

PSYCHOLOGICAL HARDINESS AND JOB ENGAGEMENT: LEADING FACTORS TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE EMPLOYABILITY

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ABSTRACT

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable development adopted by all United Nations member states has 17 Sustainable development goals (SDG's) at its heart. Among them SDG 4 Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life long learning. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 aligns with the Sustainable development goals (SDGs) and aims to revamp the education system in India. NEP 2020 emphasizes quality education for all which is in line with SDG 4. It aims to transform the education system to line up with the contemporary needs and global standards. One of its key goal is to enhance employability after graduation so as to develop sustainable employability ratio in the nation. Sustainable employability refers to the

ability of individuals to maintain and develop their employment over the long term adapting to changes in the job market and ensuring continuous growth. It refers to employees' capacities to function in work and on the labor market throughout their working lives.

Bartone(1999) and Kobasa(1979) defined psychological hardiness as, "A Psychological style associated with resilience, good health and performance under a range of stressful conditions"

Psychological hardiness consists of three attitudes-commitment, control and challenge

According to this definition, Psychological hardiness could be a personal asset that encourages workers to be engaged in their work. Hardy individuals typically value and are dedicated to their profession, persevering through hardships to achieve their goals. Psychological hardiness so can be responsible for bringing Job engagement among the workers.

The idea of job engagement which is a recent trend of positive psychology focuses on employees optimal performances and pleasant experiences at work which definitely leads to his personal and professional growth. Job engagement with its three dimensions of vigor, dedication and absorption refers to the production of motivated, productive and committed employees which in turn leads to achieve the valuable sustainable development goals and work ethics. Sustainable employability, psychological hardiness and job engagement are being able to achieve valuable work goals. This article will be helpful in analyzing dimensions of psychological hardiness and job engagement which will ultimately leads an individual towards the footsteps of sustainable employability leads to the sustainable work environment and culture.

Keywords: Psychological hardiness, Job Engagement, Sustainable Employability, NEP 2020, SDG's, Vigor, Dedication, Absorption

Education- “The art of leading out”

The term "education" is like a diamond that changes colour depending on the viewpoint. The word "Shiksha" (education) comes from the Sanskrit verbal roots "Shas," which imply "discipline," "to teach," "to instruct," or "to control," according to ancient Indian educators. According to Rig Veda “Education is something which makes man self-reliant and self-less. Since education satisfies human needs, it can be likened to a Kalpavriksha. A person's intelligence is sharpened, our speech becomes more true, we become more famous, we avoid sin, we are delighted, and our name is spread everywhere.

This can be proved from following Sanskrit verse-

Jadayam dhiyo harti sinchayati vaachi satyam,

Manotratim diyati papampakaroti

Cheteh prasadayati dikshu tanoti kirti,

Kim kim na sadayti kalplatve vidya

This task of Education is being fulfilled by a teacher.

From the Vedic age teachers are an epitome. An epitome of highest caliber and renunciation. The teachers occupied their place in the society next to the GOD. The teachers is a dynamic force of the educational system. It is upon shoulders of them the future of young and budding mind relies.

A skilled teacher by themselves can have a significant impact on both education and society because teaching is an art.

The Secondary Education Commission has stated as:

“We are, however, convinced that the most important factor in the contemplated educational reconstruction is the teacher, his personal qualities, his educational qualifications, his professional training and the place that he occupies in the school as well as in the community”

Teachers take a strong interest in their work if they are highly educated, skilled, and intellectually engaged. A body without a soul, a skeleton without flesh and blood, or a shadow without substance is what education would be without a teacher.

Sustainability and Sustainable Development

Sustainability is a long term goal and sustainable development includes many processes and pathways to achieve it.

The ability of all systems on Earth, including human cultural and economic systems, to endure and adjust to shifting environmental conditions is known as sustainability. The long-term coexistence of humans on Earth is a social objective.

Sustainable development has become a global catchphrase during the last 25 years, and it has been embraced in almost every aspect of human life. Its origins date back to the Stockholm conference in 1972. At this conference, it was underlined how important social and economic equity are to attaining sustainable development.

