

# Factors Affecting Employee Engagement: An Analysis of Online Food Aggregator Industry in India

**Sujoy Sen**

Assistant Professor  
Institute of Professional Education & Research, Bhopal, MP, India  
sensujoyjbp@gmail.com

**Amit Tiwari**

Assistant Professor  
Institute of Professional Education & Research, Bhopal, MP, India

**“If you always do what you always did, you will always get what you always got”**

**Albert Einstein**

## ABSTRACT

Disruption is a word which for long has been there in all the dictionaries of the world but has got an all-new meaning recently. Anything which disturbs the status quo is a disruption which can be both positive and negative. The Indian Hotel & Restaurant Industry is also going through such a disruption where the consumer has now the comfort of ordering his favorite food swiping through the menu card on his smart phone and that too on a discounted price. The only connect between the consumer and the restaurant is now is the app and the delivery guy. But in order to understand what the consumer wants the food tech companies and its employees has to be continuously involved with the consumer at one end and the restaurant partner at the other. To maintain such a complex relationship the employees of these companies needs to be totally engaged with their work as they are the link between the two extreme ends. Based on the scale developed by Schaufeli and Bakker (2003) the research paper tends to study the factors affecting employee engagement in the Food Tech Industry in India taking the employee of two popular companies Zomato and Swiggy as the respondent.

**Keywords: Employee Engagement; Online Food Aggregators; Employee Productivity**

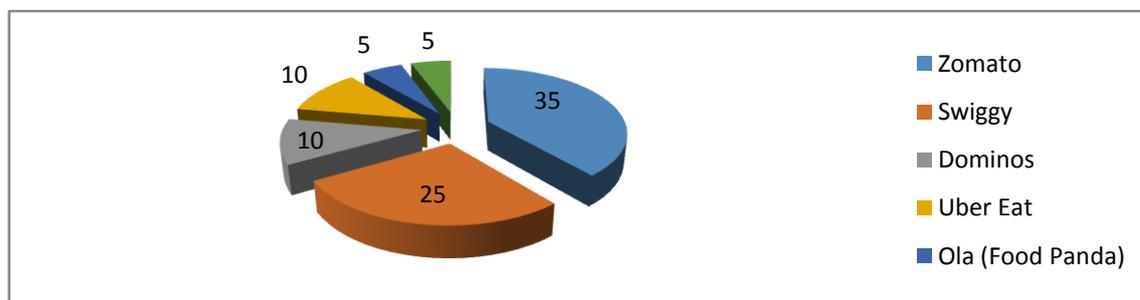
## INTRODUCTION

Internet can be considered as the biggest disruptor in the last decade which has changed the way business is being done. There is no industry left were internet has not left its mark of disruption from manufacturing to pharmacy, from banking to telecom, from transportation to retail the list goes on. The World Wide Web has so connected the globe that countries once considered at the bottom of pyramid have turned the pyramid upside down. Off these the biggest gainer can be considered the Indian IT industry which has been a game changer for the Indian diaspora spread all across the

world. It has given India the status of a country known for years as that of Snake Charmers, Ant eaters, and the beautiful Taj Mahal to a country of IT nerds who can fix any bug and program the most difficult of task. The Indian Institutes of national importance like the IITs, IIMs, NITs and IIITs are today counted amongst the best in the world.

The tremendous growth of the online platform to consumer leads restaurant rushing to the internet food delivery companies initially to register their restaurants on these platforms and improve upon their business. But with the growth of market there is tremendous competition and companies are now struggling to keep the pace with increase in demand of the customer. Since the industry has grown in the last few decades it has attracted the young and the fresh graduates who have just started their career and with high growth they have managed to attract talent with high compensation. But the industry is showing a high level of attrition also since the high energetic work environment attracts the young and the ambitious, who unfortunately do not engage with the vision and objectives of the organization easily. The reason can be a lack of culture which might be responsible for the employees to feel disconnected with the organization which in turn can be related to the lack of experience at the top management level who have fail to create a culture which can bind the individuals beyond their need of satisfying their monetary and short term objectives.

