

Impact of High Performance Work Practices on Employee Engagement in Apparel Manufacturing and Retail Firms

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Abstract

This study explored the relation of high-performance work practices with employee engagement in apparel manufacturing and retail sector. The data were collected from 150 employees of apparel manufacturing and retail companies in Bangalore through a questionnaire survey. Data collected were run through factor analysis and regression. The results were in the expected direction and fulfilled the research aims of the current study. During factor analysis, five major factors emerged with high factor loadings from 0.40 to 0.80. High factor loadings were indicative of high engagement levels due to human resources (HR) practices followed. Companies can continue with HR practices, which makes them good places to work for employees and practice good leadership to motivate people to join the apparel and retail sector, which has been facing challenging times.

Keywords : Employee engagement, high work performance practices, monotony, motivation

JEL Classification : D23, J24, J32, L67, M12

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Apparel products were one of the items put under the list of exclusive manufacturing by small scale industries as per the Industries (Development & Regulation) Act of 1951. The aim was to reduce concentration of economic power, promote employment generation, and promote quality goods with the use of local resources (SSI in India, n.d.).

The exclusion of large scale units made sure that the apparel industry becomes competitive in the world, does not face extinction, and contributes to the national income. Apparel industries were provided different types of aid and fiscal incentives to become self-reliant and grow. This resulted in spreading of small units across India providing employment and hope to many unskilled and illiterate workers for whom the apparel industry became the main source of livelihood.

Majority of Indians earlier used to get clothes stitched from local tailors as there were few well known brands. People bought readymade garments for special occasions mainly as many were out of reach of the common masses. With liberalization, India entered the fast track growth mode. Lack of time and rising disposable income coupled with the need to look good gained prominence in the workplace. Suddenly, lots of brands, both foreign and local, started setting shops in India, giving a fillip to the readymade garments sector (RMG) which started

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seeing high growth. At per 2017, the Indian textile industry contributed to 4% of the gross domestic product (GDP) and is the second-largest employer. Besides contributing to 14% of industrial production, its share in exports was 11%.

Indian manufacturers exporting abroad started facing competition from countries like China, Bangladesh, and Thailand. In order to maintain their competitive strength, many initiatives were undertaken such as bringing in technically qualified personnel as consultants along with recruitment of qualified engineers from local colleges who used scientific methods to standardize systems and improve productivity.

Although it increased productivity marginally, the productivity stagnated over the years due to lack of investments by apparel factory owners in training (short term or long term) of workers and welfare. The garment operators who were the backbone of these industries were mostly never given a share of profits. The garment operators mostly learnt on the job, making mistakes and improving along the way, which led to losing out on productivity to other countries, which gave months of trainings with all expenses paid to maintain a steady supply of labour from rural areas to these industries. In order to have a greater pie of the exports market, countries like Bangladesh started relaxing safety rules of workers despite the occurrence of many accidents. Business started shifting to these countries because of cheap operations, although the Indian government made ambitious targets for exports.

The spread of consumerism with more disposable income of youngsters working in information technology (IT), information technology enables services (ITES), and business process outsourcing (BPO) sectors made apparel companies look towards the domestic market and cater to the retail boom. The Indian retail is expected to expand to USD 865 billion by 2023, and the share of apparel retail is expected to be 8% (Technopak, 2013). Many apparel and textile companies started creating their own brands, setting up their own stores, further expanding the retail sector. The online businesses operating from India further created the need to source cheaper garments from Indian apparel manufacturers as they mostly worked on the discount model to attract customers to shop online. This demand was a boon to many small garment players who saw a resurgence in their business.

With Bangalore being developed as a cosmopolitan city, these garment operators started getting alternative job opportunities unlike earlier times, causing huge labour migration to other sectors. This forced small apparel players to shut shop, while big manufacturers started using different strategies to retain talent from draining away. Some garment factories started shifting units to rural areas near Bangalore to get a steady supply of workers and to take advantage of cheap labour. A number of employee welfare schemes and incentives were introduced to retain garment operators. Many existing garment units inside the city were changed to retail stores, and professional teams were hired to run them.

Why is Employee Engagement Needed for an Organization ?

