# Impact of Fluid Team Performance on Strategic HRM : An Empirical Study in the Organized Retail Sector of West Bengal

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## Abstract

Background : The growth of the organized retail sector is exponential. Hence, a huge boost has been observed in the demand of the organized retail segment. This demand could be met with the utilization of the fluid teams as they consist of various team members who have a rich knowledge pool from diverse fields which could be assembled under a singular structure by the human resource department.

Purpose : This study attempted to examine the impact of identified relevant factors on the fluid team performance and consequently on the effectiveness of HRM strategies through structural modeling.

Research Methodology : Primary data were collected from the various employees working in several retail stores. Secondary data were collected from various research articles wherein similar studies have been conducted. Various statistical tools like exploratory factor analysis (EFA), confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), and structural equation modeling (SEM) were executed in this study by using SPSS 23 and AMOS 23 software.

Findings : Various factors such as Creative Process, Inflexible Communication Process, Conflict Management Process, and Team Management Process had a positive impact on the fluid team performance which led to effective HRM strategies.

Research Limitations : This study was limited to the area of West Bengal, India. The outcomes may vary in the global context. This research basically lays the foundation of future research in this field.

Managerial Implications : Fluid teams could be proven to be very helpful in terms of the achievement of the organization's goal by selecting the most influencing factors pertaining to strategic decision making.

*Keywords :* fluid team, strategic HRM, team performance, organized retail sector

JEL Classification : C120, C310, C380, M100, O150

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Teamwork is very critical across organizations today. Team building is done by the management in order to achieve the goals and objectives of the organization. Team building can be defined as the set of different kinds of activities wherein the members of that particular team attempt to understand the thorough nature of the group dynamics and also effective teamwork. By doing so, the members of a team would get to know the

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inter-relationship of the processes involved in the tasks, which will help them to implement certain principles and skills of the different members of a team into the tasks, thus resulting in greater efficiency. The tasks will also take a lesser amount of time for completion. The members of a team should have some attributes which will help them in their assigned tasks. These attributes are project management, collaboration, communication, creativity, detailed analysis, and also, last but not the least, team leadership. The employees in an organization have to showcase these skills to the management through their work, which will increase their chances of getting selected in a team. The purpose of team building is to get the work done in a relatively shorter period of time. The other reasons for the creation of teams are creativity, innovation, synergy, strategic thinking, problem solving, and also, decision making. A highly functional team should consist of the following characteristics :

✎ The team should have a clear and elevating goal.

✎ The team should have a structure which is clearly focused on results.

✎ The team should have competent and authoritative team members.

✎ The team should be unified in pledging its commitment towards the organization.

✎ The team should be working under a collaborative climate (Ramaprasad, Prabhu, Lakshminarayanan, & Pai, 2017).

✎ The team should be sharing standards of excellence.

✎ The team should get external support as well as recognition for its activities.

A team can be highly dysfunctional also if the right members are not chosen. The reasons for this could be the absence of trust, fear of conflict amongst the team members, lack of commitment towards work, avoidance of accountability of the team members, and not paying attention to results. Thus, the parameters based on which team assessment is done are trust, conflict, commitment, accountability, and focus on results. Today's market demands elongated skill sets to perform the tasks and activities of the organization. It is highly impossible for a single individual to develop the entire skill sets as the required skill sets are evolving rapidly. That is why fluid teams have come into the picture. Fluid teams refer to groups of individuals of varied skill sets. They are made to reshuffle amongst themselves in order to carry out the tasks of the organization. The members of fluid teams are a group of experts having disparate functions. They are assembled together for a temporary project and they are disbanded once the project comes to an end. As these individuals belong from separate backgrounds, they might have different beliefs and values as well as priorities. Fluid teams have become common across many organizations today. These teams have been incorporated in different types of projects targeting different kinds of customers (Edmondson & Nembhard, 2009 ; Huckman, Staats, & Upton, 2009). Fluid teams refer to those teams which consist of individual members from diverse backgrounds. They pool in their experience to generate quality output (Arrow & McGrath, 1995). These teams are not restricted to any particular project. In fact, after the project in which they are assigned is over, the team is further disbanded. This is one of the reasons why these teams are referred to as "fluid." The work assigned to these teams is fluid as well. Often, it has been seen that the tasks change as well. There are a number of factors for the changing of the tasks. These factors could be mass communication in the manufacturing field, carrying on the production process along with the customer service work, constant changing requirements with that of the knowledge work, and so on (Fuchs, 1968 ; Frei, 2006 ; Pine, 1993 ; Staats, Brunner, & Upton, 2010). It has been seen that fluid teams as well as fluid tasks assigned to them interact with each other, and this interaction affects the overall team performance. However, impact of fluid tasks on the team performance has been found to be negative (Bohn, 2000 ; Fisher & Ittner, 1999 ; Repenning, 2001). It has been seen that fluid teams are put to great use in strategic human resource management. Strategic human resource management is believed to be an approach which tries to answer the question that how the goals of

organizations will be achieved by people or the employees of the organization. It is responsible for integrating the human resource strategies and policies into practice. There are various functions of strategic human resource management, which have been stated as follows :

↳ The human resource programs strive to enhance the overall organizational performance.

