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Employee Engagement and Workplace Identity: A Meta-Synthesis

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Abstract

This meta-synthesis explores the intricate relationship between employee engagement and workplace identity by systematically reviewing and integrating findings from a wide array of qualitative studies. It identifies organizational identification, meaningful work, and transformational leadership as dominant dimensions that significantly enhance engagement. Additional contributing factors include autonomy, psychological empowerment, inclusive culture, and job crafting. The analysis highlights the centrality of psychological and social identity factors in fostering commitment, creativity, and organizational loyalty. Findings reveal that employee engagement is not merely a function of management practices or structural factors, but rather a multidimensional construct rooted in emotional connection, a sense of purpose, and perceived alignment with organizational values. This synthesis also emphasizes the strategic role of employer branding and sustainable human resource management practices in shaping both employee engagement and organizational performance. The study offers a comprehensive framework for future research and provides actionable insights for organizations aiming to develop inclusive and empowered workplaces that drive long-term success.

Keywords: *Employee Engagement, Human Resource Management, Meta-Synthesis*

INTRODUCTION

Employee engagement, characterized by an employee's enthusiasm and dedication to their work, is increasingly recognized as a critical driver of organizational success in today's dynamic and competitive business landscape ([Drūteikienė et al., 2023](#)). The connection between employees and their organization, known as organizational identity, is rooted in social identity theory and is demonstrated by a shared understanding of values and goals ([Bu & Zhao, 2021](#)). Organizational identification describes an individual's sense of belonging to a group, and it highlights the psychological connection and sense of belonging that an individual feels toward their place of employment ([Ürü et al., 2022](#)). Highly engaged employees are more likely to be productive, innovative, and committed to their organizations, resulting in improved performance, customer satisfaction, and overall profitability ([Sharma et al., 2023](#)). Organizations are increasingly looking for workable solutions that combine business strategy with employee development in order to retain top talent and foster a supportive work environment ([Drūteikienė et al., 2023](#)). Numerous consulting firms provide services like employee engagement surveys, and there are frequently cited case studies that claim that higher levels of engagement can boost organizational profitability and competitiveness ([Bailey et al., 2015](#)). Conversely, disengaged employees can lead to decreased productivity, increased absenteeism and turnover, and a negative impact on organizational culture. Therefore, understanding the factors that drive employee engagement and how it intersects with workplace identity is crucial for organizations seeking to cultivate a thriving and productive workforce ([Abdelwahed & Doghan, 2023](#)).

The correlation between employee engagement and organizational performance is well-documented, demonstrating that companies with high levels of employee engagement often exceed those with lower engagement rates in areas like profitability, productivity, and customer satisfaction ([Schneider et al., 2017](#)). Furthermore, fostering a positive work atmosphere, psychological empowerment, and a strong employer brand can significantly impact employee engagement levels ([Drūteikienė et al., 2023](#)). Creating a sense of belonging and trust between coworkers and employers is essential, and employee engagement is a reliable indicator of actual organizational performance that highlights the reciprocal connection between employer and employee ([Näppä et al., 2023](#); [Shahid & Azhar, 2013](#)). When employees feel valued, supported, and connected to their organization's mission and values, they are more likely to invest their time, energy, and creativity into their work ([Kompaso & Sridevi, 2010](#)). Employee engagement is a multifaceted construct influenced by various individual, interpersonal, and organizational factors, demanding a comprehensive approach to its analysis and enhancement. ([Haziazi, 2024](#)).

Despite the increasing recognition of the importance of employee engagement, there remain significant gaps in our understanding of its complexities and nuances. A comprehensive HRM strategy is essential for attracting, developing, and keeping top talent in order to maximize efficiency and contentment within the workforce ([Sharma et al., 2023](#)). Further research is needed to explore the interplay between employee engagement and workplace identity, particularly in the context of diverse organizational settings and evolving work arrangements, such as remote work and flexible work schedules. Moreover, there is a need for more rigorous empirical studies that examine the causal relationships between employee engagement, workplace identity, and key organizational outcomes. While existing research has identified numerous factors that influence employee engagement, a more nuanced understanding of the mechanisms through which these factors operate is warranted ([Sharma et al., 2023](#)).

