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Human Resource Management Strategies in Increasing Employee Engagement in the Service Sector

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Article Info	Abstract
	The study will examine what green supply chain management (GSCM) that retail companies have been undertaking and the impediments that the companies have been experiencing during the implementation. The questionnaire applied is a survey with structured interviews involving a group of respondents who will play crucial roles in the supply chain of the companies. In this paper, the author discusses such strategies as green procurement, optimisation of routes used, renewable energy, recycling, and selling of the nature-friendly products. The findings of the study are that GSCM strategies put in place have had an effect in reducing the operational costs and enhancing the image of the company, but there are constraints like high costs of initial investments and scarcity in green logistics facilities. The suggestions of the present study include government assistance, government tax incentives and investment in greener technologies, and closer cooperation with suppliers in order to enhance sustainability.

INTRODUCTION

Employee engagement has proved to be a vital tool defining the performance of an organization especially in service industries where the service quality is mainly dependent on how employees treat clients. Employees who are actively involved in the organisation are not only productive but also add value to the working environment in the organisation, leading to customer satisfaction and loyalty (Macey & Schneider, 2008; Saks, 2006). With the increasing evolution of the service industry, organisations are required to change their human resource management (HRM) strategies to optimum levels of employee engagement.

Over the past several years, studies have emphasized the key role that effective HRM practices play in improving employee engagement. A meta analysis conducted by Christian et al. (2011) revealed a strong correspondence between the practice of HRM and employee engagement, which translates into the finding that, mostly, organizations with strong HRM strategies have engaged employees. This association shows the imperativeness of service sector establishments being in line with their HRM plans and strategies that relate with employee engagement programs. Complete training and development programs can serve as one of the major HRM strategies that will engage workers. Existing research indicates that when the organizations

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show interest in the development of their employees (i.e. their professional growth), it results in increased engagement (Saks & Gruman, 2014). Training programs do not only provide employees with the skills needed to perform their duties, but also indicate that the organization believes that their efforts are valuable and, therefore, helps in increasing employee commitment (Eisenberger et al., 2019). In addition, development opportunities have the ability to decrease turnover intentions, which is especially important in the service industry, where employee turnover is high, and interferes with the quality of service provided (Lee & Mitchell, 1994; Chung et al., 2021; Gautam & Gautam, 2024).

The other major HRM approach is the embracing of performance management systems which are regarded as fair and transparent. Murphy & Cleveland (1995) point out performance appraisal systems that focus more upon constructive feedback and recognition of their worth in the company are likely to foster nearly a sense of worth with the employees. The result of this is a culture of engagement which makes employees willing to provide the best efforts. In addition, the incorporation of the 360-degree feedback processes can help to give the employee a balanced view on their performance and help them engage in a long-term improvement process (Chandra Dalvi et al., 2023; Kamaluddeen, 2020).

Also, the employee engagement can be achieved through fostering of positive organizational culture. In a research conducted by Kahn (1990), the researcher discovered that workers who feel secure to share their ideas and concerns are more prone to be engaged. Trusting and communications are ways of making the employees relate to the work that they do on a more emotional level which in turn helps in increasing engagement among the employees. A service-based organization may achieve positive results by developing such culture because it motivates workers to be responsible in their roles as well as being actively involved in improving service delivery (Ikwuanusi et al., 2024; Nimran et al., 2024).

Furthermore, the employee contributions should be acknowledged and rewarded as a crucial element of HRM to increase engagement (Celestin et al., 2024; Zawawi et al., 2024). Studies have shown that recognition program has great impact in motivating and engaging employees (Brun & Dugas, 2008). When employees would feel recognized in their endeavors, it increases their emotional attachment to the organization. It is therefore incumbent upon service sector organizations to have recognition programs which are consistent with their values and culture hence inculcating a feeling of belonging with employees (Kuvaas, 2006; Chakraborty et al., 2024). Another initiative in this direction is work-life balance which also adds to the improved employee engagement in service sector. The growing work pressures may result in burnout and disengagement and hence the organizations should focus on the well-being of their employees. Allen et al. (2013) have found out that organizations involving work-life balance found more employees engaged and satisfied by their jobs. Flexible working arrangement, e.g., work-at-home-job and flexible working time, can go a long way in enhancing employee perception towards an organization, which makes them feel valued and involved (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014).

