

## An Analytic Study On The Impact Of Digital Employee Engagement Practices On Organizational Performance In Smes In India

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### Abstract

**Introduction:** It has become significantly important for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in India to digitalize entirely in order to improve efficiency.

**Aim:** This analysis aims to examine the effect of the approaches related to virtual employee engagement on the performance of businesses in SMEs in India.

**Literature review:** The employee engagement model helps SMEs to engage and motivate their employees. The stages and format of the concerned Gallup model help the SMEs to conduct it virtually to engage the virtual employees as well,

**Methodology:** Primary quantitative analysis is the effective way to carry out this analysis due to the opportunities of obtaining data first-hand. The survey helps the study to quantify the variables and test the hypotheses.

**Findings:** The inclusion of advanced technical infrastructure is not required for now. However, the SMEs must incorporate many modern technologies to enhance efficiency.

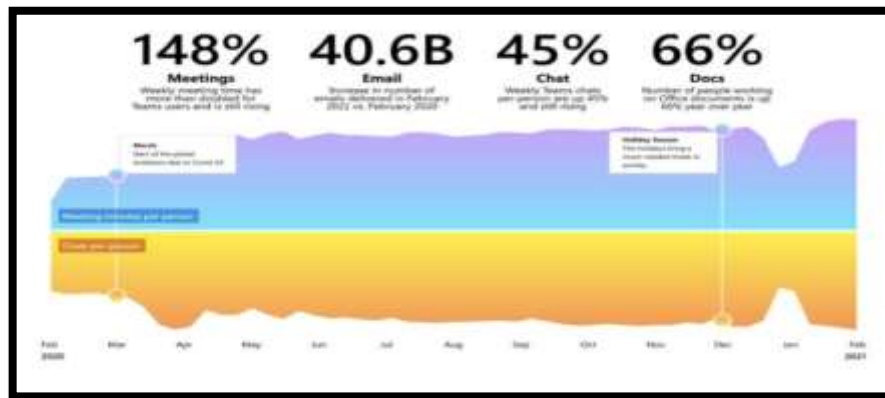
Discussion: In the future, the SMEs in India must adhere to technological advancement considering appropriate infrastructure to support virtual employee engagement strategies.

Conclusion: The significance of digitally engaging the employees to connect with the organizational management is getting high due to the increasing ratio of hybrid working to promote work-from-home concept.

Keywords: Digital Employee Engagement Practices, SMEs, Organizational Performance.

### Introduction

The use of collaborative technology tools can improve functional efficiency by 130% in Indian business setups. This could help the SME enterprises of India to adopt the hybrid working strategy in an effective manner (Winasis, Riyanto & Ariyanto, 2020). In addition, they can implement digital employee engagement facilities efficiently.



**Figure 1: Rising of Virtual Work**

(Source: Housing, 2021)

From the above-presented diagrammatic representation, it is seen that the virtual working culture is emerging and being promoted in the concerned nation, especially within the SME sector (Housing, 2021). Following this, the virtual work conducted following through meetings, where 148% of weekly meeting time has become more than doubled due to the digital team users. Therefore, conducting informal meetings would be a great initiative for the concerned SMEs in India.

**Aim:** This study aims to explore the impact of the practices related to digital employee engagement on the performance of corporations all across the SMEs in India.

### **Research Objectives**

**RO 1:** To identify the concept of digital employee engagement along with its strategies and practices

**RO 2:** To investigate the impact of implementing digital employee engagement practices on the organizational performance of SMEs in India

**RO 3:** To examine the possible threats of implementing the digital engagement of employee-related practices on the performance of the company

**RO 4:** To recognize the potential solutions to the possible threats identified with the practices of digital engagement of employees in India's SMEs

### **Research Questions**

**RQ 1:** What are digital employee engagement and its practices within SMEs in India?

**RQ 2:** What is the impact of the implementation of digital employee engagement practices on organizational performance?

**RQ 3:** What are the threats to implementing digital employee engagement practices on the performance of the organization across the SMEs in India?

**RQ 4:** What are the potential solutions to the possible threats in digital employee engagement practices?

### **Literature Review**

#### **Concept and Impact of virtual employee engagement on the Performance of the Company**

Digital employee experience (DEE) can be referred to as a unique and valuable method for employees to engage with their employers. This is especially for remote workers who work from their homes, the management of SME companies needs to make them feel connected with the organizations

(Khan et al. 2020). These aforementioned activities can be 'quarterly Christmas', 'you are awesome channel' and so on which are carried out through their phones or on their home screen (Winasis et al. 2020). However, in Indian SMEs, the digital strategies for employee engagement have not been improved yet.



