for them and 52% of the employers expressed that are not equipped and geared up as to how to address the gaps in the employee experience. This emphasizes the need for designing a guiding framework for the employers in order to provide an outstanding employee experience for their employees. The survey findings state 92% of organization prioritizing employee experience over 52% in the previous year, 40% jump signifies the importance of employee experience design. The HPEX model of employee experience suggested by the survey focuses on Inspiration, Growth, Organization, Capability, Trust, Collaboration, Support, Voiceas the drivers of the employee experience along with other variables in the model. The Josh Bersin Study in 2021 "Definitive Guide: Employee Experience", mentions that the employee experience is complex concept. There is no one action that can transform the employee experience. It needs persistent actions over the period of time to bring the change in the perception of the employees about the experience of the organization across the touch points along the journey with organization. The study further highlights that experience spans all the functions across many issues. It highlights many drivers of the employee experience including mission, leadership, workplace, culture , team, inclusion, safety etc. The study suggests a framework of employee experience called as Irresistible organization focused on six variables meaningful work, strong management, positive workplace, growth opportunities, trust in organization, health and wellbeing. Jacob Morgan in his study of the employee experience across two organizations, Lever and Cisco, identifies three workplace environments Physical, Technological, Cultural which shape the employee experience. He identifies 17attributes across these environments which create positive employee experience. In his study he recommends that to design outstanding employee experience organizations must focus on these 17 attributes that are abbreviated as ACE technology, COOL physical spaces, and a CELEBRATED culture. Employers can improve these three environments for improving the employee experience of their employees. He further mentions that employee experience is at the intersection of the expectations of the employees and the expectations of the employers.

## IV. OBJECTIVE

The main aim of the study is to conduct an empirical investigation into the variables that are shaping the employee experience and to explore the relationship between these selected variables and employee experience in information technology firms at Pune based on the perspectives of the employees.

## V. HYPOTHESIS

H1: The perception of being empowered and employee experience are significantly related.
H2: The perception of being inspired and employee experience are significantly related.
H3: The perception of being enabled and employee experience are significantly related.
H4: The perception of being involved and employee experience are significantly related.

## VI. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The goal of this research is to investigate the variables of Employee Experience among employees working in the IT sector in the city of Pune. The study was conducted to ascertain the variables that contribute to an employee's experience. Forty items/statements were researched from the literature and classified into four categories: perception of empowerment, perception of inspiration, perception of involved, and perception of enablement. The proposed study has identified a variety of variables that contribute to employee experience and can assist each employee in exploring their values, aspirations, and goals in order to understand what they expect from work and life and then developing appropriate strategies for balancing work and life and enhancing positive experience in the workplace. Convenience sampling is used for research reasons. The primary data was obtained through a structured questionnaire and used Likert scale for structuring the items. The questionnaire designed was to understand the strength and opinions of the respondents in matters to employee experience. A total of 200 questionnaires were circulated among the IT population. A total of 179 fully filled questionnaires were obtained and analyzed for the study.

## VII. DATA ANALYSIS

The data collected for the study was further analyzed using the statistical package SPSS Version 24. The data was further analysed using corelation and multiple regression analysis. The reliability of the questionnaire designed was measured using Cronbach's coefficient alpha. The test measures the internal consistency of the questionnaire, or how well the proposed variables of employee experience produced similar results. The questionnaire's reliability was improved by pre-testing it with a sample of 22 employees. A coefficient alpha of .70 or higher is a generally accepted threshold in social science research regarding instrument reliability. Each Variable of employee experience measured in this study's survey questionnaire produced a coefficient alpha above that threshold. Table 1 presents an overview of all variables used in the study. The table also shows the mean and standard deviation of the variables undertaken for the study.

**Table-1: Alpha, Mean and Standard Deviation Between the Variables.**

| Sr. No | Variables | Cronbach's Alpha Value | Mean | S. D |
|--------|-----------|------------------------|------|------|
| 1 | Empower | .720 | 3.92 | 0.11 |
| 2 | Inspire | .925 | 3.79 | 0.127 |
| 3 | Involve | .860 | 4.11 | 0.171 |
| 4 | Enable | .769 | 4.01 | 0.132 |
| 5 | Employee Experience | .924 | 3.96 | 0.135 |

From the above table, we can conclude that from the five variables undertaken for the study the variable "Involve" and "Enable" have reported the highest means. Respondents of the study feel that their perception of their own career growth, opportunity to take up challenging assignment, participation in decision making process will drive towards a better employee experience in the organization. Similarly enabling work environment with agile ways of working driven by the polices and performance management support will also improve their experience in the work environment.