↳ Human resources are involved in the strategic planning of the organization.

↳ The human resources are sought out to participate actively in the decision making process of the organization.

↳ The work processes and the activities of the organization are re - designed with the help of human resources.

↳ The financial results of all the activities involving human resources are also measured by the help of strategic human resource management.

There are four major roles of human resource managers. They act as strategic partners, administrative experts, employee champions, and change agents. Out of all these functions, the role of a strategic partner is the most important and strategic human resource management strives at successfully fulfilling this role by accomplishing the tasks and the objectives outlined in them. The tasks of the human resource department as a strategic partner have been outlined as follows:

↳ They possess the ability to translate the decided business strategy into action.

↳ They can develop human resource management as a part of the business team.

↳ They have to possess knowledge about the bottom line of the business.

↳ It adds value to the organization.

↳ It is used to measure the performance levels.

↳ It helps in providing professional advice to the human resources as well as the organization.

↳ It makes the jobs of the line managers relatively easier.

Thus, in the planning stage, the job of the human resource department as a human resource manager precedes its other roles as a whole. It is very crucial to the organization and this job is facilitated by HR with the use of fluid teams. This is because this helps the human resource department to align the organization's objectives with that of the strategies developed by the human resource department. Fluid teams also help in fulfilling other human resource roles such as job analysis, employment planning, employee recruitment, employee selection, performance appraisal, human resource development activities, career planning and development activities, compensation, industrial relations, health and safety programs, and management of the diversity.

The Indian retail market is a segment which is highly dependent on strategic human resource management. It has seen a surge in fluid team management over the years. In this segment, the expenditure by the consumers is being boosted up with the help of rising income and increasing demand of quality products. It is one of the fastest growing markets in the world due to the growth in the economy. India is considered as the fifth largest market globally in terms of retail space. The current retail space is expected to double itself in the next 3 years to come. The FMCG market is also supposed to grow along with the retail due to its robust consumption in the rural markets. This paper aims at identifying the factors affecting strategic human resource management in the organized retail sector due to increased fluid team performance.

## Literature Review

The role of strategic HRM has completely shifted. Previously, it was only considered to have administrative

functions. Now, it is concerned with the strategic core competencies of the organizations as well (Joshi, Sunny, & Vashisht, 2017). There are certain factors which are needed to be considered as an important function of various inputs, processes, and other team contexts which produce various outputs. These are precisely the factors that depend on the interaction between the different team members which took place prior to the team formation. One of the most common ways of this type of interaction could be done through the help of various social networking sites (Brass, 1995). Collective efficacy could be defined as the individual beliefs of the team members regarding their ability to carry out the required courses of action in order to gain the standard level of performance (Bandura, 1997 ; Chen & Bliese, 2002). Collective efficacy could also be gauged by looking at the history of a team (Guzzo & Shea, 1992). Also, if the team members were successful in the past, it would definitely help them to increase their efficacy level for their future events.

Familiarity amongst the team levels also helps to define the collective efficacy as the team members must be very comfortable with each other in order to generate good results. Teams must be formed by the management while keeping in mind the familiarity among team members. They cannot introduce any new member into the group who will be uncomfortable. This would lead to a decrease in the team performance as a whole (Regy & Malini, 2019). Thus, certain parameters should be kept in mind while forming the current team make up. These factors are personalities of the team members, the collective sense of identity of the team as a whole, the performance potential of the team members, and their fitness with the other team members. However, in spite of doing all these, it is difficult to gauge the longevity of the teams in the long term. Team flexibility is referred to as the ability of the team members to interchange their tasks and perform the tasks efficiently. The major characteristic of flexible teams is that the team members could be a substitute for each other, wherever required. This consequently changes their adaptability to a constantly changing environment (Campion, Papper, & Medsker, 1996). Majority of the work arrangements call for increased flexibility. If there is a deficiency in flexibility, it becomes very difficult to meet the efficiency as well as performance demands of the organization (Townsend, DeMarie, & Hendrickson, 1998). Acceptance of new technology by the employees also helps in the achievement of this particular goal (Yadav, Yadav, & Malik, 2019). This is the sole reason why the team managers choose to rotate their team members. This is because these teams would be able to adapt more readily to change and would be very much more flexible as they are in the habit of experiencing change on a frequent basis (Ziller, 1965). This benefit was also recognised by many researchers who are skilled in knowledge transfers (Argote, Ingram, Levine, & Moreland, 2000). Cohesiveness is another factor that positively influences the fluid team performance. When there is a stable team partnership, the individual members of a team tend to develop a similar way of thinking due to their shared experiences. This is quintessential in building cohesiveness amongst the team members (Michel & Hambrick, 1992). However, it must also be noted that teams whose boundaries are not stable would be restricted from developing cohesiveness (Ancona & Caldwell, 1998). A team containing team members, who are more familiar with each other, is seen to exhibit higher degree of cohesiveness (Gruenfeld, Mannix, Williams, & Neale, 1996). Other studies revealed that heterogeneity in context to the tenure of the teams had a negative influence on the team cohesiveness (O'Reilly, Caldwell, & Barnett, 1989). Tenure could be measured as the time a team member is experienced in the prevailing position and his or her time in the organization since induction (Riordan & Shore, 1997). Creativeness is a very critical quantity which is very essential during tasks and it is especially so during the transition period between tasks. The transitional processes could be referred to as goal specification, analysis of the mission, planning as well as formulation of strategy (Marks, Mathieu, & Zaccaro, 2001). All these variables which have been mentioned in previous research were positively influenced by the creativity of the teams.