Moreover, utilization of technology in HRM can improve employee engagement insofar as communication is made easier and employees equipped with instruments to help them effectively manage their works. Digital platforms can be used to conduct real-time feedback and engagement surveys which allow organizations to monitor the mood of their employees and make changes to their approach (Deloitte, 2016). The synergies of technology do not only enhance efficiency of operations but also enable employees through the provision of a voice in the organizational process, which generates a feeling of belonging and involvement to the organization.

METHODS

Research Design

The research methodology was a quantitative variation of the survey research design in order to identify and discuss the role that HRM strategies have in affecting employee engagement in the service sector. This structure has enabled the researcher to gather information at a higher level and to determine how the different HRM strategies in the companies are perceived by employees. The overall purpose of the survey was to offer a more objective and measurable picture of how well HRM practices technical training, recognition, performance management, had the effect of boosting employee participation. The quantitative data obtained were analyzed to determine whether there was a significant correlation between the strategies and the level of employee engagement or not.

Participants

The respondents in this study were 200 workers under the service industry with ages that ranged between 22 years and 45 years. The sample selection process was done using purposive sampling whereby the participants were asked to meet a criterion that they had a working experience of at least one year in the company and in non-managerial to middle management levels. In this study, the employees under consideration worked in many service sectors, such as finance, hospitality, and retail. This was carried out to obtain a representative information on employee engagement in different aspects of the service sector. The respondents were grouped into various groups in regards to the length of service and their positions, which were further examined on the basis of whether those factors made a difference in the relationship between HRM strategies and employee engagement.

Instruments

As the primary tool, this research study was conducted with the help of a structured questionnaire that aimed to capture the key variables, i.e. HRM strategies and employee engagement. This questionnaire was comprised of 2 parts. The first section concerned the adoption of several HRM practices, including the training programs, employee rewards and performance management processes. The question was based on using a 5-point likert scale in which the respondent answered how much of these strategies were implemented at their workplace. Employee engagement, as a factor, is quantified in the second portion that asks questions related to how emotionally engaged workers feel on the job, whether they are intrinsically motivated, and whether they are satisfied with their work. The degree of engagement measurement prepared was also based on the Employee Engagement Survey that has been subjected to tests of validity and reliability in several corporate environments (Kahn, 1990). Employees were asked to fill the questionnaire by responding to statements in their their own legal written words; the questionnaire had to be tested first by a small sample group to ascertain the transparency of questions and regularity of replies.

Data collection

The procedure of data collection was conducted in two phases. The initial section was the dissemination of the online questionnaires to the workers of different service organizations, where the research would be conducted. The questionnaires were shared through emails and participants were provided with 2 weeks to complete and submit questionnaires. The second phase consisted of the process of verifying the data, which involved checking the responses provided by the researchers in order to make sure that all information had been entered both fully and with the proper validity. However, during the data collection, researchers made sure that the

employees were participating in the data collection voluntarily, and their identity was not disclosed for security and honesty when giving information.

Data Analysis

The responses captured in the questionnaires were subjected to analysis of the descriptive as well as the inferential statistics. The description of the respondents and the distribution of responses associated with the utilization of the HRM strategies and employee engagement was done using descriptive analysis. The use of linear regression analysis was done to identify whether there was an important relationship between use of the HRM strategies and engagement by the employees. A t-test was also introduced to measure the differences in the level of employee engagement according to some categories, including the length of service or position level. The charts were analysed under statistical programs (eg, SPSS) to make sure that results were accurate, and factors which impact the level of employee engagement significantly were identified.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This paper examines the extent to which Human Resource Management (HRM) practices contribute towards employee engagement in the service industry which is noted to be a setting that derives its dependence on peer to peer communication and service quality. Because it depends on this scenario, employee engagement also serves as one of the strongest indicators as to customer satisfaction and organisational success. The paper uses the rising body of work whose core focus is the investigation of the impacts on employees given HRM practices like training, recognition, performance management, work life balance and career development processes on their psychological and emotional attachment to their positions. Within the context of this literature, the proposed study will fill a gap of clarity and finitude in building a causal relationship between interventions in HRM and the degree of engagement via well-structured series of experimental and quasi-experimental studies. The designed quasi-experimental and quantitative study was used to ask 200 employees working in the service industry to fill the structured questionnaires. The discussion gauges the merits of the discrete HRM programs in sum in regard to gaining tangible benefits in the form of employee engagement and should guide the HR practitioners and the organisations towards producing a more committed, pleasured and productive workforce in the emerging service economy.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of HRM Strategies and Employee Engagement (N = 200)