**Figure 1 Market Distribution of Food Tech Companies in India**

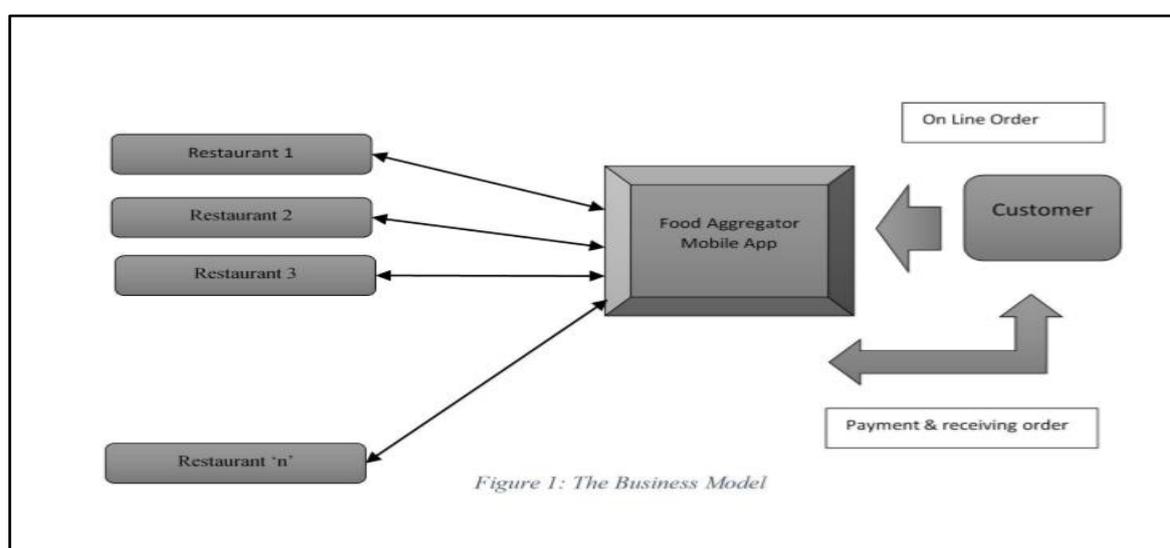


Employee productivity is something which all organization strives for the more efficient the employee is the more effectively the organization can allocate and use its resources; having a workforce which is dedicated and in sync with the objectives of organization is dream for any Management. Leadership can improve productivity but a highly engaged workforce who is dedicated to its task can achieve the unthinkable. Today with increase in competition the company has to discover and rediscover their offerings as per the changing needs of the customer, technological advancement and pressure of competition. A continuously engaged employee is expected to engage the customer who in turn can be engaged to company and better understand any change in features and availability of products and services of the company. There are several products and services in which the engagement of customer is very high as he is the one who finally decides the final

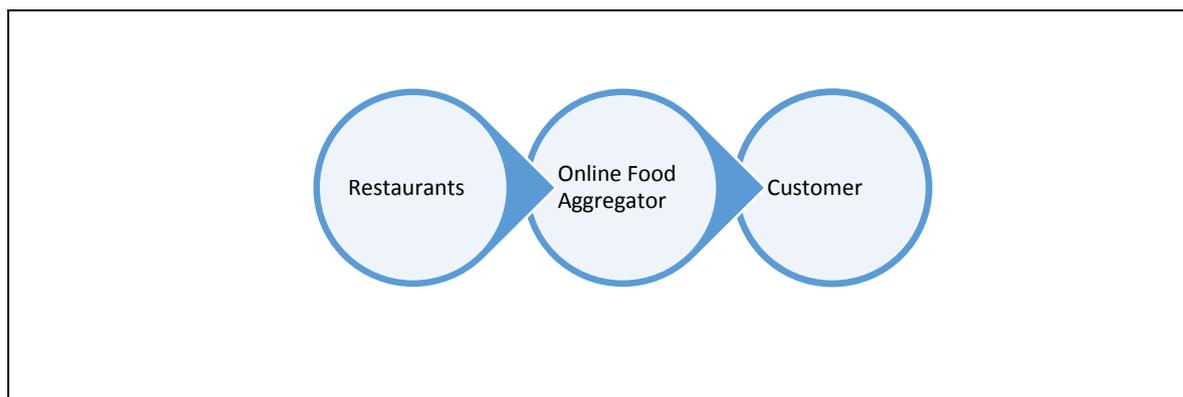
outcome and features of the product. In such offerings it's very imperative that the employees are also very much engaged, online food delivery is one such industry which needs high degree of employee involvement in their work. As they are a link between the customer and the restaurants who are serving the food, though they are not preparing the food and only delivering it, but for the customer they are the face of the restaurants and that why it's important for them to understand the needs of the customer which in turn can be shared with the company as well as the restaurant partner.