Employee engagement refers to the deep involvement both physically and mentally in the work roles by the employees of an organization so that they feel deeply satisfied with their jobs.

In countries like USA, about half of the workforce is either not fully engaged or is disengaged (Johnson, 2004), which leads to loss in productivity and profits. With increasing computerization at the workplace and standardizations of processes in organizations, companies are searching for ways to increase the engagement of employees in different sectors to maintain their bottom line. If employees are unhappy with their work, they move to a different company or sector due to numerous job alternatives available. Hence, reducing turnover intention with different employee engagement initiatives is the need of the hour. When the term 'engagement' was first used in relation to work, it was not clear, but Gallup is given the credit for coining the term. Buckingham and Coffman (1999) did a survey for a long time from 1988 covering over 1, 00,000 employees. This was summarized under the theme - Strong Workplaces. The employees' idea of workplaces was measured with 12 questions called Q12.

Employee engagement is needed to develop and continue interest in a job profile. Once an employee joins work, he/she learns all the activities related to the job. Due to the new experiences he/she gains, the employee is motivated to learn new things, and tackle different issues in the work place. Once he/she becomes proficient in his/her work by doing the same job every day, he/she is struck by the monotony of the job. After some time, an employee loses interest and motivation as there is no new learning. Finally, the approach towards work becomes mechanical as the employee becomes more detached from work, leading to disengagement and increasing turnover across industries. The main scholarly article on the term employee engagement was by Kahn (1990), who hinted that people acted out momentary attachments and detachments in role performances.

Need and Significance of the Study

The apparel sector, apart from agriculture, is a major source of income and employment for millions, it being a low technology, low investment industry, and easy to join. India was a source of cheap labour for many years, and these apparel manufacturing industries used this human resource to make cheap goods for customers across the world. With expansion of many sectors and retail boom, many manufacturing units of other sectors started being set up in and around the garment industry clusters.

These other sector units being automatic and semi - automatic gave respite from the poorly paid, labour intensive jobs in the apparel sector. The huge labour migration at the operator level caused labour shortages in the apparel sector, which enjoyed uninterrupted supply of labour for years due to lack of alternate employment for illiterate workers. Suddenly, factory owners realized that their cheap competitive advantage was under threat and to reduce turnover intentions, drastic changes in their HR practices and policies were required. Hence, their HRM policies became more worker friendly and they took a long-term view. They started working strategically for the benefit of the industry with lots of facilities being provided to workers like 5 to 10 days of training for new entrants, creche, pick and drop, boarding facilities, subsidized food, sanitized work places, city visits during holidays, attendance bonus, fixed working hours, etc. Hence, the concept of strategic human resource management (SHRM) started being widely practiced in the garment sector due to the need of the hour.

The retail sector has been the next growth engine the government has been looking at to create more employment. Attractive salaries and perks led to the exodus of technical and staff level employees to the retail sector. With rising staff attrition, the HR practices were changed by managements, taking a long-term view. With new retail chains entering the market every year, employees had too many options to choose from, making these retail companies think of human resource as a strategic resource and they started investing heavily in their human resources with long trainings, certifications from reputed institutes, rigorous selection, job autonomy, etc.

These strategic initiatives make employees stay for a longer time, although the turnover of sales staff at junior levels remains high due to monotony, limited upward mobility, and lack of decision making. In such a scenario, developing and maintaining interest in job on a daily basis is needed. This can be done with the employee engagement, and HR practices play a major role in it.

Review of Literature

In the academic literature, a number of definitions have been provided for the term employee engagement and high work performance practices.

Lado and Wilson (1994) defined HR practices as a set of distinctive but interconnected functions, activities, and a process that leads to attracting, developing, and helping maintain a firm's human capital.

High performance work systems refer to a set of broadly defined HR practices including performance related pay, various employee communication programs, training, and team based work (Harley, 2002; Huselid, 1995; Jiang, Lepak, Han, Hong, Kim, & Winkler, 2012).