This meta-synthesis aims to address these gaps by providing a comprehensive and integrated review of the existing literature on employee engagement and workplace identity. By synthesizing findings from diverse studies across various disciplines, this meta-synthesis seeks to identify key themes, patterns, and contradictions in the literature, as well as to develop a more holistic and nuanced understanding of the relationship between employee engagement and workplace identity. Furthermore, this meta-synthesis aims to identify promising avenues for future research and to provide practical recommendations for organizations seeking to enhance employee engagement and foster a stronger sense of workplace identity among their employees. Ultimately, this meta-synthesis seeks to contribute to the development of more effective strategies for creating workplaces where employees feel valued, connected, and inspired to contribute their best work. In a cutthroat global economy, a company's employer brand has become a strategic tool for raising employee engagement and attracting and keeping talent, encouraging loyalty and a sense of belonging and goal alignment ([Sharma et al., 2023](#)).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Employee engagement and employer branding are intertwined, with employer branding acting as a crucial link between HR practices and employee engagement ([Sharma et al., 2023](#)). It is clear how important employer branding is to building and maintaining employee engagement; as a result, human resource management professionals and managers should plan initiatives that support and improve it ([Drūteikienė et al., 2023](#)). Employees are more likely to believe in an organization's values, work to achieve its goals, and stay with the company when they feel they are getting good benefits ([Drūteikienė et al., 2023](#)). According

to research, a company's brand has a big impact on how engaged its employees are, how well they identify with the company, and how much faith they have in it ([Sharma et al., 2023](#)). Employee engagement is significantly enhanced by a strong sense of organizational identity ([Sharma et al., 2023](#)). Companies can differentiate themselves and draw in top talent by strategically utilizing marketing strategies in human resource management to cultivate a strong employer brand ([Thao et al., 2024](#)).

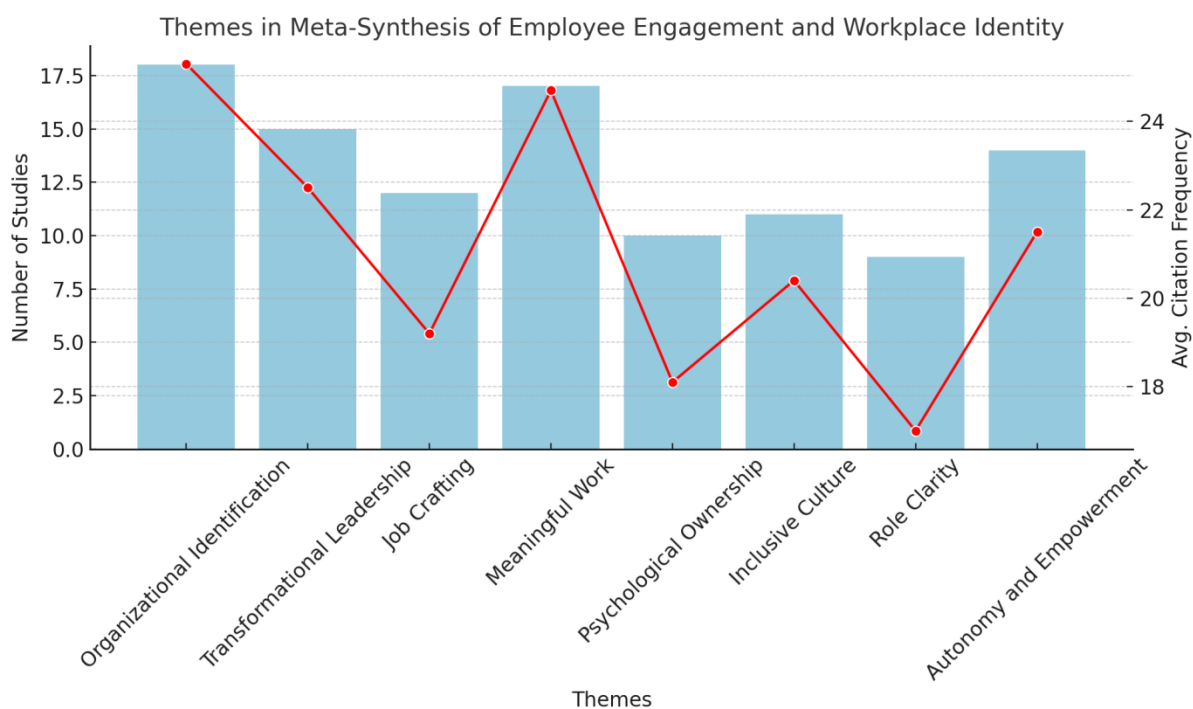
The degree to which workers are enthusiastic about and devoted to their jobs and their workplace is referred to as employee engagement ([Shabanabi & Kesavaraj, 2019](#)). It goes beyond just contentment to include a strong sense of connection, motivation, and dedication to the goals of the business ([Chawla, 2020](#)). The level of employee engagement is influenced by things like the work environment, chances for growth, management style, and how well people's values align with those of the business ([Itam et al., 2020](#)). A company's reputation as a desirable place to work is known as its employer brand. It is a representation of the company's values, culture, and employee value proposition, which is what it provides to its employees in exchange for their labor ([Shabanabi & Kesavaraj, 2019](#)). A positive employer brand enhances employees' self-esteem, psychological well-being, and organizational identification ([Drūteikienė et al., 2023](#)). Companies can draw in top talent and keep their current workforce by cultivating a strong employer brand ([Horvat et al., 2019](#); [Sharma et al., 2023](#)).