Studies have indicated that creativity in teams constantly evolved from the availability of the different perceptions about a particular topic in the minds of the team members. Some literature believed that diversity in knowledge could lead to better creativity (Nemeth, 1986), while other studies depicted that diversity in knowledge also increased the chances of conflict amongst the team members (Pelled, Eisenhardt, & Xin, 1999).

The new members added to a fluid team could also bring new and innovative ideas to the table as they might have faced similar situations at some point. This might give a competitive advantage to the team because of their innovativeness in the undertaking of a particular problem solving decision. Thus, the team provides benefits to them. It was found that a team, where experience membership changed, was found to be more creative than a team which was stable (Ziller, Behringer, & Goodchilds, 1962). However, in this study, only one membership change was considered at a point in time. The rate in the member change was not considered. It was also seen that the teams which had old people as the team members had lower creativity as compared to the teams which had relatively younger members (Stein, 1982). New team members might not be fully comfortable with the other existing team members. As a result, there would be relatively lesser amount of disagreements in the team. A false cohesiveness might arise in such situations as the new members would want to maintain good relations with the existing team members (Longley & Pruitt, 1980). Thus, creativity suffers in these kinds of situations.

Informal communication and awareness between the team members of a fluid team is also very much essential in the development of an operating fluid team. Though the communication technologies have evolved greatly over the period of time, it is important for the organizations to maintain informal channels of communication to get the work done in a faster manner. Fluid teams need to perform under a very tight schedule of time, and as a result of that, without the use of informal channels, it becomes very difficult for the team to achieve the required results (Rocker, 2015). Communication is a very important aspect of getting the work done on time. It could be defined as the transfer of ideas, information, feelings, or emotions. Communication is a very essential tool for accomplishing functions such as coordination and monitoring. The fluid teams should focus on both the external as well as the internal sources of communication in order to ensure efficiency. It was suggested that highly effective teams rarely depend on communication as the members were able to anticipate the requirements of each other (Klimoski & Mohammed, 1994). Internal communication plays a very important role in getting the tasks done and maintaining proper coordination between them. Formulation of various strategies is also greatly facilitated. The fluid team members who were working together for a long period of time showcased higher level of internal communication amongst themselves (Katz, 1982). This was because the team members shared their experiences with each other on a daily basis for a long time. As a result, communication came very easily to them. They were familiar with each other's communication habits as well. Thus, these habits became more difficult to predict if the teams were changing constantly (Hightower, Warkentin, Sayeed, & McHaney, 1998). Communication between different teams or inter-team communication is a critical part affecting the efficiency of the operations. This is also referred to as external communication. Fluid teams connect diverse people and they are responsible for bringing the outside linkages inside the team. However, new members might not be accepted inside the team readily, thus creating havoc. It will negatively influence the team performance as a whole. The team will have some non-redundant information as it comprises of a highly diverse network having a low density.

Conflict is a very natural part of any team building process. Conflicts might arise in teams when they disagree on the nature as well as the process of the accomplishment of tasks (Pelled, 1996). These conflicts are linked with higher team performance. This is because the team members are forced to consider all the alternatives for a particular problem and select the most suitable one out of them. Thus, conflict, in a sense, is good in deriving the best performance out of a team. There is an informational diversity in fluid teams. As a result, all the aspects of a problem are considered in detail (Jehn, Northcraft, & Neale, 1999). Higher stress might result in membership change, which could lead to greater conflict. Thus, task management is highly important for fluid teams. There are also relationship conflicts within a fluid team. These types of conflicts arise over disagreements between team members over issues which are not related to any task. These kinds of problems are detrimental to the functioning of the teams generally. However, it has been seen that these kinds of conflicts generally do not arise in fluid teams as they do not have the time to discuss these kinds of issues (Meyerson, Weick, & Kramer, 1996). These teams know that they would not be working together for a long period of time, and as a result, they do not bother to have a

relationship conflict with each other. Employee participation is greatly enhanced with the increase in fluid team performance. Fluid teams need to work very closely in order to get the work done in a stipulated period of time. As a result, each and every employee has an assigned task at hand which needs to be completed in order to deliver the entire job at hand. In this scenario, each and every employee is motivated to deliver his/her assigned tasks to get the entire job done (Mahadevan & Mohammed, 2014). Fluid teams support the other human resource activities like recruitment and selection, compensation planning, training and development, etc. and are greatly helpful to increase the efficiency of these human resource functions.