The below is brief pictorial representation of food aggregators business model where we can clearly see how different restaurants are connected through app or aggregator companies and forms a bridge between the customer and restaurants.

**Figure 2 Business Models of Online Food Aggregators Companies**



The level to which individuals value, enjoy and believe in what they do. Its measure is similar to employee contentment and devotion. Fleming, Coffman and Harter (2005) use the term devoted employees as a synonym for engaged employees. Robinson, Perryman and Hayday (2004) define engagement as "a positive approach held by the employee towards the business and its values". An engaged employee is conscious of the business perspective, works with his co-workers to improve performance within the job for the benefit of his organization and in turn the organization also must cultivate and nurture engagement, which is mutual relationship between the employer and employee.

**Figure 3 Online Food Aggregator Relationships with Restaurants & Customer****Work engagement is defined as follows**

‘Engagement is a positive feeling towards one’s organization which is gained when one is having a, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption. Rather than a temporary and definite state, engagement refers to a more dogged and ubiquitous affective-cognitive state that is not focused on any particular object, event, individual, or performance.

**Vigor** is characterized by high levels of drive and mental strength while working, the willingness to invest effort in one’s work, and determined even in the face of difficulties.

**Dedication** refers to being intensely involved in one’s work and experiencing a sense of importance, passion, motivation, pride, and challenge.

**Absorption**, is characterized by being fully focussed and happily captivated in one’s work, whereby time passes swiftly and one has difficulties with detaching oneself from work’

**REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

The importance of employee engagement has always been felt in the Western countries in comparison to their counterpart in Asian Countries (Manish Gupta 2017). Employee productivity is an assessment of the efficiency of a worker or group of workers. Productivity is a component which directly affects the company’s profits (Gummesson, 1998; Sels et al., 2006) and evaluated in terms of the yield of an employee in a definite period of time. Normally, the productivity of a given worker is measured vis-a-vis an average out for employees doing similar kind of work. It can also be calculated according to the quantity of units of a product or service that an employee does in a defined time frame (Piana, 2001). As the success of a business depends mainly on the efficiency of its employees, therefore, employee productivity has become an important objective for businesses (Cato & Gordon, 2009; Gummesson, 1998; Sharma & Sharma, 2014).

Many studies have focused on one or two ways to measure productivity and since many different approaches are taken, it can be challenging to compare the results (Nollman, 2013). Overall, there is a lack of an effective and standardized way to assess productivity. According to Sharma and Sharma (2014), employee productivity is based on the amount of time that an employee is physically present at his/ her job, besides the extent to which he/ she is “mentally present” or efficiently working during the presence at the job. Companies should address such issues in order to ensure high worker productivity. Ferreira and Du Plessis (2009) indicated that productivity can be evaluated in terms of the time spent by an employee actively executing the job he or she was hired to do, in order to produce the desired outcomes expected from an employee’s job description.

Previous literature has clearly discussed the advantages of employee productivity which would lead to organizational success. According to Sharma and Sharma (2014), higher productivity results in economic growth, higher profitability, and social progress. It is only by increasing productivity, employees can obtain better wages/ salaries, working conditions and larger employment opportunities. Cato and Gordon (2009) also demonstrated that the alignment of the strategic vision to employee productivity is a key contributor to the success of an organization. This alignment as a result would motivate and inspire employees to be more creative, and this ultimately can improve their performance effectiveness to accomplish organizational goals and objectives (Morales et al., 2001; Obdulio, 2014). Moreover, higher productivity tends to increase the competitive advantage through reduction in costs and improvement in quality of output.

The above discussion has clearly discussed the concept of employee productivity. It indicates that employee productivity is a key determinant of organizational profitability and success. In the following section, work engagement as key human resource practice and its effect on employee productivity is presented.

Several definitions of employee engagement exist in the literature. Fleming and Asplund (2007, p. 2) describes employee engagement as, “the ability to capture the heads, hearts, and souls of your employees to instil an intrinsic desire and passion for excellence”. Certain scholars also viewed employee engagement as a construct which consists of cognitive, emotional, and behavioural elements that are related to the role of employee performance (Shuck et al., 2011). It reflects the commitment and involvement of an employee towards his/ her work that is aimed to improve organizational performance (Sundaray, 2011). Furthermore, Bakker and Demerouti (2008) defined engagement as “a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by Vigor, dedication, and absorption”.