Although multiple HR practices should include various measures, there is no agreement between practitioners or academics. Broadly, the practices consist of rigorous staffing, multiple trainings, employee decision making, competency - based compensation, and bonuses. The pioneering work of Huselid (1995) was tested by Gile (2013) in hospitals, while Way (2002) talked about these practices in small business firms in the USA. Deshpande and Golhar (1994) compared HR practices based on firm sizes, while Gurbu (2009) studied their impact on job satisfaction. Bharathi (2009) studied the HR practices in the spinning mills in India; whereas, Ramaprasad, Prabhu, Sethumadhavan, and Yogesh (2017) studied the link between HR practices and organizational commitment.

While Wright and McMahan (1992) gave different perspectives of strategic human resource management, Sajeewanie and Opatha (2007) and Gooderham, Parry, and Ringdal (2008) described how HR practices can convert labour into valuable assets to satisfy strategic plans of a company in the long term.

Shin and Konrad (2014) and Lee and Hojin (2012) studied the link between HR practices and performance, but Byremo (2015) doubted if any relation was there between the two variables. In addition, Rao, Vani, and Messala (2015) studied the link of HR practices and employee engagement on career success.

Kahn (1990) defined personal engagement as the harnessing of organization members to their work roles. People employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances in engagement. Personal disengagement refers to the uncoupling of selves from work roles; in disengagement, people withdraw and defend themselves physically, cognitively, or emotionally during role performances. Thus, according to Kahn (1990, 1992), engagement means to be psychologically present when occupying and performing an organizational role. The concept was empirically tested by May, Gilson, and Harter (2004) and Saks (2006).

Shuck and Wolland (2009) talked about the original theory in their article on which the construct of employee engagement was based. Kahn's construct of employee engagement was mainly based the internationalist theory of Goffman (1961). In addition, Shuck (2010) identified the precedents and their outcomes.

Schaufeli, Bakker, and Salanova (2006) defined work engagement as a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption. They further stated, "engagement is not a momentary and specific state; rather, it is a more persistent and pervasive affective - cognitive state that is not focused on any particular object, event, individual, or behavior" (p. 702). Schaufeli and Bakker (2003) developed a scale to measure employee engagement, while opposite dimensions of engagement and burnout were studied together by Schaufeli, Salanova, González - Romá, and Bakker (2002). Schaufeli (2013) again elaborated on the definition, scales, and models of engagement. Gruman and Saks (2011) elaborated strategies to enhance employee engagement to raise performance of employees. Sharma and Yadav (2018) researched the dimensions of engagement and organizational justice; whereas, Chug and Vibhuti (2017) studied engagement in hospitals, while Bhatnagar (2007) studied engagement in the ITES domain. Bakker, Demerouti, and Schaufeli (2005) equated burnout and work engagement in their study for working couples. Schaufeli and Bakker (2004a) explored job demands, job resources, and their relationship with burnout and engagement. In addition, Schaufeli and Bakker (2004b) created the Utrecht work engagement scale.

(1) Significance of Apparel Manufacturing and Retailing : India is becoming one of the fastest - growing economies of the world after China and more foreign brands are entering India to setup shop. The sourcing of garments and accessories from India by foreign retailers is going to increase, making it necessary to study the market. A huge young crowd with high disposable income and willingness to spend on clothes and accessories makes India a very lucrative market for both Indian and foreign brands.

The retail chains are expanding to tier 2 and tier 3 cities to cater to the young and upwardly mobile, apart from selling their wares on online stores. There is a dearth of empirical studies on HR practices and employee engagement in the apparel manufacturing and retail sector, which has been identified as a gap after literature

review was done, although the relation has been studied by Thite (2012) for IT sector ; Budhwar, Luthar, and Bhatnagar (2006) for ITES sector ; Chand and Katou (2007) for hospitality sector ; Muduli, Verma, and Datta (2016) for banking sector ; and Dhiman and Mohanty (2010) for oil & gas sector. Hence, this study adds to the existing body of literature on the impact of HR practices on employee engagement in the apparel manufacturing and retail sector.

(2) Theoretical Underpinnings and Hypothesis Development : Teece, Pisano, and Shuen (1997) talked about the dynamic capability theory. According to them, dynamic capability is the firm's ability to integrate, build, and reconfigure internal and external competences to address rapidly changing environments.