## Research Gap

The concept of fluid teams is a dynamic and evolving concept. This concept is being increasingly implemented across industries today. As shown in the literature review, there are many studies depicting the use of fluid teams in order to increase productivity across various organizations. However, there are a limited number of studies which have successfully addressed the utilization of fluid teams in the organized retail sector. The retail sector demands high quality of services to be given to the customers in order to satisfy them. To achieve this objective, the organized retail sector carries out extensive changes in the human resources engaged in the system. Hence, fluid teams ensure quality in the delivery of the services. Hence, this paper tries to find out the various factors in fluid teams that are responsible for driving team performance in a retail organization.

## Hypotheses Development

⮱ **H1 :** 'Creative Process' positively influences 'Fluid Team Performance'.

⮱ **H2 :** 'Inflexible Communication Process' negatively influences 'Fluid Team Performance'.

⮱ **H3 :** 'Conflict Management Process' positively influences 'Fluid Team Performance'.

⮱ **H4 :** 'Team Management Process' positively influences 'Fluid Team Performance'.



Figure 1. Hypothesized Research Model Establishment
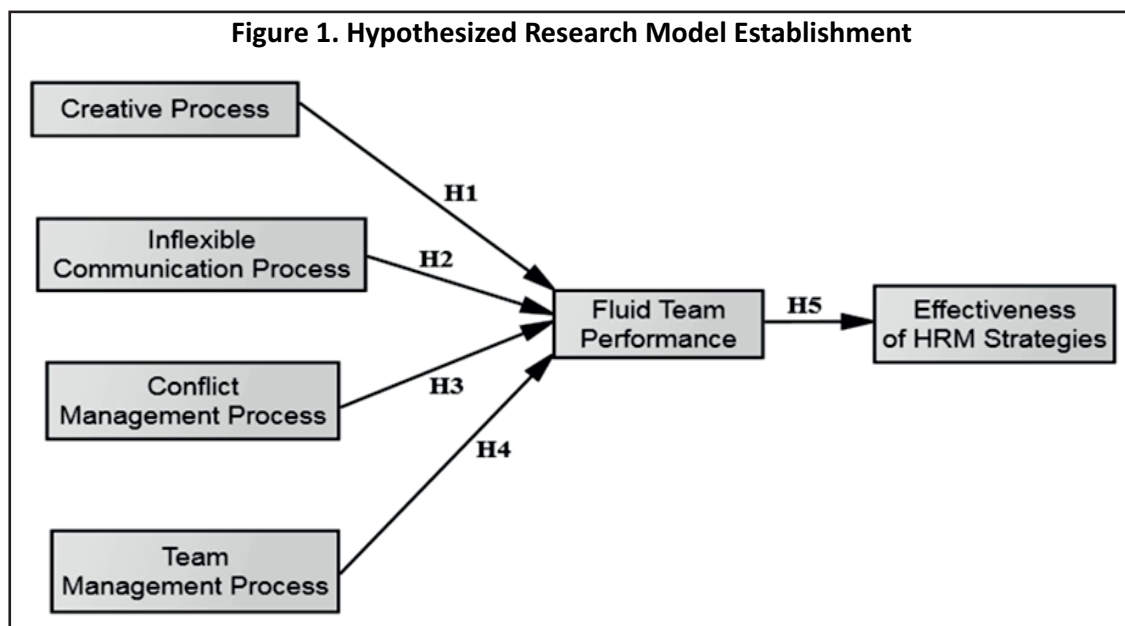
↳ **H5 :** 'Fluid Team Performance' positively influences 'Effectiveness of HRM Strategies'.

## Research Methodology

In this paper, the hypothesized research model (Figure 1) is framed by the factors collected from the literature review and suggestions from experts in the HR field.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Research Type** | Cross-sectional research which is descriptive in nature. |
| **Data Type** | Secondary and primary data |
| **Survey Instrument for Primary Data Collection** | Close ended structured questionnaire |
| **Scaling Technique** | 5 Point Likert Scale : *Strongly Agree* (5) to *Strongly Disagree* (1) |
| **Respondents** | HR Personnel |
| **Industry** | Organized retail sector (Big Bazaar, Shoppers Stop, Reliance Retail, Spencer's Retail, Lifestyle) |
| **Sampling Area** | West Bengal |
| **Sampling Technique** | Convenience Sampling |
| **Sample Size** | 150 |
| **Study Period** | July 25, 2019 – September 25, 2019 |
| **Statistical Software** | SPSS-23 & AMOS-23 |
| **Statistical Techniques** | Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) ; Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) ; Path analysis through structural equation modeling (SEM). |

## Analysis and Results

**(1) Reliability and Validity Testing :** First of all, reliability and validity of the primary dataset and questionnaire have been tested in this study. For reliability testing, Cronbach's alpha value has been calculated. Cronbach's alpha value (Table 1) indicates the acceptable range of reliability which is greater than 0.70 (0.790) in this study.

For validity testing, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) using SPSS-21 and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) using AMOS-21 are used. EFA explains the questionnaire validation through data reduction method and CFA helps to measure construct validity through convergent and discriminant method. Construct validity has been performed for testing how well the defined variables appropriately create individual factors. Here, KMO and Bartlett's test (Table 2) indicates the suitability of execution of EFA and sampling adequacy.