According to Bakker and Demerouti (2008), Vigor can be described in terms of an employee's levels of energy and the mental resilience while doing his/her work. Shirom (2003) indicated that Vigor refers to the mental and physical health of an employee. On the other hand, Harpaz and Snir (2014) expressed dedication in terms of being highly involved in the work and is reflected through the feelings of enthusiasm, challenge, and significance. The other dimension of work engagement which is known as absorption was previously described by being fully focused and happily attached in one's work, whereby the employee feels that time passes quickly and has difficulties with detaching himself from work (Truss et al., 2013).

Employee engagement is a key organizational issue that should be strictly given enormous consideration by organizational management in the current scenario of challenging business environment (Saxena & Srivastava, 2015). This is because highly engaged and motivated employees reflect the core values of the organization, and this resultantly reinforces overall brand equity (Ramanujam, 2014). The review of literature reveals that engaged employees yield positive organizational outcomes. In the rapidly changing markets, business leaders recognize that highly engaged employees can increase their productivity and firm performance (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008; Markos & Sridevi, 2010). In other words, engaged employees feel passionate about their work, happy to work in their organization, and have the enthusiasm to go to their work every day (Ramanujam, 2014). Besides that, employees who are engaged in their work are deemed very important for their organizations in maintaining competitive advantages; coping with changes, and ensuring work innovations. Past studies (Abraham, 2012; Anitha, 2014; Echols, 2005; Haid & Sims, 2009) found that work engagement had a significant positive effect on employee productivity. According to Zahargier and Balasundaram (2011), a prosperous and highly dynamic business can be achieved by engaging its employees in improving their performance. In line with the study of Markos and Sridevi (2010), employers should consider investing in workforce engagement because it has a positive impact on performance outcomes such as employee productivity.

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

- To analyse the level of Employee Engagement in Selected Companies (Zomato & Swiggy).
- To study the various factors that affects Employee Engagement Activities in the selected Companies.

**HYPOTHESIS TESTING:**

- **H<sub>1</sub>:**There is no difference in Vigor with which employees of Swiggy & Zomato approach their work
- **H<sub>2</sub>:**There is no difference in the degree of dedication with which employees of Swiggy & Zomato approach their work
- **H<sub>3</sub>:**There is no difference in the level of absorption with which employees of Swiggy & Zomato approach their work

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

A thorough literature review was conducted on the topic before selecting the major factors that impacts the Engagement of an employee .This study followed the quantitative approach for collecting the relevant data from respondents. In particular, an online survey was administered to 100 permanent staff working in the food aggregator companies like zomato and swiggy. The measurement scales of constructs were adopted and adapted from previous studies to ensure that the respondents can easily understand them and suit the context of this study. As stated above in the literature review, work engagement is composed of three dimensions, namely vigor, dedication, and absorption. All of the aforementioned dimensions were measured using the scale developed by Schaufeli and Bakker (2003); Vigor (six items), dedication (five items), and absorption (five items).

All the items were measured on five point Likert scale ranging from “1=strongly disagree” to “5=strongly agree”. The obtained data was analyses through SPSS 20.0 version

A number of tests such as Cronbach’s alpha reliability, face validity and factor analysis were conducted to generate the outcomes of this study and to confirm whether the factors actually measured what they ought to measure.

The reliability analysis was conducted on all variables using Cronbach’s alpha the values are satisfactory ranging from 0.739 to 0.810. Specifically, employee engagement achieved an average Cronbach’s alpha value of 0.784. The dimensions of employee engagement were also reported at high reliability Cronbach’s alpha; Vigor (0.810), dedication (0.801), absorption (0.739). Therefore, it can be concluded that the values of Cronbach’s alpha for all variables are acceptable and satisfied the minimum requirement as suggested by Pallant (2007).

**Reliability Test:****Table 1**

<b>Reliability Statistics</b>		
<b>Variable</b>	<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>	<b>N of Items</b>
Vigor	0.810	6
Dedication	0.801	5
Absorption	0.739	6

**ANALYSIS OF RESULT**

The results of respondents' profile are presented in Table 1 it can be seen, that the distribution of male and female is equal 15 (50 %). In terms of education, all the respondents where post graduate with MBA as their preferred degree. The majority of respondents (83%) had working experience in the rage of 2-4 years and also most of them were from sales (80%) and marketing (20%). The data also showed that most of them are pretty well paid with an average salary of 400000 to the highest salary in the range of 800000. The majority of employee in both the companies is working in sales and marketing domain.