**Table 2: Co-relation between the Dependent and Independent Variable.**

| | | Empower | Inspire | Enable | Involve | EEX |
|---|---|---------|---------|--------|---------|-----|
| Empower | Pearson Correlation | 1 | -0.101 | .615* | .728** | .500** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | 0.003 | 0.005 | 0.002 | 0 |
| | N | 179 | 179 | 179 | 179 | 179 |
| Inspire | Pearson Correlation | -0.101 | 1 | 0.443 | .350** | -0.121 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | 0.003 | | 0.32 | 0.002 | 0.776 |
| | N | 179 | 179 | 179 | 179 | 179 |
| Enable | Pearson Correlation | .615* | 0.443 | 1 | .669* | .713* |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | 0.005 | 0.32 | | 0.004 | 0.002 |
| | N | 179 | 179 | 179 | 179 | 179 |
| Involve | Pearson Correlation | .728** | .350** | .669* | 1 | .762** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | 0.002 | 0.002 | 0.004 | | 0.001 |
| | N | 179 | 179 | 179 | 179 | 179 |
| EEX | Pearson Correlation | .500** | -0.121 | .713* | .762** | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | 0 | 0.776 | 0.002 | 0.001 | |
| | N | 179 | 179 | 179 | 179 | 179 |

*P<0.05, **P<0.01

The correlation analysis aided in determining the link between the independent and dependent variables. To indicate the direction, intensity, and significance of the association between the variables, Pearson's correlation coefficient was utilised. From the above table, we found out that the perception of inspiration has a negative co relation with Employee experience (r=-.121, p<0.01). The perception of empowerment, enablement and involvement share a positive and significant relationship with employee experience. To evaluate the pre-established hypothesis in this study, regression analysis was used. The independent factors (perception of empowerment, inspiration, enablement and involvement) were tested using multiple linear regression to see if they predicted the dependent variable (employee experience). Multiple linear regression analysis was also utilised to establish which of the four independent factors (perception of empowerment, inspiration, enablement, and involvement) contributed the most to the variation of the dependent variable (employee experience).

**Table 3 - Model Summary**

| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | .825$^a$ | 0.681 | 0.613 | 0.2059224 |

a. Predictors: (Constant), Involve, Enable, Empower, Inspire

According to Table 3, the correlation between independent factors and employee experience is 0.825. The (R square) value, which aids in explaining variance in the dependent variable (employee experience), is depicted in the model summary. The (R square) value also known as coefficient of determination is 0.681. This suggests that the independent factors (Empower, Inspire, Involve, Enable,) predict the dependent variable (employee experience) by 68.1 percent, leaving 31.9 percent unaccounted for. In a nutshell, this suggests that there are additional independent factors that were not considered in this study yet are important in explaining employee experience variance.

**Table-4 ANOVA$^a$**

| Model | | Sum of Squares | Df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Regression | 16.181 | 4 | 2.045 | 18.068 | .036$^b$ |
| | Residual | 23.085 | 175 | 0.042 | | |
| | Total | 39.266 | 179 | | | |

a. Dependent Variable: EEX
b. Predictors: (Constant), Involve, Enable, Empower, Inspire

The ANOVA was used to determine whether the regression model is a good descriptor for the relationship between the predictor variables (Empower, Inspire, Involve, Enable) and the dependent variable (employee experience). As a conclusion of the findings, the model is an adequate descriptor of the connection between the independent variables and the dependent variable (F= 18.068; p=0.036). The significance level is less than.05. As a result, the independent factors account for a considerable portion of the variance in the dependent variable. The total correlation of 0.825 is significant, according to the ANOVA table.