### Table 1. Overall Reliability Statistics

| Cronbach's Alpha | No. of Items / Variables |
|---|---|
| 0.790 | 15 |

### Table 2. KMO and Bartlett's Test

| Kaiser – Meyer – Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy. | | **0.717** |
|---|---|---|
| Bartlett's Test of Sphericity | Approx. Chi-Square | 2514.255 |
| | *Df* | 105 |
| | Sig. | **<0.001** |

EFA has extracted six different factors with variables of high factor loading (>0.7) using principal component analysis (PCA) and varimax rotation method. These factors describe 90.831 % of the total variation (Table 3).

Here, AVE values through CFA, which are remarkably higher than the corresponding squared interconstruct correlation (SIC) values, prove the discriminant validity (Table 4).

### Table 3. Results of Factor Analysis - Rotated Component Matrix [a]

**Rotated Component Matrix[a]**

| Factors/ Variables | Team Management Process | Fluid Team Performance | Effectiveness of HRM Strategies | Inflexible Communication Process | Creative Process | Conflict Management Process |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| q4 | **.954** | .162 | .212 | −.064 | −.016 | −.036 |
| q6 | **.953** | .165 | .186 | −.015 | −.001 | −.038 |
| q5 | **.950** | .174 | .187 | −.069 | .003 | −.021 |
| q1 | .173 | **.915** | .214 | −.146 | .094 | .130 |
| q2 | .148 | **.891** | .154 | −.130 | .208 | .065 |
| q3 | .215 | **.832** | .103 | −.178 | .173 | .158 |
| q14 | .189 | .128 | **.901** | −.163 | −.025 | .090 |
| q13 | .185 | .311 | **.830** | −.001 | −.012 | .068 |
| q15 | .258 | .032 | **.729** | .126 | .343 | .013 |
| q10 | −.061 | −.169 | .023 | **.948** | −.089 | −.103 |
| q9 | −.056 | −.182 | −.076 | **.940** | −.130 | −.093 |
| q7 | −.017 | .137 | .102 | −.126 | **.919** | .056 |
| q8 | −.016 | .229 | .045 | −.097 | **.913** | .006 |
| q12 | −.036 | .111 | .030 | −.099 | .082 | **.948** |
| q11 | −.045 | .147 | .105 | −.087 | −.021 | **.936** |
| % of Variance Explained | 19.769 | 17.907 | 15.053 | 12.969 | 12.737 | 12.396 |

Extraction Method : Principal component analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser normalization.

***Note.*** [a] Rotation converged in 6 iterations.

### Table 4. Squared Correlations Between Factors Through Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) (see Appendix Figure A1)

| Factors | Conflict Management Process | Fluid Team Performance | Team Management Process | Creative Process | Inflexible Communication Process | Effectiveness of HRM Strategies |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Conflict Management Process | **0.779** | | | | | |
| Fluid Team Performance | 0.188 | **0.805** | | | | |
| Team Management | −0.091 | 0.316 | **0.919** | | | |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Process | | | | | |
| Creative Process | −0.008 | 0.287 | −0.023 | **0.826** | |
| Inflexible Communication Process | −0.165 | −0.302 | −0.172 | −0.169 | **0.900** |
| Effectiveness of HRM Strategies | 0.085 | 0.376 | 0.430 | 0.217 | −0.094 | **0.739** |

*Note.* *Diagonal elements are average variance extracted (AVE).

Here, higher standardized regression estimates ($>0.7$) indicate higher reliability of individual variables. According to Hair, Black, Babin, and Anderson (2010) and Field (2009), the following conditions, as checked from Table 5, prove the convergent and discriminant validity in the research model.

**(i)** AVE $> 0.5$,

**(ii)** CR $>$ AVE,

**(iii)** MSV $<$ AVE,

**(iv)** ASV $<$ AVE.

**Table 5. Validity Testing Results by Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)**
**(see Appendix Figure A1)**

| Factors / Constructs | Variables | Standardized Regression Estimate | Construct Reliability (CR) | Average Variance Extracted (AVE) | Maximum Shared Variance (MSV) | Average Shared Variance (ASV) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Fluid | $q1$ | 0.825 | **0.846** | **0.647** | **0.141** | **0.090** |
| Team | $q3$ | 0.784 | | | | |
| Performance | $q2$ | 0.804 | | | | |
| Team | $q4$ | 0.923 | **0.942** | **0.845** | **0.185** | **0.065** |
| Management | $q6$ | 0.915 | | | | |
| Process | $q5$ | 0.92 | | | | |
| Creative | $q7$ | 0.812 | **0.811** | **0.682** | **0.082** | **0.032** |
| Process | $q8$ | 0.839 | | | | |
| Inflexible | $q9$ | 0.897 | **0.895** | **0.810** | **0.091** | **0.037** |
| Communication | $q10$ | 0.903 | | | | |
| Process | | | | | | |
| Conflict | $q11$ | 0.781 | **0.755** | **0.607** | **0.035** | **0.016** |
| Management | $q12$ | 0.777 | | | | |
| Process | | | | | | |
| Effectiveness | $q13$ | 0.718 | **0.783** | **0.546** | **0.185** | **0.078** |
| of HRM | $q15$ | 0.728 | | | | |
| Strategies | $q14$ | 0.769 | | | | |

**(2) Establishment of the Hypothesized Research Model :** For establishing the model and testing the hypotheses, structural equation modeling (SEM) using AMOS-21 has been used in this study. Appropriateness of the research model has been judged through fitness indices.

