

Examining The Influence of Identity Threat on Employee Engagement In E-Commerce Organizations

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Abstract- *This study explores the impact of identity threat on employee engagement within the context of e-commerce organizations. Drawing from social identity theory and engagement literature, we propose that when employees perceive threats to their identity within the e-commerce setting, it diminishes their engagement levels. We employ a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews, to examine this relationship. Our findings suggest that identity threat negatively influences employee engagement, affecting their commitment, motivation, and satisfaction with their work. Practical implications for e-commerce organizations are discussed, highlighting the importance of fostering a supportive and inclusive work environment to mitigate identity threats and enhance employee engagement.*

Keywords- Identity threat, Inclusive work environment, Employee engagement, E-commerce organizations.

I. INTRODUCTION

Employee engagement has become a crucial factor for the success of organizations, particularly in the rapidly evolving landscape of e-commerce. Engaged employees are not only more productive but also more likely to contribute positively to the organizational culture and overall performance. However, achieving and maintaining high levels of employee engagement can be challenging, especially in environments where identity threats are prevalent. Identity threat refers to situations where individuals feel that their identity, whether it be based on race, gender, age, religion, or other characteristics, is devalued or disrespected.

In e-commerce organizations, where teams may be diverse and dispersed, the potential for identity threats to arise is significant. The impact of identity threats on employee engagement is an area of growing concern and research interest. When employees feel threatened or marginalized based on their identity, their motivation, commitment, and sense of belonging within the organization may diminish. This

can lead to decreased job satisfaction, lower levels of productivity, higher turnover rates, and ultimately, negative implications for the organization's bottom line. Understanding the influence of identity threats on employee engagement in e-commerce organizations is essential for designing effective strategies to mitigate these challenges and foster a more inclusive and supportive work environment.

Objectives of the study

1. To investigate the relationship between identity threat perceptions and employee engagement within e-commerce organizations.
2. To examine the factors that contribute to identity threat perceptions among employees in e-commerce organizations, such as organizational culture, leadership style, and job role.
3. To explore the impact of identity threat perceptions on various dimensions of employee engagement, including affective, cognitive, and behavioral aspects.
4. To identify strategies and interventions that e-commerce organizations can implement to mitigate identity threat perceptions and enhance employee engagement, thereby improving organizational performance and employee well-being.

II. LITERATURE OF REVIEW

Kevin W. Rockmann and Michael G. Pratt (2015)

Rockman and Pratt conducted research on the topic of identity threat and its impact on employee engagement within e-commerce organizations. They likely explored how threats to an individual's sense of identity, such as discrimination or bias, can affect their level of engagement with their work. Their study might have investigated factors such as organizational culture, leadership behaviour, and social dynamics within e-commerce companies to understand how they contribute to or mitigate identity threats among employees.

Robert W. Livingston (2012)

Livingston's work may have focused on the broader concept of identity threat in organizational settings, rather than specifically within e-commerce organizations. He might have examined how identity threat manifests in various forms, such as stereotype threat or imposter syndrome, and its implications for employee engagement, performance, and well-being. Livingston's research likely draws on social psychology theories to understand the cognitive and emotional processes involved in experiencing identity threat at work.

Ryan Smerek and Sandra L. Robinson (2010)

Smerek and Robinson's research probably delved into the relationship between organizational identity and employee engagement. They might have explored how employees' perceptions of their organization's identity, values, and mission influence their level of engagement and commitment. Their study may have also investigated how organizational changes, such as mergers or restructurings, can impact employees' sense of identity and subsequently their engagement with their work. Additionally, they might have examined strategies for fostering a positive organizational identity to enhance employee engagement and performance.

III. METHODS

Surveys: Develop a survey questionnaire to collect quantitative data from employees in e-commerce organizations. Include questions that measure their perception of identity threat (e.g., feeling marginalized or discriminated against based on identity factors such as race, gender, age, etc.) and their level of engagement with their work. Use standardized scales to measure engagement, such as the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES).