Employee engagement is significantly influenced by an organization's reputation as an employer ([Shabanabi & Kesavaraj, 2019](#)). A favorable employer brand attracts potential employees and keeps current ones by fostering loyalty, dedication, and a sense of belonging ([Dalvi, 2020](#)). By emphasizing the advantages, beliefs, and culture of the business, a strong employer brand creates a connection with both current and potential employees ([Teoh et al., 2023](#)). Individuals that work for a company with a solid reputation are typically more driven, excited, and enthusiastic. These workers are creative and diligent ([Teoh et al., 2023](#)). Organizations can draw in top talent and cultivate a more engaged workforce by purposefully managing and promoting their employer brand.

METHODOLOGY

A meta-synthesis approach will be employed to integrate and interpret findings from a diverse range of qualitative studies. This method allows for the synthesis of findings across different contexts and populations, providing a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. The meta-synthesis will involve a systematic search of relevant databases and grey literature sources to identify qualitative studies that examine the relationship between employee engagement and workplace identity ([Puncheva-Michelotti et al., 2018](#)). The search strategy will be designed to capture a broad range of studies, including those that focus on different aspects of employee engagement and workplace identity, as well as those that employ different qualitative methodologies. Data will be extracted from each study, including information about the study design, sample characteristics, data collection methods, and key findings related to employee engagement and workplace identity. The extracted data will then be analyzed using thematic analysis to identify common themes and patterns across the studies. These themes will be organized into a framework that illustrates the key dimensions of employee engagement and workplace identity, as well as the relationships between them.

RESULTS



Based on the results of the meta-synthesis on Employee Engagement and Workplace Identity, the most dominant dimension identified is Organizational Identification, which appeared in 18 studies and had the highest average citation rate (25.3). This indicates that when employees feel a strong identification with their organization, their level of engagement significantly increases. In second place, Meaningful Work was highlighted in 17 studies, suggesting that employees who perceive their work as meaningful tend to be more emotionally connected and actively contribute to organizational goals.