Table 6 shows the fitness indices of the research model. The fit indices (Table 6) of the research model (Figure 2) indicate the acceptable range of a good model fit.
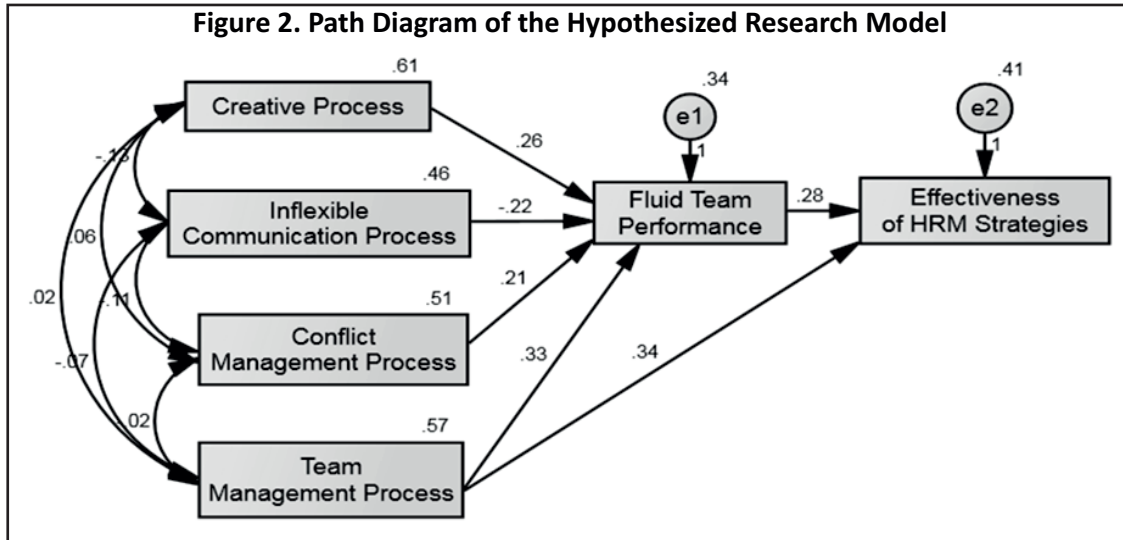


**Figure 2. Path Diagram of the Hypothesized Research Model**

**Table 6. Fit Indices of the Research Model**

| Fit Index | Tolerable Threshold Levels | Structural Model Values |
|---|---|---|
| $\chi^2/df$ (Chi-square / degree of freedom) | < 3 | 1.723 |
| RMSEA (Root mean-square error of approximation) | < 0.06 | 0.049 |
| GFI (Goodness of fit index) | > 0.90 | 0.989 |
| AGFI (Adjusted goodness of fit index) | > 0.90 | 0.921 |
| NFI (Normed fit index) | > 0.90 | 0.963 |
| CFI (Comparative fit index) | > 0.90 | 0.982 |

**(3) Hypotheses Testing and Research Findings (Table 7) :** The following findings are deduced from Table 7 :

 **H1 :** 'Creative Process' positively influences 'Fluid Team Performance'.

Positive (+.259) path coefficient with significant $p$-value (<0.01) supports the hypothesis. Creativity and innovativeness are very essential qualities that are needed within the team members today to deliver services within a stipulated period of time. The experience of the various team members in a fluid team comes into effect by

**Table 7. Path Analysis by Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)**

| Measurement Path | | | Hypothesis | Estimate | S.E. | C.R. | P | Assessment |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Fluid Team Performance | ← | Creative Process | **H1** | .259 | .063 | 4.095 | <.001* | Supported |
| Fluid Team Performance | ← | Conflict Management Process | **H3** | .210 | .069 | 3.047 | .002* | Supported |
| Fluid Team Performance | ← | Team Management Process | **H4** | .329 | .064 | 5.125 | <.001* | Supported |
| Fluid Team Performance | ← | Inflexible Communication Process | **H2** | −.224 | .075 | −2.997 | .003* | Supported |
| Effectiveness of HRM Strategies | ← | Fluid Team Performance | **H5** | .280 | .077 | 3.629 | <.001* | Supported |
| Effectiveness of HRM Strategies | ← | Team Management Process | **New** | .339 | .075 | 4.532 | <.001* | Supported |

**Note.** *Significant regression coefficient ($p < 0.01$).

brainstorming together. They are able to come up with the best solution successfully in this manner. The transition processes could be reduced drastically, thus enriching the experience of the customers. The constant changes of members in the fluid team can also bring diverse and creative ideas on the table which could be discussed and analyzed by the team members. If any such idea is found to deliver quick services to the customers, they can be implemented at once. In this manner, the team performance would be increased as well.