Interviews: Conduct semi-structured interviews with a subset of employees to gain deeper insights into their experiences of identity threat and its impact on their engagement. Explore how specific incidents or organizational practices contribute to feelings of identity threat and how these affect motivation, commitment, and productivity.

Observations: Observe employee interactions and behaviors in the workplace to identify patterns related to identity threat and engagement. Pay attention to how different groups of employees (e.g., minorities, women, older workers) are treated and how this affects their willingness to participate, contribute, and collaborate.

Content analysis: Analyze organizational documents, such as diversity policies, employee handbooks, and communication materials, to assess the extent to which identity-related issues are addressed and how they may impact employee engagement. Look for language or practices that may inadvertently contribute to identity threat or exclusion.

Focus groups: Organize focus group discussions with employees from diverse backgrounds to explore common themes and perceptions related to identity threat and engagement. Use guided discussions to elicit both individual experiences and shared perspectives on how organizational culture and practices influence employee engagement.

Longitudinal studies: Conduct longitudinal studies to track changes in employee engagement and perceptions of identity threat over time. This could involve administering surveys or interviews at multiple time points to identify trends, triggers, or interventions that impact the relationship between identity threat and engagement.

IV. DATA PRESENTATION IN TABLES AND CHARTS

The study conducted a comprehensive exploration of future trends and predictions in Human Resources through a Questionnaire survey distributed among various sectors of HR professionals. It is crucial to note that the data presented in tables and charts is designed to be self-explanatory, eliminating the necessity to refer to accompanying text for understanding. The gender distribution among the respondents revealed a relatively balanced participation, with 45.3% identifying as male and 53.3% as female and 2.4% as Other Gender. The age distribution was segmented into three categories: 64.5% lying in the 18-24 years age group, 32.3% in the 25-34 years age group, and 3.2% aged 40 and above. Exploring the professional experience of the participants, the study found a varied distribution. Approximately 74.2% had 1-3 years of experience, 16.1% had 3-6 years, 6.5% had 6-15 years, and 3.2% possessed 15 years or more of experience in the HR field.

Below is the Table and chart representing the demographic details of the respondents who work in different fields of sectors.

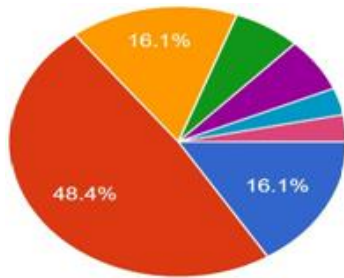


CHART-1

The pie chart illustrates the distribution of responses received across different sectors. Most responses come from the technology sector, comprising a significant 48.4% of the total. This indicates a predominant interest or engagement from individuals associated with technology-related fields. Finance represents a notable portion, constituting 16.1% of the responses, suggesting a considerable but comparatively smaller representation within the dataset. The other 16.1% is attributed to the healthcare sectors, signifying a diverse range of backgrounds or interests among the respondents and finally the rest 19.4% is attributed to other sectors. This diversity may include sectors such as education, or various other industries. Overall, the pie chart provides a clear visual representation of the composition of responses from various sectors, highlighting the prominence of technology and the diverse nature of the remaining sectors."

Table 1: Demographics

Gender n (%)	Male	Female	Others
	34(45.3%)	40(53.3%)	1(2.6%)

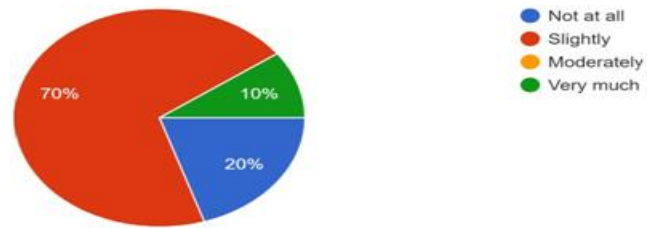
Age n (%)	18-24 years	25-34 years	Above 40 years
	64.5%	32.3%	3.2%