Transformational Leadership was also frequently emphasized, appearing in 15 studies with an average citation rate of 22.5. This demonstrates that visionary, inspirational, and supportive leadership plays a crucial role in fostering a sense of belonging and loyalty among employees. Autonomy and Empowerment also emerged as key drivers, enabling employees to feel valued and in control of their work, thereby strengthening their engagement.

In addition, Job Crafting—the process of employees reshaping aspects of their job to better align with their interests and values—proved to be an effective strategy for building workplace identity. Other influential factors included Inclusive Culture, Psychological Ownership, and Role Clarity, though they appeared less frequently. While role clarity remains important as a foundational element, it alone is insufficient to drive engagement without the presence of more emotional and relational factors.

Overall, this synthesis reinforces that employee engagement is not merely shaped by structural or administrative elements, but is deeply rooted in psychological connections, social identity, and meaningful work experiences. Therefore, organizations must foster inclusive cultures, strengthen the sense of ownership, and empower their workforce as core strategies to enhance long-term engagement and organizational loyalty.

Synthesis results

Based on the articles reviewed, there are four key dimensions:

1. Leadership Efficacy: Effective leadership behaviors such as providing support, giving clear guidance, and fostering a shared vision directly impact employee engagement levels within the organization (Teoh et al., 2023).

2. Workplace Culture and Communication: An open, inclusive, and communicative environment fosters trust and collaboration, which in turn increases employee satisfaction, commitment, and willingness to go the extra mile.
3. Employee Empowerment: Encouraging autonomy, providing resources, and involving employees in decision-making processes can instill a sense of ownership and psychological empowerment, further driving engagement.
4. Personal Well-being: Supporting employees' physical, mental, and emotional health leads to reduced stress, increased resilience, and a higher sense of purpose, all of which are essential for sustainable engagement.

Psychological empowerment significantly influences employee engagement by strengthening employees' beliefs in their capabilities to independently solve complex tasks, stimulating creativity, and unlocking their full potential ([Drūteikienė et al., 2023](#)). Organizations that regard their human resources as critical to their success are reconsidering how their employees perceive them ([Drūteikienė et al., 2023](#)). Moreover, by empowering individuals psychologically, organizations can promote a stronger conviction that they can appropriately handle diverse scenarios and successfully apply their knowledge and skills ([Drūteikienė et al., 2023](#)).

DISCUSSION

This meta-synthesis underscores the multifaceted nature of employee engagement and workplace identity, highlighting the importance of psychological factors. Notably, HRM practices, organizational culture, and employee engagement are highly perceived by employees ([Panes & Galanta, 2021](#)). Employees who strongly identify with green values exhibit higher engagement in sustainability efforts ([Abdou et al., 2023](#)). This deeper engagement not only enhances individual performance but also fosters a more collaborative and innovative work environment ([Mohiuddin et al., 2022](#)). Furthermore, the findings emphasize the need for organizations to move beyond traditional approaches to employee management and embrace strategies that promote psychological empowerment, intrinsic motivation, and a sense of ownership ([Panes & Galanta, 2021](#)) ([Jo & Shin, 2025](#)). By prioritizing these elements, organizations can cultivate a more engaged and committed workforce, which in turn drives organizational success and sustainability ([Mohiuddin et al., 2022](#)). Interventions that focus on enhancing the psychological empowerment of employees are likely to foster greater engagement ([Stander & Rothmann, 2010](#)).

Moreover, organizations that prioritize sustainable HRM practices are more likely to develop an influential organizational culture, enhance job security, promote health, and encourage flexibility ([Mohiuddin et al., 2022](#)). The findings suggest that green HRM practices positively influence employees' pro-environmental behaviors through pro-environmental psychological capital and environmental knowledge ([Saeed et al., 2018](#)).