↳ **H2 :** 'Inflexible Communication Process' negatively influences 'Fluid Team Performance'.

Positive (−.224) path coefficient with significant $p$ - value (<0.01) supports the hypothesis. Fluid teams operate under a lot of pressure and the services need to be delivered within a definite time frame. As a result, they have to depend on flexible communication processes for the smooth functioning of the entire retail store. Internal communication within the team members and external communication between the different teams need to be in sync. Thus, inflexible communication processes have a negative impact on the team performance as the team is not able to deliver quality services within the time frame.

↳ **H3 :** 'Conflict Management Process' positively influences 'Fluid Team Performance'.

Positive (+.210) path coefficient with significant $p$ - value (< 0.01) supports the hypothesis. The fluid teams are rich in informational diversity. As a result, there are numerous conflicts between the team members. However, these conflicts lead to an increase in the fluid team's performance as each and every area is revised several times to reduce errors. Due to this intensive grilling process, the best alternatives for the customers are chosen by the team. Also, the team members are well aware of the strengths and weaknesses of their organization because of the large experience pool which they possess. It becomes easier for them to handle any kind of unfortunate situations.

↳ **H4 :** 'Team Management Process' positively influences 'Fluid Team Performance'.

Positive (+.329) path coefficient with a significant *p* - value (< 0.01) supports the hypothesis. Team management is an extremely important function. The diversified beliefs and thinking of the team members need to be amalgamated in order to come up with a standard level of service delivery. However, once this is done, it enhances the fluid team performance greatly. The efficacy levels of the teams also increase greatly. Flexibility within the teams is also enhanced so that at times of need, any member can substitute for the other without any hitches.

✤ **H5 :** 'Fluid Team Performance' positively influences 'Effectiveness of HRM Strategies'.

Positive (+.280) path coefficient with a significant *p* - value (<0.01) supports the hypothesis. Increased fluid team performance has a positive effect on the effectiveness of the HRM strategies. Fluid teams are put together by the HR department for delivering optimal performance. When the team performance goes up, the effectiveness of the HR strategies automatically increases. It also ensures that all the members of the fluid teams are actively involved in the tasks at hand and they are putting their best efforts into the task.

## Managerial Implications

The retail industry is growing exponentially today. This growth spurt is due to the changing needs of the customers. Various new retail segments are also coming up in the market today. However, in order to tap into this demand and utilize this opportunity effectively, it is important to increase the quality of services being provided to the consumers. This goal can be achieved with the help of fluid teams. These teams perform together synergistically and holistically and they work to increase the effectiveness of the HRM strategies which have been implemented as well. Providing good quality services would also help an organization to gain a competitive edge over its competitors. Setting up a good image in the market helps these retail organizations in attracting customers from a global forum. Loyal customers would be generated through this and the customer base will increase drastically. Meeting this demand could also result in the production of many job opportunities which would further lead on to positively influence the economy as a whole. However, this could be attained only when fluid teams perform well. This would result in an increase in the productivity of the entire system. The profitability of the organizations would also increase in this manner which would further help them to sustain in the market for a longer period of time. Customers today prefer consolidated retail stores from where they can access all kinds of products from a singular space as they have restricted time for these activities. These retail stores contain a wide assortment of products accumulated from multiple sources across the world. The customers prefer them as all their requirements are fulfilled within the same store, thus saving a lot of their time. The retail segment has been successful in penetrating diverse locations with the sole objective of serving customers. It is still expanding and it will continue to do so in the near future.

## Conclusion

With a rise in population, there is an extensive demand of retail stores. To cater to this demand, the retail stores face cut throat competition within the industry. In order to survive in the market, these organizations have to create a competitive advantage over their competitors. The greatest challenge of the human resource department is to place their human resources in positions wherein they will excel. One of the methods being implemented by the human resource department to strengthen the effectiveness of their strategies is to create fluid teams and embed them in proper places in the retail organization. The fluid teams have a varied pool of knowledge and experience. This helps the team members to decide on the best course of action. It further strengthens the retail organization by delivering quality services. As retail is a service industry, it is extremely important for the organization to satisfy its customers. A fluid team, because of its diverse background, is able to figure out the needs

and wants of the customers and delivers them easily. Creative processes, team management processes, and conflict management processes play a very important role in elevating the fluid team performance as a whole. Inflexible communication processes, however, prove to be detrimental to the fluid team performance. If there is a growth in the fluid team performance, the effectiveness of the HRM strategies would be enhanced as well. Thus, in this era of globalization, sustaining in the market proves to be a challenge for many retail stores. In order to sustain themselves, organizations must put their best foot forward and strive towards excellence.

## Limitations of the Study

There may be certain errors that occurred while collecting the data unintentionally from some of the reluctant or biased respondents. These response errors may have some undesirable impact on analysis as well as the interpretation of the data. Also, we may have overlooked some significant research papers conducted on our topic. This study was limited to a particular state, that is, West Bengal due to certain financial restrictions. In this paper, the results were interpreted from the data collected, however, these results might not hold true globally as multiple other factors which were not considered in this study could be playing a key role in influencing the strategic human resource management of the organized retail sector.