**Figure 2: Major Factors for Employee Engagement**

(Source: Wipro, 2020)

The above-presented diagrammatic representation 2 showed the critical influencing factors of employee engagement, which are fulfilling the career goals, and personal milestones of the

employees along with offering them an overall excellent experience and strong cultural dynamics (Wipro, 2020). As stated by Stofberg, Strasheim & Koekemoer, (2021), in the virtual employee's context, the SMEs in India have to do the same by introducing some virtual activities to fulfill those aforementioned major factors. Additionally as opined, by Adisa, Ogbonnaya & Adekoya, (2021), it is important to enhance the employee experience digitally by engaging virtual workers, as it would create an environment that enables seamless connection as well as collaboration. In addition, the workflow and productivity of each individual would be maintained due to the enhanced experience. This should be carried out along with the self-service HR and IT.

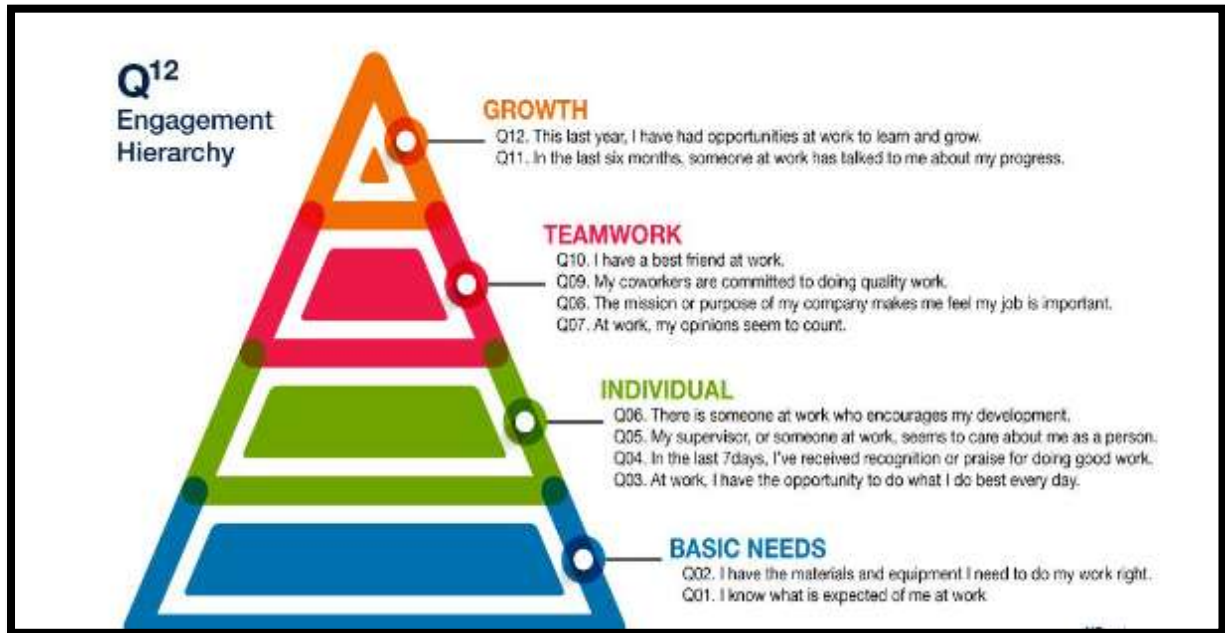
#### **Threats and possible solutions for implementing the activities to engage employees virtually**

It is seen that the facilities offered to remote workers by SMEs in India are not so effective. Additionally, the incorporation of advanced technologies and building a strong technical infrastructure has not improved yet. Hence, offering employee engagement strategies digitally is not entirely possible for the concerned SME organizations (Viktorovna, 2022). Apart from this, the basic issues of employee engagement in the organization can be reflected digitally as well such as lack of support from the leadership style and leaders. It is to state that digital communication can weaken the bond between leaders and virtual workers (Arora & Gupta, 2020). In addition, the autocratic or leader-dominated leadership style would not go along with the hybrid style of working; this would severely impact the entire employee engagement.

The potential solution to the identified threats of the implementation of DEE within the hybrid setup at the SMEs, the strong corporate culture and structure are the main two factors to resolve these issues (Gheidar & ShamiZanjani, 2021). If the corporate structure is strong enough to handle the hybrid work culture well, the DEE can be established within the SMEs in India.