As a result, the World Conservation Strategy was created in 1980, and the UNCED Earth Summit was held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 1992. In 2012, Rio de Janeiro hosted the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD), also known as Rio+20, to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the Earth Summit.

Sustainable development follows “ a form of growth and development in society that meets the current human needs preserving the natural resources for meeting the needs of future generation

as well”. As defined in the Brundtland Commission report (WCED,1987), Sustainable development is “meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”.

It has three pillars- Economic development, Social development, Environment protection.

Sustainable Development Goals

“Much of India’s development agenda is mirrored in the sustainable development goals. Our national plans are ambitious and purposeful; sustainable development of one-sixth of humanity will be of great consequence to the world and our beautiful planets.”

Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of India

In 2015 United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) adopted SDG’s Sustainable development goals for the year 2030.

The United Nations established the sustainable development goals (SDGs), commonly referred to as the global objectives, in 2015. There is integration among the 17 SDGs. They understand that development needs to be balanced in all sectors because changes in one will have an impact on other areas. It states that social, economic, and environmental sustainability must all be balanced.

The direction of the global education development agenda is reflected in SDG 4 of the 2030 agenda for sustainable development. It is the quality education. Five of the seven targets of SDG 4 focus on quality education and learning outcomes. SDG 4 is a comprehensive objective that may be applied to any country striving to improve the quality of life for its people in a sustainable manner without causing environmental degradation.

One of the key goal of NEP 2020 is to enhance employability after graduation so as to develop sustainable employability ratio in the nation.

NEP 2020

NEP 2020 states that the teacher must be at the forefront of any significant changes made to the educational system. The goal of the new education strategy is to restore teachers' status as the most valued and vital members of society at all levels.

It must make every effort to empower educators and support them in carrying out their duties as efficiently as possible. The calibre and involvement of the professors is the most crucial element in educational institutions' success.

There should be clear goals, supportive organizations, resources and sound policies to enhance employability in the nation. It is where sustainable employability comes into role.

Sustainable Employability

Recently, the idea of sustainable employability has gained popularity, mostly in industrialized nations (Gurbuz et al., 2022a). It is a significant issue from the viewpoints of the organization and the employees.

According to de Jonge and Peeters (2019), a sustainable workforce can effectively lower the expenses associated with employee turnover, burnout, and sick leave. The ability of workers to continue working and participating in the labor market throughout their working lives is referred to as sustainable employability.

One of the recognized conceptualization of sustainable employability was introduced by Sen(1993) based on Vanderklin et al (2016) capability perspective

Sustainable employability refers to the ability of employees to realize concrete opportunities in the form of a set of capabilities over the course of their working careers. They also benefit from the conditions that protect their health and wellbeing while enabling them to contribute significantly through their employment both now and in the future.

This calls for both the mind set and drive to take advantage of these opportunities, as well as a work environment that supports them.

Workers with sustained employability are those who can perform well in a range of roles and adjust to changing circumstances.

Among the components of long-term employability are:

Employee development: One of the most crucial aspects of being a good employer is to support employee development.

Conditions of employment: Part of being a good employer is providing good terms of employment.

Open culture: Maintaining an open culture is crucial to becoming a reputable employer.

Improvement of leadership and personal development: Improving these areas is crucial to being a good employer.

Continuous learning: Mental adaptability and continuous learning promote employment.

Monitoring for health and safety: Establishing practices for monitoring health and safety can improve employability over time.

Sustainable employability refers to the ability of individuals to maintain their employment and career progression over the long term while adapting to changes in the labor market and

workplace. It involves a combination of skills, adaptability, and resilience to ensure that workers can thrive in various job environments and withstand economic shifts.