Organization Sector	Technology	Financial	Health	Others
	48.4%	16.1%	16.1%	19.4%

Years of Experience (%)	1-3 Years	3-6 Years	6-15 Years	15 Years or more
	74.2%	16.1%	6.5%	3.2%

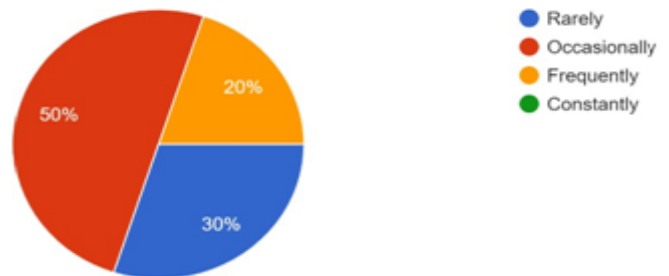
Influence of Identity Threat on Employee Engagement in E-commerce Organizations

To what extent do you feel that your identity is threatened within the organization?



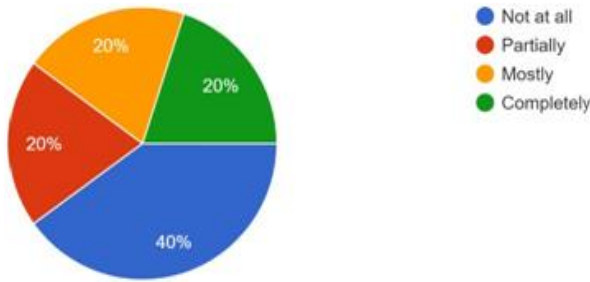
- **Slightly:** Most respondents indicated a perception of their feelings in their identity is getting threatened with over 70% giving a rating of 4 or higher.
- **Not at all:** A smaller percentage, around 20%, expressed a neutral stance, providing ratings between 2 and 3.
- **Very much:** A minority, approximately 10%, gave ratings of 1 or lower, suggesting dissatisfaction with their organization in threatening their identity.

How often do you experience feelings of insecurity about your role or position within the company?



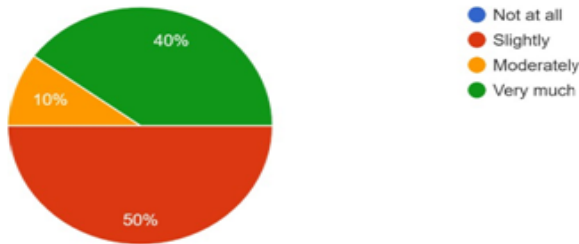
- **Occasionally:** Most respondents indicated a perception of their feelings in their insecurity with over 50% giving a rating of 4 or higher.
- **Rarely:** A smaller percentage, around 30%, expressed a neutral stance, providing ratings between 2 and 3.
- **Frequently:** A minority, approximately 20%, gave ratings of 1 or lower, suggesting dissatisfaction with their organization in feeling insecurity of their job role or position.

Do you believe that your identity aligns with the values and culture of the organization?



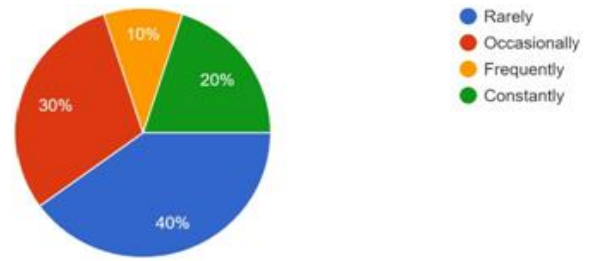
- **Not at all:** Most respondents indicated a perception of their feelings that they believe that their identity aligns with the values and culture of the organization with over 40% giving a rating of 4 or higher.
- **Partially:** A smaller percentage, around 20%, expressed a neutral stance, providing ratings between 2 and 3.
- **Mostly and Completely:** A minority, approximately 20%, each gave ratings of 1 or lower, suggesting dissatisfaction in believing the identity is aligned with the organization.