#### **Gallup Employee Engagement Model**

In Gallup's Model, employee engagement is perceived as the involvement and enthusiasm of workers within their work and workplace (Winasis et al. 2021). Employee involvement within the interest and operations of the SMEs is needed to modify and enhance the performance of the companies in India.



**Figure 3: Employee Engagement Concept via Gallup Model**

(Source: calpolycorporation, 2023)

As per the above-presented diagrammatic representation 3, the four main stages of the concerned model have been provided which are basic needs, individual, teamwork, and growth (calpolycorporation, 2023). Following this, Gallup has identified twelve elements of engagement, which can be asked to employees in the question format to analyze the high quotient of team performance. The virtual employees can also be involved within the structure of the concerned model where they can be forwarded the questions via an online survey to know their engagement quotient.

### Methodology

The primary quantitative method has been followed here to quantify the implication of digital employee engagement-related practices on the organizational performances of SMEs in India. As opined by Pandey & Pandey, (2021), through the primary quantitative research method, the entire focus was based on acquiring data directly instead of obtaining it from previously done research. Due to this, a larger sample can be tapped by conducting an online survey process (Braun et al. 2021). 90 samples were taken into consideration that was associated with the concerned SME organizations' employees in India, working virtually. The thirteen survey questionnaires that included three demographic and ten descriptive questions

were based on the three hypotheses. The concerned hypothesis testing has been done by creating one dependent variable (DV) and three independent variables (IV). Based on the survey results, the responses were processed through the SPSS software following the regression linear analysis. Furthermore, linear regression within the research methodology can be referred to as the analytical tool where the values of the independent variables were predicted with precision and accuracy with the value of the dependent variable here.

### **Findings**

**DV:** Organizational Performance in SMEs in India

**IV1:** Digital Employee Engagement Practices

**IV2:** Advanced Technological Infrastructure

**IV3:** Employee Training

### **Hypothesis 1**

**H1:** Digital Employee Engagement Practices Impact the organizational performance

**H0:** Digital Employee Engagement Practices do not influence the organizational performance

### **Hypothesis 2**

**H1:** Advanced technological infrastructure is required to implement for integrating digital technologies and enhancing overall organizational productivity

**H0:** Advanced technical infrastructure is needed to execute for incorporating digital technologies and improving overall organizational productivity in SMEs in India

### **Hypothesis 3**

**H1:** Proper employee training is mandatory to increase the performance and productivity of the SMEs in India

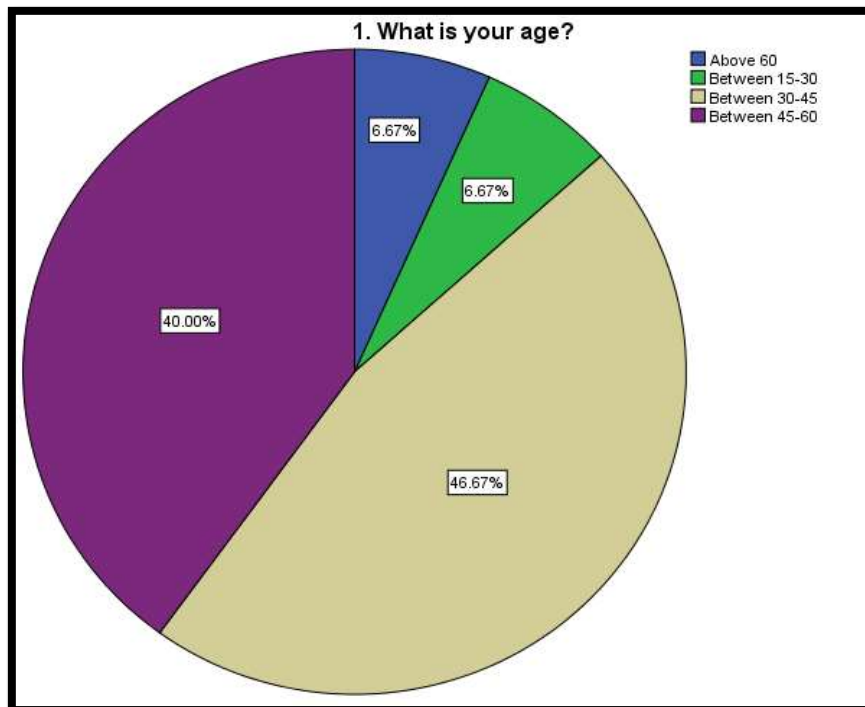
**H0:** Proper employee training is compulsory to boost the performance and productivity of the SMEs in India