Here are some key aspects of Sustainable Employability:

1. **Skill Development:** Continuously acquiring and updating skills is crucial. This includes both technical skills relevant to one's profession and soft skills like communication, problem-solving, and teamwork.
2. **Adaptability:** It is crucial to be able to adjust to new technology, shifts in the industry, and changing employment needs. This could entail being willing to pick up new skills, procedures, or even alter one's job path if needed.
3. **Career Planning:** Setting career goals and planning for the future helps individuals navigate their professional journey effectively. This might include seeking mentorship, pursuing further education, or gaining diverse experiences.
4. **Health and Well-being:** Maintaining physical and mental health is important for long-term career success. A healthy work-life balance, stress management, and self-care contribute to overall employability.
5. **Networking:** Throughout one's career, establishing and preserving professional contacts can lead to new opportunities and support.
6. **Workplace Trends:** Staying informed about industry trends, economic shifts, and emerging job markets helps individuals align their skills and experiences with future demands.

Sustainable employability is not just about securing a job but about ensuring that one can remain valuable and relevant in a constantly evolving work environment.

Sustainable Employability features under NEP 2020

Unfortunately, the teacher's status has declined today. The quality of teacher empowerment, training, recruitment, deployment, and service conditions is below expectations, which means that teacher motivation and quality fall short of what is intended.

Following are seven key areas affecting motivation and engagement of teachers and teacher education today.

1. There are currently no interviews or in-class demonstrations used to gauge motivation and passion in teacher recruiting.
2. There is a severe lack of teacher education and a present crisis in this area.
3. Serious flaws and less-than-ideal methods in teacher deployment.
4. Too little infrastructure, supplies, and resources exist in many schools for teachers to feel secure in their roles.
5. Teachers are frequently requested to devote a significant amount of their time to non-teaching activities.
6. There are insufficient possibilities for high-quality professional growth.
7. There are typically no official merit-based systems in place for leadership roles, career management, salary, or promotions within and outside of the educational system.

NEP 2020 policy envisages a complete overhaul of the teaching profession in these key areas. It includes many sustainable employability practices which will really enhance engagement of teachers in their job.

1. Effective teacher recruitment and Deployment- It include-

- Merit-based awards to motivate exceptional students to pursue careers as teachers
- Rigorous and transparent recruitment process for teachers.

2. Proper service environment and culture

- Adequate physical infrastructure, facilities and learning resources
- Caring and inclusive school culture

3. Continuous professional development of teachers(CPD)

- Flexible and modular approach to CPD for teachers
- Self-directed personal development of teachers
- Online resources for CPD

4. Career management and vertical mobility

- Professional advancement through promotions and pay increases
- parity in service conditions at all educational levels; and a tenure-track system for employing teachers and regular teacher performance reviews (every year or more frequently)

- Vertical mobility for career advancement

5. **Teacher Education to be gradually moved into multidisciplinary colleges and universities-** moving teacher education into university system which is a four-year integrated B.Ed. programme.

Sustainability Employability measures under NEP 2020 in higher Educational Institutions

1. Adequate physical infrastructure and facilities
2. Desirable student teacher ratio is maintained and diversity is ensured.
3. Judicious mix of capacities within each institutions.
4. Institutional autonomy for recruitment
5. Empowering and motivating institutional culture
6. Permanent(tenure) employment tract for university staff including faculty
7. Faculty development plan
8. Orientation program for new faculty
9. Mentoring by senior academicians
10. Career and compensation management of faculty and other employees
11. Faculty recruitment and development, career progression and compensation management to be part of the institutional development plan(IDP)

Psychological Hardiness

Psychological hardiness, sometimes referred to as personality hardiness or cognitive hardiness is a unique dimension of personality type which was first of all suggested by Kobasa(1979). Maddi and Pucetti(1982) furthermore portrayed hardiness as a personal perpetual pattern that helps a person to handle life stressors. Hardiness is the ability to go for one's goal in the face of adversity and handle stressful circumstances.

Psychological hardiness consists of three attitudes-

- (1) Commitment -ability to feel deeply involved in the activities
- (2) Control- having control or influence the events of experience
- (3) Challenge- anticipating challenges as exciting

Job Engagement

Work engagement or Employee engagement or Job 'Engagement is a positive, fulfilling work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor dedication and absorption. (Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzalez-Roma & Bakker, 2001).' High amount of energy and mental tenacity at work are traits of vigor, he/she will remain concentrated on his task and efforts even in the presence of any problem. According to Schaufeli and Salanova (2007) and Langelaan, Bakker, Doomen, and Van and Schaufeli (2006), dedication is "a state of being intensely involved in one's work and experiencing a sense of pride, inspiration, and enthusiasm from one's work."