An organization's basic competencies should be used to create short - term competitive positions that can be developed into longer-term competitive advantage. This is the main assumption of this theory. The aim is to survive and draw up future plans to face drastic, discontinuous changes in the environment in which an organization is operating.

Teece et al. (1997) talked about three steps to improve dynamic capability of a firm to ensure competitive advantage. First, the employee should learn quickly how to create assets. Second, integrate these assets into company processes, and transform existing assets to be ahead of competition. Hence, physical assets, human resources, and processes over a period of time will give a sustainable competitive advantage. Augier and Teece (2009) showed their importance in economic performance.

So, new ways of doing things were initiated in the garment industry. In earlier times, managers in the factory, be it a factory manager or production manager or quality manager, rose through ranks, and were uneducated. They used their people skills to exploit poor workers who would not have found employment elsewhere due to lack of education. Those employees whose people management skills were good were elevated to manage the largely illiterate workforce who used to listen due to fear and abuse. The factories had minimal facilities and lacked proper sanitation facilities. Many factories did not have sufficient water, creche for women workers, and training for new workers was unheard of. Overtime, these were provided, but the workers were mostly unpaid or underpaid (Ambrosini & Bowman, 2009).

Hence, to retain operators, proper training was provided, which was evaluated and was based on the performance in the routine tests. They were assigned different garment operations to be performed in the sewing line unlike earlier times. Well trained operators need less of management involvement and supervision since they know what to do (Gutteridge, Leibowitz, & Shore, 1993). Some companies started creche facilities, pick-up and drop facilities, attendance bonus, festival bonus to increase loyalty, and to retain operators. At the staff level, technically qualified staff was appointed after proper tests and interviews. Investment in employee welfare and training helps in creating human resources as assets. Applebaum, Bailey, Berg, and Kalleberg (2000) highlighted the benefits of high-performance work practices in the manufacturing sector.

Separate production and planning departments and industrial engineering units were set up, which used time and method study to plan and monitor the production processes. Reasons for production shortages were found and rectified. Before a new product was introduced in the sewing line, a proper meeting of all the production teams was conducted to discuss new methods of raising productivity or challenges faced during production and how to resolve the same. Everything was preplanned to avoid wastage of time.

Quality circles were setup in some factories where issues were discussed regularly. If the company vision or plans were shared with the low level staff also, their actions could be aligned to it. Professionals were inducted from relevant technical institutes to improve the processes. They brought new ideas and new practices which were beneficial in the long term for the firm. When employees are given good pay, it may also contribute to the growth and survival of a firm (Dessler, 2010). Organizations have started felicitating the most productive employees with monetary rewards in front others to motivate them (Long & Shields, 2010).

Value percept theory (Locke & Bryan, 1967, 1969) is used to explain employee engagement. According to this

theory, an employee values certain things. There are different aspects in a job, and some aspects are more important and valued by an employee. If some aspects of a job are able to provide the value which an employee values at the required level, then he/she will still find engagement and absorption in the job. This ultimately enhances overall job satisfaction, and the employee continues with the job. If not, he/she starts getting disengaged and disinterested, and starts searching for another job as it only increases his/her overall job dissatisfaction till he/she leaves the job for better prospects. Engaged employees put their heart and soul in their work, are more creative (Sahoo & Mishra, 2012), and can create sustainable competitive advantage for their organizations (Crawford, Lepine, & Rich, 2010). Anitha (2014) and Pandita and Bedarkar (2015) validated in their study the impact of employee engagement on employee performance in the Indian context. Muduli et al. (2016) explored the relation of high performance work practices and employee engagement in the banking sector in India, while Huang, Ma, and Meng (2017) explored their equation in the Chinese context.

Hence, in the light of major changes happening in the external environment, apparel manufacturing and retail companies are changing the way they operate to seize new opportunities coming their way and brace up for the challenges ahead. New strategies of operating the business are being adopted to reduce turnover intentions, and companies are creating sustainable competitive advantage by treating human resources as strategic assets. On the basis of this argument, we propose the hypothesis that HR practices have a positive impact on employee engagement.