**Demographic data****Age**

1. What is your age?					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Above 60	6	6.7	6.7	6.7
	Between 15-30	6	6.7	6.7	13.3
	Between 30-45	42	46.7	46.7	60.0
	Between 45-60	36	40.0	40.0	100.0
	Total	90	100.0	100.0	

**Table 1: Age analysis**

(Source: SPSS)

**Figure 4: Age analysis**

From the above-presented graphical representation in Figure 4, it is reflected that most of the respondents of 46.67% were aged between 30 and 45. This proves the experienced group is currently leading SME enterprises in India (Zel & Kongar, 2020).



In addition to this, all the respondents are following the hybrid working strategy, especially focusing on working from home culture. Furthermore, 40.00% of respondents were from the age group of 45 to 60 years, they are experienced and the rest of 6.67% of respondents were above 60 and aged between 15 and 30. The presence of above 60 respondents evidently shows that the officially retired people can also join the work virtually and they stayed engaged at work.

### Gender

2. What is your gender?					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Man	12	13.3	13.3	13.3
	Prefer not to respond	12	13.3	13.3	26.7
	Transgender	54	60.0	60.0	86.7
	Woman	12	13.3	13.3	100.0
	Total	90	100.0	100.0	

Table 2: Gender analysis

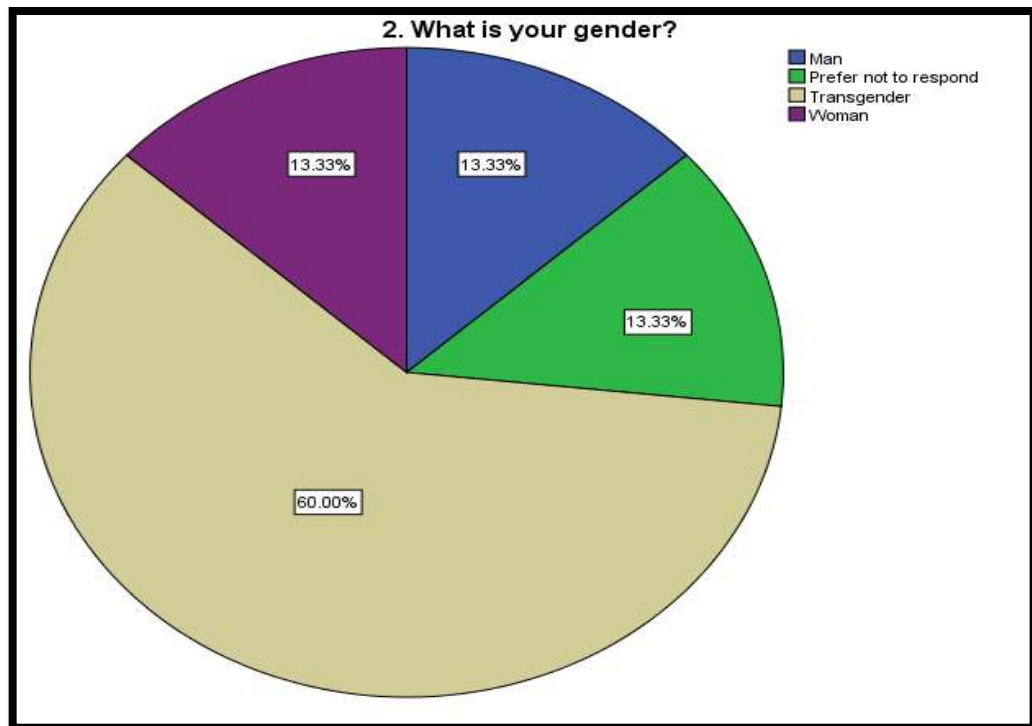


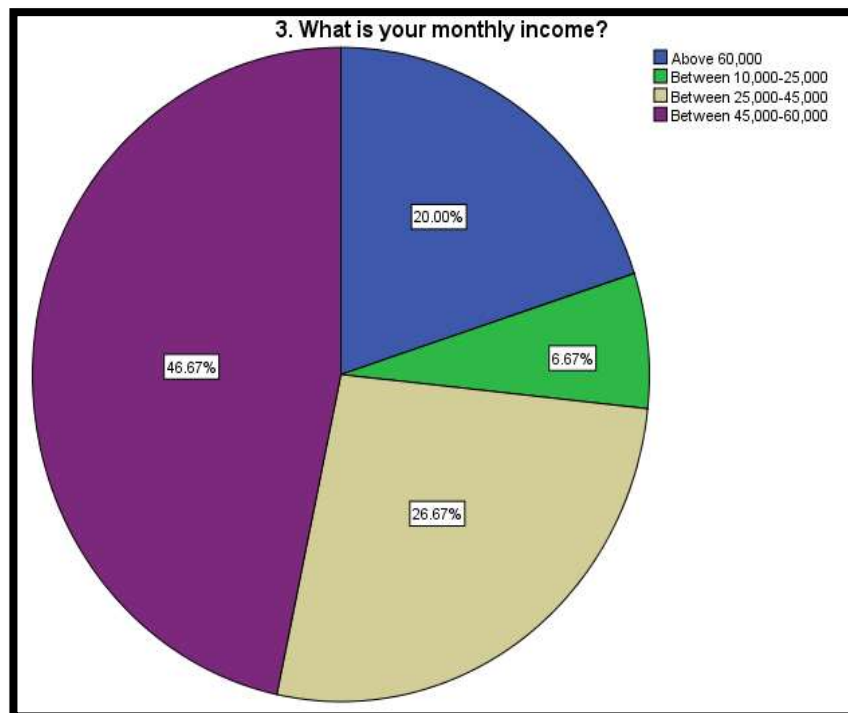
Figure 5: Gender analysis

Figure 5 reflected on the gender analysis that reflects that 60.00% of respondents were transgender and the remaining 13.33% of respondents were men, women, and people who preferred not to respond about their gender orientation. Following the ratio of dominating respondents, it can be stated that the concerned nation is overcoming its conservations and traditional obstacles. More people with different gender and sexual orientation are being accepted here in the workplace in different industries.

### Monthly income

3. What is your monthly income?					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Above 60,000	18	20.0	20.0	20.0
	Between 10,000-25,000	6	6.7	6.7	26.7
	Between 25,000-45,000	24	26.7	26.7	53.3
	Between 45,000-60,000	42	46.7	46.7	100.0
	Total	90	100.0	100.0	

Table 3: Analysis of monthly income



**Figure 6: Analysis of income**

The analysis of monthly income in Figure 6 suggested that 46.67% of the remote workers earned between 45,000 and 60,000 and 20.00% earned above 60,000. This proves there is room for progress in the concerned digital working environment to grow further. Additionally, 26.67% of respondents earn around 25,000 to 45,000 and the remaining 6.67 of respondents are getting between 10,000 and 25,000.