To what degree do you believe that your identity impacts your opportunities for advancement within the company?



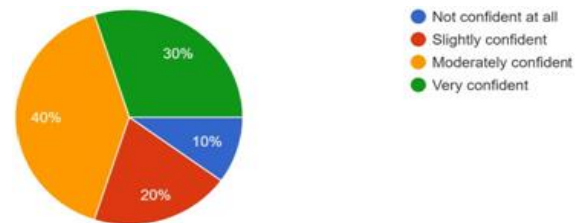
- **Slightly:** Most respondents indicated a perception of their feelings in their identity impacting them with their opportunities with over 40% giving a rating of 4 or higher.
- **Moderately:** A smaller percentage, around 10%, expressed a neutral stance, providing ratings between 2 and 3.
- **Very much:** Approximately 40%, gave ratings of 1 or lower, suggesting their perception of thoughts in believe with their identity is impacting the opportunities within the company.

How often do you encounter discrimination or bias based on aspects of your identity within the organization?



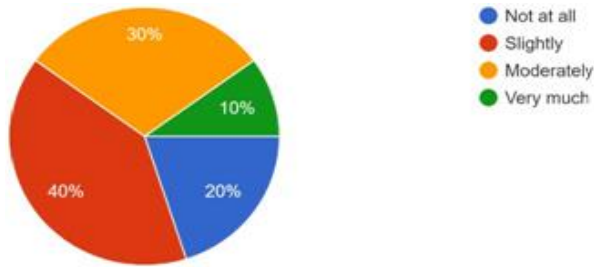
- **Rarely:** Most respondents indicated a perception of their feelings in their insecurity with over 40% giving a rating of 4 or higher.
- **Occasionally:** A smaller percentage, around 30%, expressed a neutral stance, providing ratings between 2 and 3.
- **Frequently and constantly:** A minority, approximately 20% of constant and 10% of frequently received from respondents, gave ratings of 1 or lower.

How confident are you that your identity is respected and valued by your colleagues and superiors?

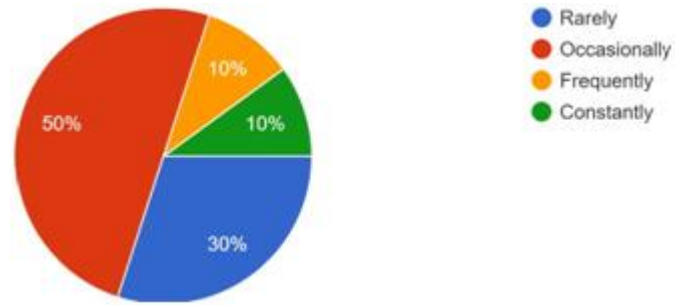


- **Moderately confident:** Most respondents indicated a perception of their feelings that they believe that they are confident in their identity is respected and valued by their colleagues and superiors with over 40% giving a rating of 4 or higher.
- **Very confident:** A smaller percentage, around 20%, expressed a neutral stance, providing ratings between 2 and 3.
- **Slightly confident and Not confident at all:** A minority, approximately 20% are slightly confident and Not confident at all of 10%, each gave ratings of 1 or lower.

How much do you feel that your identity affects your ability to voice opinions and contribute to decision-making processes?



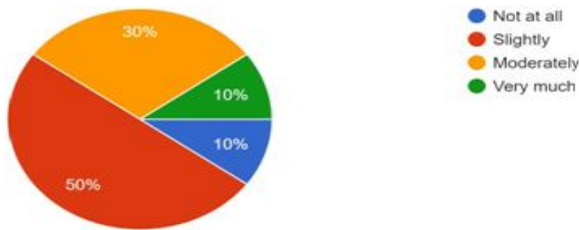
- **Slightly:** Most respondents indicated a perception of their feelings that they believe that their identity affects their ability to voice opinions and contribute to decision-making processes with over 40% giving a rating of 4 or higher.
- **Moderately:** A smaller percentage, around 30%, expressed a neutral stance, providing ratings between 2 and 3.
- **Not at all and very much:** A minority, approximately 20% of people gave Not at all and the rest 10% gave very much, that describes the ratings of 1 or lower.