Methodology

(1) Research Design : A detailed questionnaire was designed keeping in view of the objectives of the study and was administered to the sample respondents of apparel manufacturing companies. The questionnaire had two sections, and the responses were rated using a 5 - point Likert rating scale, ranging from 1 to 5, where 1 refers to *strongly disagree*, 2 refers to *disagree*, 3 refers to *can't say*, 4 refers to *agree*, and 5 refers to *strongly agree*.

All measures used in this survey were adopted from established scales in the field of human resource management. The questionnaire consisting of 40 questions was prepared after referring to Gallup's workplace audit questions (Harter et al., 2006) on employee engagement. It composed of 12 items that measure employee perceptions of work characteristics. It had a Cronbach's alpha reliability of 0.91 at the business unit level of analysis. The questionnaire on high performance work practices consisting of 28 questions was taken from the scale developed by Demo, Neiva, Nunes, and Rozzett (2012). To calculate the reliability of the six sub - scales, the Joreskog's RHO was found. It was for recruitment and selection policy ($\rho = 0.82$) ; involvement policy ($\rho = 0.92$) ; training, development, and education policy ($\rho = 0.88$) ; work conditions policy ($\rho = 0.80$) ; and compensation and rewards policy ($\rho = 0.86$).

(2) Sampling Frame : The sampling unit consisted of employees of the apparel manufacturing and retail sector.

(i) Sample Size : A sample of 150 responses was considered for this study, although the questionnaire was sent to 370 respondents. Hence, the response rate was 40.5%. All the employees of the companies were sent an online questionnaire through Google Docs. In some cases, print copies of the questionnaire were also distributed, and the objective of the survey was conveyed verbally. Survey respondents were mostly men. The work experience of majority of the respondents varied from 0 to 5 years as shown in the Table 1.

(ii) Sampling Method : Simple random sampling method was adopted for the study. It is a probability sampling technique. Employees at the entry level, middle level, and senior level were considered for 10 apparel manufacturing and retail companies having establishments in Bangalore.

We visited all the 10 companies located in different parts of the city of Bangalore to meet the HR managers or

Table 1. Demographic Variables of the Respondents (N = 150)

Demographic Variables	Characteristics	Numbers	%
Gender	Male	95	63
	Female	55	37
Age (in years)	22-26	35	23
	27-32	67	45
	33-38	29	20
	39-44	11	7
	45-50	5	3
	51 and above	3	2
Work Experience (in years)	0-5	61	41
	5-10	57	38
	10-15	20	13
	15-20	4	3
	20 and above	8	5

contacted them through email and telephone to explain the idea behind the survey. Once the permission was granted, emails were sent and phone calls to select department heads and operational heads were also made to ensure maximum participation.

To avoid the common method bias, which might occur since the data regarding dependent and independent variables were being collected from the respondents at one point (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003), the Harman test was conducted. The main factor accounted for 31% of the variance, which is less than 50%. Hence, the data does not suffer from common method bias. The data were collected from March - June 2018.

Data Analysis and Results

Data analysis was done using SPSS Version 23.0. The data collected were coded, tabulated, and analyzed with the help of SPSS version 23.0 using Kaiser Meyer Olkin sampling adequacy and factor analysis with varimax rotation. Table 2 shows that the mean range is from 3.35 to 4.39 and standard deviation is from 0.613 to 1.235 of the variable - employee engagement. Table 3 shows that the mean range is from 2.757 to 3.886 and standard deviation is from 0.7734 to 1.2811 for high work performance practices. Factor analysis was employed to confirm the major parameters defining the whole questionnaire.

The KMO value is 0.782, while chi-square is 770.685. *df* is 190, and significance level is 0.00. High value 0.782 indicates that factor analysis is useful with the data and Cronbach's alpha of 0.901 shown in Table 4 shows high reliability.

After factor analysis, the four factors were identified and renamed for high work performance practices which are : Long Term Training and Proper Staffing, Decision Making, Job Autonomy, Open Communication, Clearly Defined Roles and Duties, and one factor for employee engagement, which is renamed as : Feel Valued. The items being renamed as factors are shown in the Table 5. All the five factors arrived at have a cumulative variance of 63.80% as shown in Table 6.