When someone is committed, they take immense pride in their work and see it as significant.

Absorption is described as outstanding level of focus and immersion in one's tasks. The idea of

“Job Engagement” which focuses on employee optimal performances and pleasant experiences/interactions at work, is an outcome of the recent trend towards positive psychology. It is associated with the positive characteristics associated with favourable employee experiences. In his 1990 paper, ‘Psychological Conditions of personal engagement and disengagement at work(Academy of Management JournalDec.1990 Vol. 3 no.4 pp 92-724)’, William Kahn of Boston University introduced the concept of employee engagement for the first time. According to Fleming and Asplund, job engagement is the capacity to subdue workers’ mind, heart and souls in order to steadily foster a degree and passion for excellence. Job Engagement is defined as an individual’s enthusiastic involvement in their responsibilities, driven by intrinsic rewards and a personal connection to their tasks (Roberts&Davenport,2002) The relationship between dimensions of job engagement and sustainable employability is quite significant, as job engagement can influence various aspects of an employee's ability to remain productive and fulfilled in their career over the long term. Here’s a breakdown of how these concepts interconnect:

Relationship between Psychological Hardiness and Sustainable Employability

1. **Stress Resilience:** It help employees to manage job stress and adversity and supports long-term health and well being.
2. **Adaptability:** Employees who are hardy individuals embrace change as growth which enhances career flexibility and longevity.
3. **Motivation & Engagement:** Employees who are committed performs purposeful work which promotes consistent work performance.

4. **Perceived control:** Encourages proactive problem-solving which increases career self-management and satisfaction.
5. **Learning orientation:** Hardy employees sees challenges as learning opportunities and fosters continuous development and upskilling.

Relationship between Job Engagement and Sustainable Employability

1. **Enhanced Skill Development:** Employees who are highly engaged are more likely to seek out opportunities for learning and development, which contributes to their skill enhancement and adaptability, key components of sustainable employability.
2. **Improved Health and Well-being:** Engaged employees often experience higher job satisfaction and lower stress levels, contributing positively to their overall health and well-being. This can help in maintaining long-term productivity and reducing absenteeism, which are important for sustainable employability.
3. **Better Work-Life Balance:** Engaged employees are often more motivated and productive, which can lead to better time management and the ability to achieve a healthier work-life balance. This balance is crucial for long-term career sustainability.
4. **Career Satisfaction and Development:** High job engagement can lead to greater job satisfaction, which supports career longevity and reduces the likelihood of burnout. Engaged employees are also more likely to pursue career advancement opportunities, supporting their sustainable employability.
5. **Organizational Commitment:** Engaged employees tend to have a higher level of commitment to their organization. This commitment can result in a more stable employment relationship, contributing to career security and long-term employability.

6. **Adaptability and Resilience:** Vigor and dedication, key dimensions of job engagement, contribute to an employee's ability to handle change and challenges effectively. This adaptability is crucial for sustaining employability in a constantly evolving job market.

In summary, high levels of psychological hardiness and job engagement can positively impact various dimensions of sustainable employability, including skill development, health and well-being, work-life balance, career development, and organizational commitment. By fostering job engagement, organizations can help employees enhance their sustainable employability and ensure a more productive and satisfied workforce.

Relationship of dimensions of Psychological hardiness and Sustainable

Employment-

Commitment and Sustainable Employability-

Commitment refers to an employee's psychological attachment and dedication to their organization, role of profession. It can be affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment. Employees who are committed tend to

- Invest more in their personal and professional development
- Engage more fully with their work, which maintains motivation and job satisfaction
- Adapt better to changes, increasing their long-term value in their labor market.
- Prioritize health and well-being, recognizing its impact on their ability to perform.

Control and Sustainable Employability-

Control refers to the degree of autonomy, decision-making, power and influence an individual has over how they perform also called as job control or autonomy.