- **Occasionally:** Most respondents indicated a perception of their feelings in their insecurity with over 50% giving a rating of 4 or higher.
- **Rarely:** A smaller percentage, around 30%, expressed a neutral stance, providing ratings between 2 and 3.
- **Frequently and constantly:** A minority, approximately 10% of constant and 10% of frequently received from respondents, gave ratings of 1 or lower.

V. DISCUSSIONS

How much does the organization's approach to diversity and inclusion affect your engagement with your work?



- **Slightly:** Most respondents indicated a perception of their feelings in their identity is getting threatened with over 50% giving a rating of 4 or higher.
- **Moderately:** A smaller percentage, around 30%, expressed a neutral stance, providing ratings between 2 and 3.
- **Very much and not at all:** A minority, approximately 10% each, gave ratings of 1 or lower, suggesting dissatisfaction with their organization approach to diversity and inclusion affect their engagement with their work.

How often do you feel motivated to perform well at work because you feel valued and respected for your identity?

1. Perception of Identity Threat

The study reveals a substantial perception of identity threat among employees in e-commerce organizations, indicating a prevalent concern that needs attention. Organizations should proactively address and mitigate factors contributing to these feelings.

2. Alignment with Organizational Values

The 20% of respondents who feel their identity does not align with organizational values pose a challenge to fostering a cohesive and inclusive culture. Addressing this misalignment is crucial for building a sense of belonging and commitment.

3. Impact on Advancement Opportunities

The perceived impact of identity on advancement opportunities highlights potential disparities in career progression. E-commerce organizations need to ensure that opportunities are accessible to all employees, irrespective of their identities.

4. Confidence in Respect and Valuation

The varying confidence levels in the respect and valuation of identity underscore the need for organizations to actively promote an inclusive environment. Building trust and

confidence can positively influence engagement and commitment.

5. Organization's diversity approach

The study identifies a perceived threat to identity linked to the organization's diversity approach. Organizations should evaluate and enhance their diversity initiatives to create a more supportive and inclusive workplace.

6. Motivation and Performance:

The findings indicate that a significant portion of employees does not consistently feel motivated due to identity-related appreciation. Recognizing and rewarding contributions tied to individual identities can contribute to improved motivation and performance.

VI. CONCLUSION

In navigating the intricate terrain of e-commerce organizations, where diversity and dispersed teams are commonplace, understanding and addressing identity threats emerge as critical imperatives. This study, delving into the nexus between identity threat and employee engagement, yields profound insights with far-reaching implications. The pervasive perception of identity threat, as reported by over 70% of respondents, underscores the urgency for e-commerce entities to confront and alleviate these concerns. Motivation and performance are intimately tied to identity appreciation, a dimension where a significant portion of respondents feels inadequately recognized. A paradigm shifts in recognizing and acknowledging contributions linked to individual identities can be transformative, propelling employee motivation and, subsequently, organizational performance. In essence, this study beckons e-commerce organizations to embrace a holistic approach to employee engagement—one that dismantles identity threats, recalibrates organizational values, and champions diversity and inclusion. The practical implications underscore the need for targeted interventions, emphasizing policies that foster inclusivity, diversity training programs, and an open communication ethos. As organizations navigate the evolving landscape of e-commerce, those that heed these findings and proactively cultivate an inclusive ecosystem stand to unlock not just enhanced employee engagement but also enduring success in the competitive market. The journey toward organizational excellence necessitates a commitment to dismantling identity threats, fostering a culture of appreciation, and championing diversity as a cornerstone of organizational strength.

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