**Table-5 Coefficients$^a$**

| Model | | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | T | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | B | Std. Error | Beta | | |
| 1 | (Constant) | 3.553 | 0.223 | | 7.469 | 0.004 |
| | Empower | 0.26 | 1.472 | 0.436 | 0.856 | 0.002 |
| | Inspire | 0.011 | 0.825 | 0.008 | 0.013 | 0.991 |
| | Enable | 0.681 | 0.625 | 0.619 | 1.09 | 0 |
| | Involve | 0.831 | 0.882 | 0.34 | 0.545 | 0.04 |

The coefficients Table no. 5 helped to compare which of the four predictor variables (Empower, Inspire, Involve, Enable) contribute the most to the variation in employee experience. Therefore, to make the comparison, the Beta standardized coefficients were used. The results indicate that empower (β= 0.260; p= 0.002), enable (β= 0.681; p= 0.000) involve (β= 0.831; p= 0.040) were the predictors that contributes to the variation in employee experience. The variable inspire (β=.011; p= 0.991) shows an insignificant relationship with employee experience. The table also predicts that with all the independent variables remaining constant, employee experience in the IT Industry is 3.553. This model also predicts that with a slight change in the empower ,involve and enable variables will directly affect the employee experience.

Therefore, the Regression equation will be, EE = 3.553 + 0.831 (Involve) +0.681(Enable) + 0.260 (Empower) +.011 (Inspire)

## VIII. FINDINGS

The study reveals that perception of empowerment, enablement and involvement are the major contributors to employee experience. "Empowerment" normally refers to employees' belief that they can accomplish their jobs, "Involve" refers to employees' belief that their work is connected to the organization's mission and significance and "Enabling" the employees is giving them opportunity as well as the means and support to do their job.

The three variables combined results in employees who are more invested in the success of the company. Table No. 6 summarises the outcomes of hypothesis testing and provides a full explanation of the findings in connection to the hypotheses related to the four variables identified in the literature that improve employee experience. The criteria validity was proved by significant Pearson's correlation coefficients (r) between employee experience and four independent variables. Pearson's correlation coefficient ($0.825^*$) between dependent and independent variables indicates that there is no evidence of multicollinearity in the data, as it is less than the threshold value of 0.9.

**Table-6: Summary of Hypothesis Testing**

| S. No | Hypothesis Formulated | Decisions (Accepted/Rejected) |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | The perception of being empowered and employee experience are significantly related. | Accepted |
| 2 | The perception of being inspired and employee experience are significantly related | Rejected |
| 3 | The perception of being enabled and employee experience are significantly related. | Accepted |
| 4 | The perception of being involved and employee experience are significantly related | Accepted |

## IX. CONCLUSION

This paper provided an overview of the Employee Experience idea and discussed the proposed framework. This study focused on the organisations in the IT sector. The survey data was examined for four major factors 40 statements associated with these factors that contribute to employee experience, as well as what factors influence or improve employee experience. The four major factors were identified based on the literature review. The literature review has mentioned number of variables which drive employee experience across organisations in different studies. A framework was designed, and the validity and reliability were tested. This study supports findings of the literature. The four pillars of model, perception of empowerment, perception of involvement perception of inspire perception of enablement, are related to employee experience. within each of these pillars there are 10 dimensions of respective perceptions are defined.The study reveals that support by manager and organization towards opportunity to do the best and encouragement to take risk without fear create significantly high perception of empowerment among the respondents. Factors like training, employee benefits policies, authority, supportive work environment are key drivers of perception of enablement. Support provided by manager in achieving target level of performance also acts as driver of significantly higher level of perception of enablement. Perception of involvement significantly depends on factors like opportunity to participate in engaging experiences, participation in decision making process, executing challenging assignments, support by co-workers, clarity of expectations and periodic feedbacks.The drivers of Perception of being inspired are vision and leadership of the organization, the work itself, attention to wellbeing and encouragement by manager and own growth. The model proposed in the study can be adapted in the other organisations of the service sector or the manufacturing sector to design employee experience. There is possibility of addition of more pillars based on the specific need and changing context of the organisations. There is also scope to apply this model to specific target segment of the employee as per the need of the research.Researchers believe that by combining this structured framework with a few problems identified during the empirical investigation, they will be able to create an employee experience grid that will help organisations position themselves in the minds of their employees and create a positive employee experience.

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## AUTHOR PROFILE

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