**Descriptive analysis****Hypothesis 1**

Model Summary <sup>b</sup>										
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					Durbin-Watson
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	
1	.111 <sup>a</sup>	.012	.001	1.24278	.012	1.090	1	88	.299	2.190

ANOVA <sup>a</sup>						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1.683	1	1.683	1.090	.299 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	135.917	88	1.545		
	Total	137.600	89			

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	7.329	.593		12.351	.000
	Digital_Employee_Engagement_Practices	.054	.052	.111	1.044	.299

**Table 4: Hypothesis 1**

The above-presented Table 4 tested the first hypothesis, the influence of virtual employee engagement on the overall performance of the company. The overall productivity cannot be completely influenced by the concerned factor of practicing digital engagement strategies in SMEs as there are several

other factors, which account for the entire growth (Anand & Acharya, 2021). The significance value showed 0.299, which is higher than the standard value of 0.05 this means the impact of IV is less on DV.

### Hypothesis 2

Model Summary <sup>b</sup>										
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					Durbin-Watson
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	
1	.253 <sup>a</sup>	.064	.053	1.20973	.064	6.025	1	88	.016	2.453

ANOVA <sup>a</sup>						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	8.817	1	8.817	6.025	.016 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	128.783	88	1.463		
	Total	137.600	89			

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>					
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	
1	(Constant)	4.768	1.296		.000
	Advanced_Technological_Infrastructure	.283	.115	.253	.016

**Table 5: Hypothesis 2**

The above-given statistical representation of Table 5 reflected the second hypothesis of the importance of advanced technical infrastructure for carrying out digital technological operations and overall performance enhancement. SMEs all over India have seen to adopt a few advanced technologies; however, it does not entirely become technology-inclined when it comes to operating the business (Purba, 2021). However, the 0.016 significance value prediction of this hypothesis showed that the IV has less value than DV.