**Respondents Profile:****Table 2**

<b>Respondent Profile</b>			
		<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Company</b>	Zomato	21	70
	Swiggy	09	30
<b>Gender</b>	Male	15	50
	Female	15	50
<b>Hierarchy</b>	Senior Management	0	0
	Middle Management	25	83
	Junior Management	5	17
<b>Experience</b>	0yrs-2yrs	0	0
	2 yrs-4 yrs.	25	83
	4yrs-6yrs	5	17
	6yrs-8yrs	0	0
<b>Qualifications</b>	Post Graduate	30	100
	Graduate	0	0
	others	0	0
<b>Area</b>	Sales	24	80
	Marketing	6	20
	Finance	0	0
	HR	0	0
<b>Salary</b>	400001-600000	15	50
	6000001-800000	15	50
	8000001-1000000	0	0
	1000000 and above	0	0

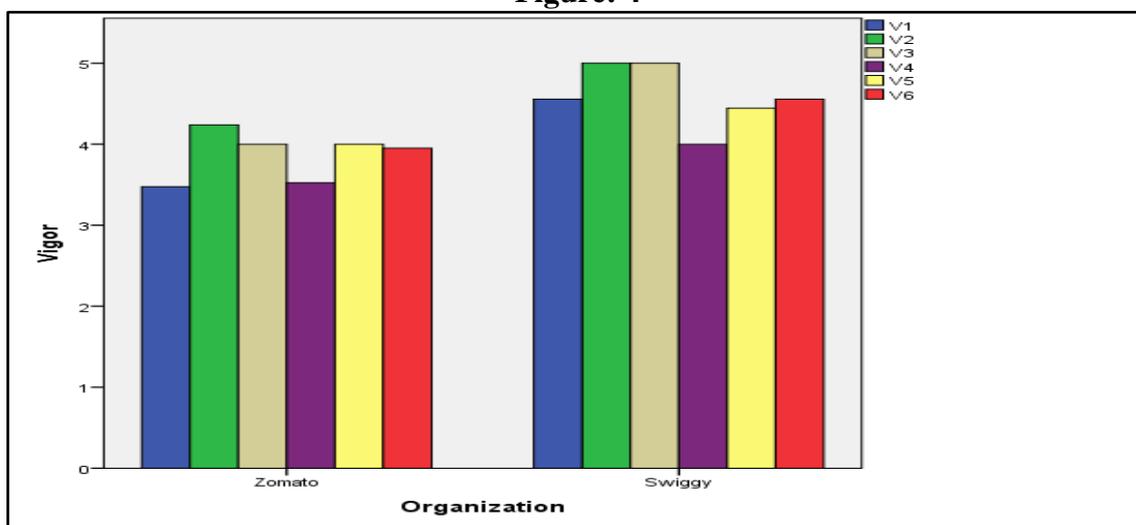
For testing of hypothesis Mann Whitney U Test was it is used to measure the difference of mean scores between two groups measured on ordinal data collected through five point likert scale following non-normal distribution.

**Table 3 Test Statistics<sup>a</sup>**

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Mann-Whitney U	20.000	22.500	.000	49.500	62.500	52.500
Wilcoxon W	251.000	253.500	231.000	280.500	293.500	283.500
Z	-3.667	-3.769	-5.385	-2.493	-1.602	-2.056
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.013	.109	.040
Exact Sig. [2*(1-tailed Sig.)]	.000 <sup>b</sup>	.001 <sup>b</sup>	.000 <sup>b</sup>	.040 <sup>b</sup>	.150 <sup>b</sup>	.056 <sup>b</sup>

From the above table it can be concluded that the Vigor towards their work is more in the employees of Swiggy in comparison to that of Zomato taking the average score we get the values as  $U=34.5$ ,  $p=.041$ ,  $Z= -3.16$  .This is a significant result at confidence level of 5%. Thus we can reject the null hypothesis that the employees of both the companies approach their work with same vigor. The further result can be explained using the descriptive analysis and visual survey of the graph.