## Scope for Further Research

Due to the restrictions imposed on this study, it was impossible for us to take into consideration each and every factor which was found to be influencing the strategic human resource management of the organized retail sector. This could be rectified in further studies related to this topic. Also, this study was restricted to the small state of West Bengal, India. This study can be carried out in other parts of India as well as the world so that it will be easier to draw conclusions that will be applicable in the global scenario. A separate model can be developed in the context of the global aspect. In this study, the respondents were the HR personnel of this particular segment. For further research, data could be collected from other employees of the organizations as well as from other departments to gain a holistic understanding to the research problem at hand.

## Authors' Contribution

Dr. Arunangshu Giri was responsible for conceiving the idea for this particular research study. He developed the core model design for this particular empirical study. Satakshi Chatterjee collected the relevant research literature of the studies already carried out in this topic and generated concepts and codes for this research design. Dr. Arunangshu Giri developed the research methodology suitable for this particular study. He verified the methods of the study and supervised the entire process. He took the interviews from the respondents and collected the data. He analyzed the data and interpreted the results. The numerical computations were also carried out by Dr. Arunangshu Giri by the use of various softwares such as SPSS 23.0 and AMOS 23.0. Satakshi Chatterjee, with consultation from Dr. Arunangshu Giri, identified the implications, limitations, as well as the future scope of this study.

## Conflict of Interest

The authors certify that they have no affiliations with or involvement in any organization or entity with any financial interest, or non-financial interest in the subject matter, or materials discussed in this manuscript.

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# Appendix

**Appendix Table A1.**

| Factors | Structured Questionnaire with Different Variables |
|---|---|
| **Fluid Team Performance** | *q1* : Team management processes have a positive impact on fluid team performance.<br>*q2* : Creative processes have a positive impact on fluid team performance.<br>*q3* : Conflict management processes have a positive impact on fluid team performance. |
| **Team Management Process** | *q4* : Unfamiliarity among fluid team members cannot create any communication barrier because of clearly delineated roles.<br>*q5* : Fluid team members are interchanged continuously in order to increase their adaptability quotient.<br>*q6* : The members of the fluid team have developed a similar way of thinking regarding the execution of any task at hand. |
| **Creative Process** | *q7* : Fluid teams try to implement creative processes in the transition period of the tasks at hand.<br>*q8* : Fluid teams do not hesitate to communicate informally as and when needed for full usage of their innovativeness. |
| **Inflexible Communication Process** | *q9* : Internal communication methods play an important role in completing the tasks of a fluid team.<br>*q10* : Inflexible communication process intensifies the fluid team performance. |
| **Conflict Management Process** | *q11* : Conflict management is very important for deriving the best performance out of fluid teams.<br>*q12* : Fluid teams generally do not have relationship conflicts as they will be working with each other for a shorter period of time. |
| **Effectiveness of HRM Strategies** | *q13* : Increased fluid team performance leads to an increased effectiveness in the HRM strategies which are implemented.<br>*q14* : Effective HRM strategies increase employee participation.<br>*q15* : Flexible structure of fluid teams intensifies the efficacy of HRM strategies. |



**Appendix Figure A1.**
**Construct Validity Testing through AMOS**
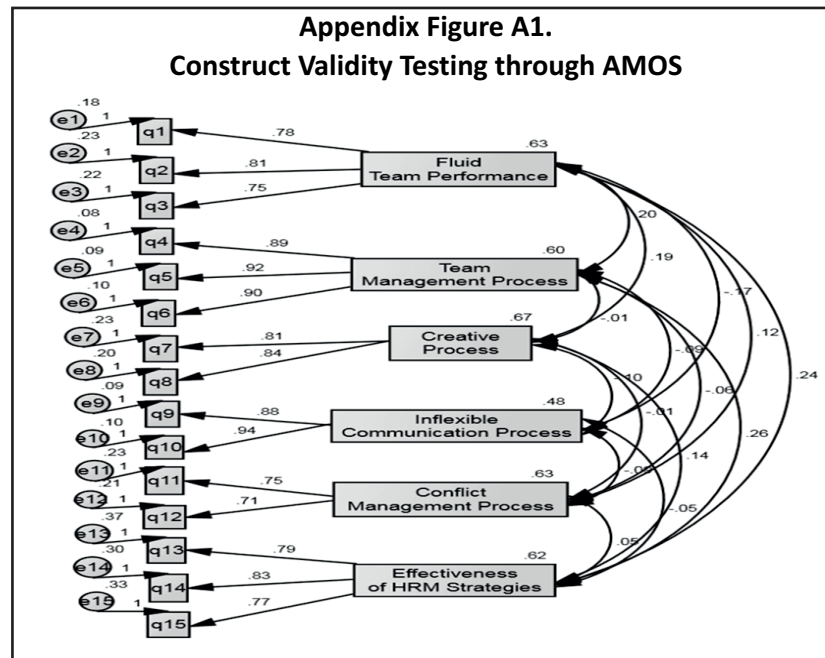
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