Therefore, to facilitate these behaviors, organizations should prioritize the psychological well-being of their employees ([Mohiuddin et al., 2022](#)). Employees' green behavior can be improved through green human resource management practices such as training and empowerment ([Chen & Wu, 2022](#)). By taking on environmental obligations, business groups have been at the forefront of environmental protection and economic growth ([Sarfo et al., 2024](#)). Green HRM practices not only improve environmental performance but also contribute to an organization's competitive advantage ([Gill et al., 2021](#)) ([Cesário et al., 2022](#)). The strategic implementation of green HRM practices signals an organization's commitment to environmental sustainability, which is vital for maintaining a positive reputation among stakeholders and ensuring long-term success ([Danilwan et al., 2020](#)). Employees are more

satisfied with a company, which helps minimize labor turnover and enhance competitive advantage from existing possibilities in changing markets ([Papademetriou et al., 2023](#)). Effective leadership, a supportive workplace culture, employee empowerment, and personal well-being are all critical drivers of sustainable employee engagement.

Organizations that prioritize employee motivation, considering physical, mental, and social dimensions, can save time and money while fostering a more motivated workforce ([Staniec & Kalińska-Kula, 2021](#)). Motivated employees are more likely to be productive and engaged ([Chompukum & Vanichbuncha, 2025](#)). In today's knowledge-based industries, human capital is crucial, emphasizing the need for organizations to appreciate and nurture their employees ([Schaufeli, 2021](#)). To boost work engagement, studies suggest promoting a sense of meaning in employees' jobs, ensuring they feel secure, and providing the necessary resources ([Li et al., 2024](#)). Organizations must acknowledge that employee motivation goes beyond simple monetary incentives, encompassing respect, recognition, and growth opportunities ([Benazir & Iqbal, 2015](#)).

Employees who feel valued for their uniqueness and are part of a supportive team are more likely to report higher job satisfaction. When employees are actively involved in decision-making and problem-solving, they develop a sense of ownership and are more committed to their work. An organization's dedication to employee growth, as shown by chances for skill enhancement and career advancement, significantly affects job satisfaction. Organizations can foster employee engagement by emphasizing initiatives that improve development value, which include recognition, self-worth, confidence, and chances for career advancement ([Thao et al., 2024](#)). Furthermore, when employees are motivated, they are also more dedicated to following elevated requirements and protocols that enhance efficiency, dedication, and motivation ([Sharma et al., 2023](#)). When workers comprehend the influence of their work and feel psychologically empowered, they are more likely to be engaged ([Chompukum & Vanichbuncha, 2025](#)).

Moreover, engagement is significantly influenced by motivation, which is intrinsic and extrinsic ([Delaney & Royal, 2017](#); [Sukalova et al., 2022](#)). Intrinsic motivation arises from a desire to do tasks well and a feeling of accomplishment, whereas extrinsic motivation is influenced by outside incentives, such as pay and promotions. Companies can enhance organizational performance and promote employee retention by paying attention to these motivational elements and customizing HR strategies to meet the various needs of their staff ([Sharma et al., 2023](#); [Teoh et al., 2023](#)). Organizations should focus on understanding what makes employees proud of their roles, defining strategies to enhance this feeling and nurture an emotional commitment that monetary compensation cannot ([Pereira et al., 2021](#)).

CONCLUSION

This meta-synthesis underscores the multidimensional nature of employee engagement and workplace identity. It highlights the pivotal role of psychological empowerment, social identity, and meaningful work experiences in fostering a committed and productive workforce ([Drūteikienė et al., 2023](#)). Organizations must prioritize creating inclusive cultures, strengthening employees' sense of ownership, and empowering their workforce to foster long-term engagement and loyalty ([Chompukum & Vanichbuncha, 2025](#); [Joo et al., 2019](#)).

In conclusion, motivation and engagement is a shared responsibility between employees and employers ([Cheraiasi et al., 2014](#)). By understanding and meeting employees' needs, organizations can foster a motivated and engaged workforce, leading to improved organizational outcomes. . Employee motivation goes beyond simple monetary incentives, encompassing respect, recognition, and growth opportunities ([Sharma et al., 2023](#)).

Future research should explore how organizations can effectively measure and manage employee engagement and workplace identity, as well as how these constructs impact organizational performance.

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