**Figure: 4**



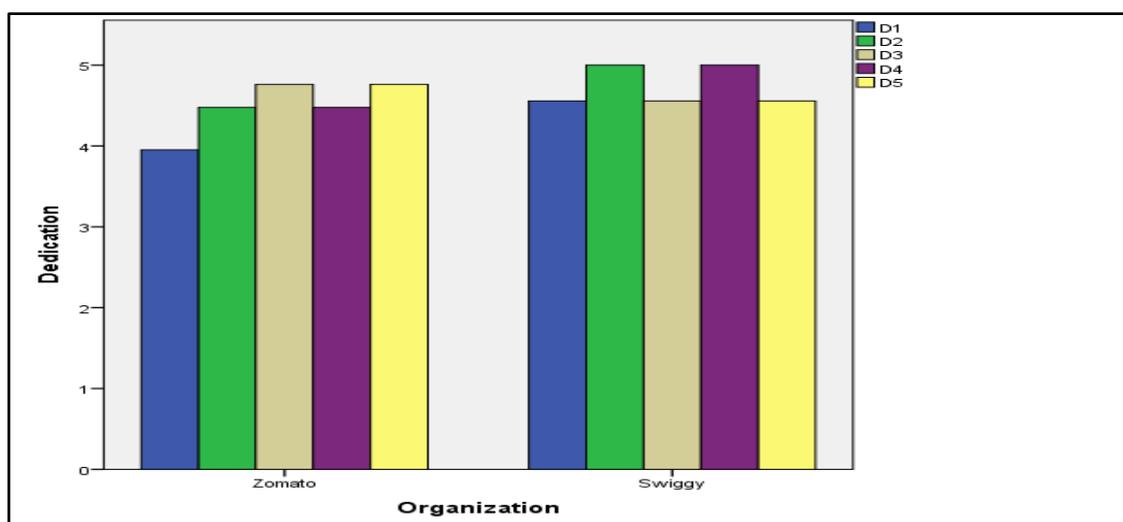
By comparing the mean scores of six items which measure Vigor with which employees work in their organization is an important aspect of employee engagement. It was found based on the highest mean rank that the employees at Swiggy have more of Vigor when it comes to approaching their work in comparison to Zomato and as result are more engaged towards their work. The same result can be seen in the diagrammatic representation also.

Table 5 Test Statistics<sup>a</sup>

	D1	D2	D3	D4	D5
Mann-Whitney U	52.500	45.000	75.000	45.000	75.000
Wilcoxon W	283.500	276.000	120.000	276.000	120.000
Z	-2.056	-2.682	-1.111	-2.682	-1.111
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.040	.007	.266	.007	.266
Exact Sig. [2*(1-tailed Sig.)]	.056 <sup>b</sup>	.025 <sup>b</sup>	.397 <sup>b</sup>	.025 <sup>b</sup>	.397 <sup>b</sup>

From the above table it can be concluded that the Dedication towards their work is more in the employees of Zomato in comparison to that of Swiggy taking the average score we get the values as  $U=58.5$ ,  $p=.18$ ,  $Z= -1.92$ . This is a significant result at confidence level of 5%. Thus we can reject the null hypothesis that the employees of both the companies approach their work with same dedication. The further result can be explained using the descriptive analysis and visual survey of the graph.

Figure: 5



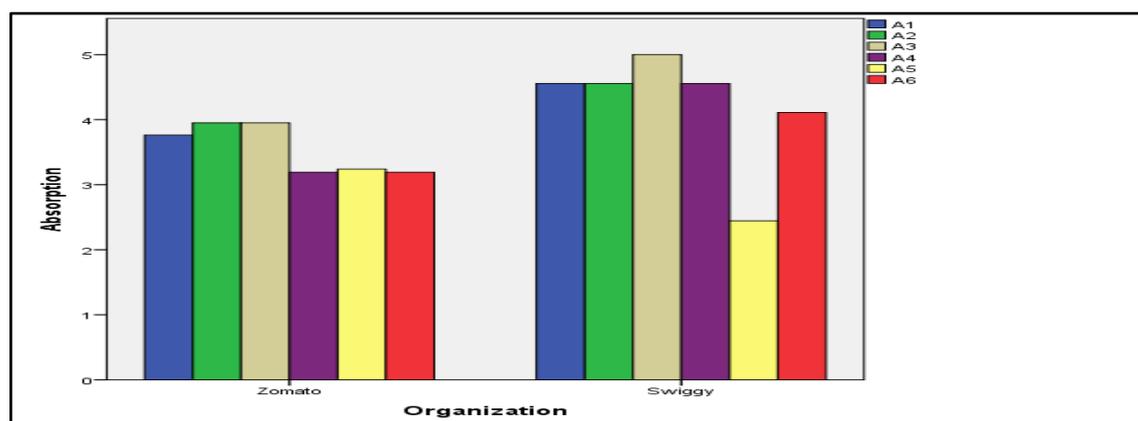
By comparing the mean scores of five items which measure Dedication with which employees work in their organization is an important aspect of employee engagement. It was found based on the highest mean rank that the employees at Zomato have more of Dedication when it comes to approaching their work in comparison to Swiggy and as result are more engaged towards their work. The same result can be seen in the diagrammatic representation also.