**Hypothesis 3**

Model Summary <sup>b</sup>										
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					Durbin-Watson
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	
1	.148 <sup>a</sup>	.022	.011	1.23674	.022	1.963	1	88	.165	2.070

ANOVA <sup>a</sup>						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	3.002	1	3.002	1.963	.165 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	134.598	88	1.530		
	Total	137.600	89			

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>					
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	
1	(Constant)	9.263	.958		.000
	Employee_Training	-.183	.131	-.148	.165

**Table 6: Hypothesis 3**

The above-presented Table 6 reflected the significant value of 0.165 for the third hypothesis on the importance of employee training for the SME's improvement. Though the training and development of the employees are significantly important, it is not the sole reason behind the improvement of the concerned SMEs all across India.

**Discussion**

It is seen that the SMEs in India have established Organization Performance Management (OPM), which provides comprehensive consulting that evaluates whether the concerned SMEs are following the exact things. This aims to lay its focus on each individual employee along with the entire teams, programs, procedures, and the company as an entirety to ensure corporate productivity (Anwar & Abdullah, 2021). Therefore, the employee engagement strategies, especially

digital practices have not been seen to be significant in the survey. However, the style and process of conducting business operations are changing with the emerging nature of SMEs in the concerned nation (Gode, Johansen, & Thomsen, 2020). The inclusion of advanced technologies, the improved operating infrastructure, becoming technology-driven, and supporting the hybrid nature of work is gradually becoming the main characteristics of the concerned SME sector. In this regard, offering the same facilities and similar motivational strategies for both the regular and virtual employees will become significant for the concerned sector. It is seen that employee engagement is significantly important to establish in the workplace context for the success of the organization. The employees must reach better mental health through the strategies and practices of the concerned employee engagement. It is the duty of HR to make them feel fulfilled and engaged in the work to improve the entire environment of the workplace (Pass & Ridgway, 2022). With more inclusion of technologies in the SME sector, enterprises would be able to permit hybrid work, promoting the work-from-home culture. Then, the SMEs would be required to implement the digital employee experiences by engaging them in virtual activities and adhering to advanced technical support.

### **Conclusion**

In the future, the increasing capacities of technological advancement need to be incorporated by SMEs all over India so that efficacy can be enhanced for digitally engaging the employees with the proper infrastructure. Within the hybrid environment of current SMEs, the organizational performance management ensures employee growth and understanding without even stressing over the digital employee engagement strategies. In this context, the concerned management must include employee engagement strategies for the virtual workers as well to support the hybrid working of the SMEs in India.

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## **Appendices**

### **Appendix 1: Survey Questions**

#### **Survey Link:**

Special Issue On Multidisciplinary Research

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScxuTPu8YBdqpquv7eJ8xG5n6RdCj6ODdFA5RzYJDQd7syA1g/viewform?usp=sf\\_link](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScxuTPu8YBdqpquv7eJ8xG5n6RdCj6ODdFA5RzYJDQd7syA1g/viewform?usp=sf_link)

**DV:** Organizational Performance in SMEs in India

**IV1:** Digital Employee Engagement Practices

**IV2:** Advanced Technological Infrastructure

**IV3:** Employee Training

**Survey:**

**Survey questions:**

**1. What is your age?**

**2. What is your gender?**

**3. What is your monthly income?**

**DV: Organizational Performance in SMEs in India**

4. Technical changes and lack of infrastructure are affecting the organizational performance of the SMEs recently

5. Retaining skilled and motivated human resource is one of the most definite criteria to improve organizational performance in SMEs

**IV1: Digital Employee Engagement Practices**

6. Digital employee engagement practices can improve and strengthen the relationship between the management and its remote workers.

7. Virtual employee engagement practices should be implemented with equal importance as the regular employee engagement for the in SMEs of India

8. Through virtual games and activities related to employee engagement programs the virtual employee motivation can be improved

**IV2: Advanced Technological Infrastructure**

9. Advanced technical infrastructure is required for the improvement of the company to develop and operate the applications that underpin the business

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10. Advanced technological infrastructure within the SMEs in India can significantly help the company to fulfill its aim and offer a competitive advantage in the market

11. Technological infrastructure sets the foundation of the digital capacities that can adhere to further advanced or modified technological development in the future

**IV3: Employee Training**

12. Training and development is significantly important for the success of the organization through uplifting overall performance

13. Training and development programs help the employees to grow personally, professionally, and as a team