Multiple Regression Analysis

Multiple regression analysis is used to analyze the relationship between a single dependent variable (Feel Valued)

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive Statistics of Employee Engagement (EE)		Mean	Standard Deviation
EE1)	I know what is expected of me at work.	4.396	0.6131
EE2)	I have the materials and equipments I need to do my work right.	4.140	0.760
EE3)	At work, I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day.	3.887	0.945
EE4)	In the last 7 days, I have received recognition or praise for doing good work.	3.248	1.2352
EE5)	My supervisor or someone at work seems to care about me as a person.	3.826	0.8756
EE6)	There is someone at work who encourages my development.	3.725	0.861
EE7)	At work, my opinions seem to count.	3.720	0.9562
EE8)	The mission or purpose of my company makes me feel my job is important.	3.867	0.8165
EE9)	My associates or fellow employees are committed to doing quality work.	3.800	0.8592
EE10)	I have a best friend at work.	3.353	0.9493
EE11)	In the last six months, someone at work has talked to me about my progress.	3.653	0.9048
EE12)	In the last year, I have had opportunities to learn and grow at work.	4.127	0.8693

Note. *EE = Employee Engagement

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive Statistics of High Performance Work Practices (HPWP)		Mean	Standard Deviation
HPWP13)	Individuals in this job are allowed to take decisions.	3.757	0.8931
HPWP14)	Supervisors keep communications with employee in this job open.	3.707	0.9163
HPWP15)	Employees are provided the opportunity to suggest improvements.	3.727	0.8346
HPWP16)	Employees in this job are often asked by their supervisor to participate in decisions.	3.892	0.9907
HPWP17)	Employees are exposed to self-directed work teams in performing major part of their role.	3.797	0.7734
HPWP18)	Flexibility is given to employees to perform their work.	3.886	0.99
HPWP19)	Employees have few opportunities for upward mobility.	3.315	0.9086
HPWP21)	Promotion in this organization is based on seniority.	3.181	1.1093
HPWP22)	Employees do not have any future in this organization.	2.757	1.2811
HPWP23)	Employees have clear career paths in this organization.	3.148	1.1876
HPWP24)	Extensive training programs are provided for individuals in customer contact or frontline jobs.	3.439	0.9705
HPWP25)	There are formal training programs to teach new hires the skills they need to perform their job.	3.189	1.0325
HPWP26)	Employees in customer contact jobs normally go through training programs frequently.	3.293	0.893
HPWP27)	Formal training programs are offered to employees in order to increase their promotability in this organization.	3.007	1.0435
HPWP28)	Long term employee potential is emphasized.	3.51	0.9243
HPWP29)	Considerable importance is placed on the staffing process.	3.524	0.9166
HPWP30)	Very extensive efforts are made in selection.	3.442	0.9151
HPWP31)	Great effort is taken to select the right person.	3.707	1.0993
HPWP32)	The duties in this job are clearly defined.	3.639	1.0399

HPWP33)	This job has an up to date description.	3.571	1
HPWP34)	The job description for a position accurately describes all the duties performed by individual employees.	3.51	0.9535
HPWP35)	Performance is more often measured with objective quantifiable results.	3.571	0.8914
HPWP36)	Employee appraisals emphasize long term and group based achievement.	3.592	1.0052
HPWP37)	Employees in this job can be expected to stay with this organization for as long as they wish to.	3.712	1.0632
HPWP38)	Job security is almost guaranteed to employees in this job.	3.253	1.036
HPWP39)	Individuals in this job receive bonus based on the profit earned by the organization.	3.438	1.1324
HPWP40)	Individual /group in his/their job receive bonus.	3.124	1.2012

Note. HPWP = High Performance Work Practices

Table 4. Reliability Statistics

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N
0.901	40

Table 5. Exploratory Factor Analysis - Maximum Likelihood Extraction and Loadings