- It makes workers more responsible and intrinsically motivated and increased motivation leads to higher engagement
- Autonomy encourages initiative-taking and problem-solving.
- High control buffers negative effects of high demands, protecting health and supports long-term employability.
- Employees with more autonomy can often adjust their work schedules or environment helping maintain work-life balance.

Challenge and Sustainable Employability-

Challenge refers to work that is mentally stimulating offers growth opportunities and pushes employees to stretch their abilities without being overwhelmed. It includes

- Learning new skills
- Solving complex problems
- Working on meaningful tasks
- Autonomy and responsibility

A key component of long-term employability is the link between vigor, devotion, and absorption—It is frequently discussed in the context of the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) paradigm.

Vigor: When working, this is the state of having a lot of energy and mental toughness. Vigorous people are more likely to take an active part in their roles, adjust to new situations, and continue to perform well over time. This persistent energy helps with long-term professional development and employability.

Dedication: A deep sense of participation and devotion to one's work is a component of dedication. Devoted workers are more likely to put in the time and effort to further their careers

as well as to follow their goals with a fervor. This dedication creates a feeling of community and may open doors to promotion, improving employability.

Absorption: This dimension has to do with being contentedly and totally focused on one's work. Because they are totally absorbed in their work, employees who experience absorption are frequently more inventive and productive. Deep participation can result in the development of skills and adaptability, two things that are essential to being employable in a changing labor market.

Relationship of dimensions of Job Engagement and Sustainable Employment

Vigor and Sustainable Employability-

There is a strong correlation between vigor and sustainable employability. Energy, mental toughness, and excitement are all components of vigor, which is vital for people to interact with their work and progress in their careers.

High Productivity levels- Employees having higher energy levels, zeal and enthusiasm increases the output of the company by performing to its fullest and work for providing more gain to the organization.

Adaptability- Employees having high vigor are more adaptable and flexible which in turn ultimately effect their long term employability.

Job Satisfaction- Vigorous individuals are satisfied with their job and it reduces attrition. Satisfied employees understand their roles and responsibilities well which increase their long term sustainability on their positions.

Continuous learning- Persons who are vigorous are keen to learn. They have an attitude to learn more and more for their personal and professional development.

Motivation and Engagement- Individuals having higher energy levels are more motivated and have high engagement levels. They can easily take on challenges and are very committed for their roles.

Enhanced Resilience: Vigorous workers are better able to withstand stress and setbacks, which lowers burnout and fosters long-term career sustainability.

Dedication and Sustainable Employability-

Skill Development: People with dedication are more keen and willing for opportunities to learn, which results in ongoing skill improvement. This proactive strategy is crucial in a work market that is changing quickly.

Organizational loyalty: Workers who are dedicated have closer ties with the organization. It in turn effect more stable employment history which is a key factor of sustainable employability.

Positive work environment: Work force which is dedicated leads to positive work culture. Networking and collaboration is enhanced by a supportive environment.

Performance outcomes: Dedicated employees exhibit higher performance levels which leads to career advancement opportunities which in turn increases employability.

Absorption and Sustainable Employability:

Absorption and sustainable employability have a wider relationship. The employees who are engaged have a proactive approach. These employees are satisfied with their job which in turn promotes well-being. Absorption lower the burn out rates of employees which contributes to a more sustainable work life makes individual for longer workforce.

In a nutshell the commitment, control and challenge of psychological hardiness and the vigor, dedication and absorption elements of job engagement are critical to fostering long-term employability. Organizations may improve employee satisfaction, skill development, and flexibility by cultivating dedication in the workplace. This will ultimately result in a workforce that is more resilient and employable. In order to improve their employees' long-term employability, firms should prioritize developing an engaged workforce. When these three factors are combined, they create a positive workplace culture that inspires and involves workers. Employability can be further improved by a friendly atmosphere that draws talent and encourages retention. In conclusion, vigor, devotion, and absorption all work together to improve performance, build skills, and strengthen resilience in a good work environment, all of which contribute to an individual's sustainable employability.

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