Table 5 Test Statistics<sup>a</sup>

	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	A6
Mann-Whitney U	54.500	52.500	22.500	42.500	44.500	52.500
Wilcoxon W	285.500	283.500	253.500	273.500	89.500	283.500
Z	-1.982	-2.056	-3.525	-2.498	-2.399	-2.056
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.047	.040	.000	.012	.016	.040
Exact Sig. [2*(1-tailed Sig.)]	.070 <sup>b</sup>	.056 <sup>b</sup>	.001 <sup>b</sup>	.017 <sup>b</sup>	.022 <sup>b</sup>	.056 <sup>b</sup>

From the above table it can be concluded that the degree of being Absorbed in their work is more in the employees of Swiggy in comparison to that of Zomato taking the average score we get the values as  $U=44.84$ ,  $p=.037$ ,  $Z= -2.41$ . This is a significant result at confidence level of 5%. Thus we can reject the null hypothesis that the employees of both the companies are equally absorbed in their work. The further result can be explained using the descriptive analysis and visual survey of the graph.

Figure: 6



By comparing the mean scores of six items which measure absorption with which employees work in their organization is an important aspect of employee engagement. It was found based on the highest mean rank that the employees at Swiggy have more of Dedication when it comes to approaching their work in comparison to Zomato and as result are more engaged towards their work. The same result can be seen in the diagrammatic representation also.

## FINDINGS

Based on our study the findings can be divided into two parts, one based on the descriptive study and the other based on the various statistical tests on the collected data.

1. It is observed that the industry follows gender diversity as the number of male and female employees is almost equal.
2. Most of the respondent belongs to middle and lower management as these are new age companies tend to follow a relatively flat structure.
3. The average work experience in this industry is 3-6 years reason being the industry itself being too young.
4. The average salary is quite high in comparison to people working at the same level in other industries like banking and telecom.
5. The average employee working in this industry is quite highly qualified with most of them as MBAs or Software Engineers.
6. Most of the employees are either working in sales or marketing team or if not then in the technical team associated with the mobile platform.
7. The employees at Swiggy approach their job with more Vigor in comparison to Zomato as result they are more engaged in their work.
8. The employees at Zomato approach their job with more Dedication in comparison to Swiggy and as result is more engaged in their work.
9. The employees at Swiggy looks more absorbed in their job in comparison to that of Zomato and as a result are more engaged in their work.

## CONCLUSION

The Indian Customer is on a cross road where he has to decide what matters him the most the experience of eating out with friends and family or actually the taste of food. He can now sit comfortably in his home and have the luxury of ordering his favorite dish at cheapest rates with lot many future options of offers and discounts. But in doing so the restaurant which is open to give an eating experience is losing its sheen. In a nutshell the food tech companies are promoting the product and killing the brand by endorsing their own brand. This business model is favorable for the end consumer where he has got a lot many options to choose from. It's too early to say anything on the sustainability of this model but the way the world is moving towards digitalization this model is here to stay for long. But to keep the employees engaged in such an industry where the customer perception about the service is dependent more on the quality of product on which you do not have any control

is quite different. The Industry have to continuously come up with unique HR initiatives to keep this young and restless millennial generation employee engaged in his work as only an engaged employee promises to keep the customer engaged .

## LIMITATIONS

1. The study was conducted on a small group of employees.
2. The study was limited to employees working in only two companies namely Zomato and Swiggy
3. The study was limited to employees mainly working in marketing and sales domain of the organization.
4. The study was limited to only the lower and middle management of the organization.
5. Not much of literature is available on this Industry.

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