Factor	Items	Loadings
1) Long Term Training and Proper Staffing	1. There are formal training programs to teach new hires the skills they need to perform their job.	0.791
	2. Employees in customer contact jobs will normally go through training programs frequently.	0.75
	3. Formal training programs are offered to employees in order to increase their promotability in this organization.	0.771
	4. Long term employee potential is emphasized.	0.735
	5. Considerable importance is placed on the staffing process.	0.669
2) Job Autonomy, Decision Making, Open Communication	1. Individuals in this job are allowed to make decisions.	0.717
	2. Supervisors keep communications with employees in this job open.	0.622
	3. Employees are provided the opportunity to suggest improvements.	0.621
	4. Employees in this job are often asked by their supervisor to participate in decisions.	0.687
	5. Employees are exposed to self-direct work teams while performing major part of their role.	0.676
3) Clearly Defined Roles and Duties	6. In the last year, I have had opportunities to learn and grow at work.	0.736
	1. The duties in this job are clearly defined.	0.787
	2. This job has an up to date description.	0.87
4) Feel Valued	3. The job description for a position accurately describes all the duties performed by individual employees.	0.816
	1. My supervisor or someone at work seems to care about me as a person.	0.837
	2. There is someone at work who encourages my development.	0.864
	3. At work, my opinions seem to count.	0.652
5) Low Job Mobility	1. Employees have few opportunities for upward mobility.	0.781

and several multiple independent variables. High work performance practices is the independent variable (IV) and employee engagement is the dependent variable (DV). To test this hypothesis, the following regression model is used:

$$Y = a + b_1 (\text{Long Term Training and Proper Staffing}) + b_2 (\text{Job Autonomy, Decision Making}) + b_3 (\text{Open Communication}) + b_4 (\text{Clearly Defined Roles and Duties})$$

where,

Y = feel valued;

a = constant;

b_1, b_2, b_3, b_4 = coefficients of independent variables ;

x_1, x_2, x_3, x_4 = independent variables.

The hypotheses formulated are as follows as per Figure 1 :

- ✦ **H₁**: There is a significant relationship between long term training & proper staffing and feeling valued.
- ✦ **H₂**: There is a significant relationship between decision making, job autonomy, & open communication and feeling valued.
- ✦ **H₃**: There is a significant relationship between clearly defined roles & duties and feeling valued.

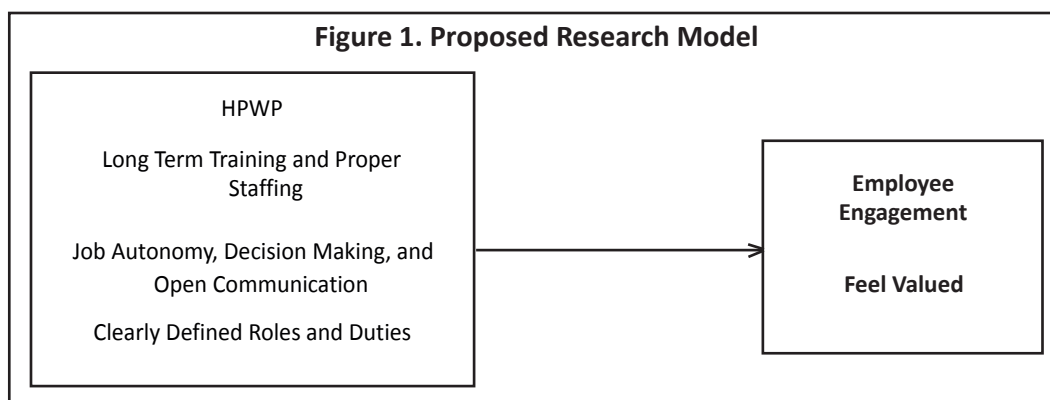


Table 6. Eigen Values and Percentage of Variance

	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5
EIGEN VALUE	6.183	2.105	1.903	1.386	1.184
% OF VARIANCE	30.914	10.523	9.517	6.93	5.921
% OF CUMULATIVE VARIANCE	30.914	41.437	50.955	57.885	63.806

Table 7. Multiple Regression for High Performance Work Practices as a Function of Employee Engagement

Model	R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	Standard Error of Estimate	F	Sig.
1	.467 ^a	0.218	0.202	1.90536	13.484	.000

Note. ^a Predictors : (Constant). Clear Defined Roles and Duties ; Long Term Training and Proper Staffing; Decision Making, Job Autonomy, Open Communication

Table 8. Beta Table of Multiple Regression for High Performance Work Practices as a Function of Employee Engagement

Particulars	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t-value	Level of significance	Result: Hypothesis Supported/ Not Supported
	B	Standard Error	Beta			
(Constant)	4.798	1.059		4.529	0	
Long Term Training and Proper Staffing	0.088	0.049	0.152	1.811	0.072	Not supported
Decision Making, Job Autonomy, Open Communication	0.241	0.05	0.415	4.809	0	Supported
Clearly Defined Roles and Duties	-0.051	0.074	-0.06	-0.686	0.494	Not supported

The proposed model is adequate as the *F*-statistics (*F*-value = 13.484, *p*-value = 0.000) in Table 7 show statistically significant relationship between high performance work practices and employee engagement. The coefficient of determination (adjusted R^2) is 0.202, which means that 20.2% of employee engagement is explained by the three factors : Long Term Training and Proper Staffing ; Decision Making, Job Autonomy, and Open Communication ; and Clearly Defined Roles and Duties.

The Table 8 shows the multiple linear regression estimates including the intercept and significance levels. The *t*-values for Decision Making, Job Autonomy, and Open Communication are significant at the 5%. Hence, the null hypothesis that there is no significant impact of the independent variables on the dependent variable - employee engagement (Feel Valued) is rejected. Hence, we accept the alternate hypothesis H_2 .

The alternate hypothesis H_1 is rejected as the *t*-value for it is insignificant at 5% as shown in Table 8. Similarly, alternate hypothesis H_3 is rejected as the *t*-value for it is insignificant at 5%.

Findings and Conclusion

As per the literature review, a conducive work environment, fair treatment by supervisors, and friendly colleagues with ethical practices go a long way in enhancing employee engagement at the workplace. Our empirical study has confirmed it. Many of the employees were happy to work in their organizations. Due to fair treatment by the management, the staff members were proud to work in their respective companies, which indicates that the companies should continue with their worker friendly policies. In case of any problems, the supervisors and colleagues should discuss and solve the issues. This helps in promoting a congenial work environment.

Proper training, decision making, job autonomy, and open communication go a long way in enhancing employee engagement and reducing turnover, thus creating a sustainable competitive advantage for a long time.

Managerial Implications

The study has a number of implications for the management of apparel and retail industries. With huge changes happening in the internal and external environments, labour and staff migration will be a norm. Unless a long-term vision is formulated on how to recruit and retain staff and labour, labour shortages will adversely impact the industry. When labour is treated as a strategic asset which should be cared for and nurtured, the drain to equally competitive and better paying sectors reduces.

Under the strong leadership of managers who should be trained to have a long and short term vision, right

recruitment tools should be used to hire proper staff, mandatorily conduct induction training as well as regular trainings and feedback sessions should be organized to prepare staff to face daily challenges. Junior staff should also be given a chance to voice their views on how to resolve issues or tackle problems. Practically feasible solutions can be implemented, which shall involve staff and operators more in the workplace. Social functions like cultural programmes or sports events can be organized in the workplace to maintain bonhomie amongst staff and workers. Health checkups can be organized for all. This will make the workers realize that the management cares for the workers. Yoga should be taught and practiced on a daily basis by workers and staff after explaining its benefits to avoid resistance. Work bonuses should be introduced for good employees. All these HR initiatives shall go a long way in enhancing employee engagement, which shall improve productivity, and in effect, retain staff.

Limitations of the Study and Scope for Further Research

This study is confined only to staff of 10 companies having branches in Bangalore city. It is assumed that the respondents provided genuine inputs and reflected their true experiences. Responses were taken only from those who agreed to give their valuable inputs.

Future studies can be conducted across different Indian cities having garment clusters for better generalization of the results. It can be extended to different age groups and different genders to see the level of engagement with different HR practices. The study is conducted only in one sector, but other sectors can also be studied, and comparative studies can also be done across different verticals like pharmaceuticals, IT, etc. for better representativeness. The impact of culture of an organization and contextual factors for organizational success (Sun, Aryee, & Law, 2007) can be studied in the future.

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