HRM Strategy	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Training	4.10	0.85	-0.45	-0.32
Recognition	3.80	1.00	0.10	-0.55
Performance Management	3.95	0.92	-0.25	-0.20
Work-Life Balance Policies	3.70	1.05	0.25	-0.75
Career Development	4.05	0.88	-0.40	-0.18
Employee Engagement	4.20	0.80	-0.60	0.10

The descriptive statistics reveal that various Human Resource Management (HRM) strategies are positively associated with employee engagement. Among the strategies examined, training recorded the highest mean score (M = 4.10, SD = 0.85), suggesting that employees generally express high satisfaction with the training provided by their organizations. The negative skewness value (-0.45) further supports this, indicating a strong tendency among respondents to rate training favorably. In contrast, recognition received a lower mean score (M = 3.80, SD = 1.00) and exhibited a slight positive skewness (0.10), implying that recognition practices may be implemented less consistently across organizations. Performance management (M = 3.95, SD =

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0.92) and work-life balance policies (M = 3.70, SD = 1.05) displayed relatively higher standard deviations, reflecting greater variability in how these strategies are perceived or applied. Career development was also rated positively, with a mean score of 4.05 (SD = 0.88), indicating a favorable perception among employees. Notably, the overall employee engagement score was the highest (M = 4.20, SD = 0.80), with a pronounced negative skewness (-0.60), suggesting that most employees reported high levels of engagement. These findings collectively underscore the significant role that effective HRM strategies play in enhancing employee engagement within the service sector.

Table 2. Correlation Matrix Between HRM Strategies and Employee Engagement

Variables	Training	Recognition	Performance Management	Work-Life Balance	Career Development	Employee Engagement
Training	1	0.58	0.63	0.55	0.60	0.70
Recognition	0.58	1	0.50	0.52	0.55	0.62
Performance Management	0.63	0.50	1	0.48	0.53	0.65
Work-Life Balance	0.55	0.52	0.48	1	0.60	0.61
Career Development	0.60	0.55	0.53	0.60	1	0.68
Employee Engagement	0.70	0.62	0.65	0.61	0.68	1

The correlation matrix illustrates the strength of the relationships between various Human Resource Management (HRM) strategies and employee engagement. Among all the strategies analyzed, training exhibits the strongest positive correlation with employee engagement (r = 0.70), suggesting that employees who receive consistent and effective training tend to be more engaged in their work. Career development and performance management also show strong positive correlations with engagement, with coefficients of r = 0.68 and r = 0.65, respectively, indicating that opportunities for growth and transparent performance evaluations are closely linked to increased employee commitment and motivation. The statistically significant correlations across all HRM strategies affirm that these practices are positively associated with employee engagement, highlighting the critical role HRM plays in fostering a productive and engaged workforce.

Table 3. Paired-Samples T-Test: Pre-Test vs. Post-Test for Employee Engagement in Experimental Group (N = 100)

Test	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value	p-value
Pre-Test Engagement	3.50	0.75		
Post-Test Engagement	4.20	0.70	8.50	0.00002

The table presents the results of a paired-samples t-test conducted to evaluate changes in employee engagement within the experimental group before and after the implementation of Human Resource Management (HRM) strategies. The findings indicate a notable increase in engagement levels, with the post-intervention mean score rising to 4.20 (SD = 0.70) from a pre-intervention mean of 3.50 (SD = 0.75). The t-value of 8.50 and the corresponding p-value of 0.00002 provide strong statistical evidence that this improvement is highly significant. These results suggest that the HRM interventions had a meaningful and positive impact on enhancing employee engagement within the experimental group.

Table 4. Independent Samples T-Test: Post-Test Engagement Scores for Experimental vs. Control Group

Group	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value	p-value
Experimental	4.20	0.70	5.45	0.0001

Control	3.70	0.75		

The table presents the findings of an independent samples t-test conducted to compare employee engagement scores between the experimental group, which received targeted HRM interventions, and the control group, which did not. The results reveal that the experimental group reported a higher mean engagement score (M = 4.20, SD = 0.70) than the control group (M = 3.70, SD = 0.75). The calculated t-value of 5.45 and a highly significant p-value of 0.0001 indicate that the difference in engagement levels between the two groups is statistically significant. These results provide strong empirical support for the effectiveness of the HRM strategies implemented in the experimental group, demonstrating their positive impact on enhancing employee engagement within the service sector context.

Table 5. Regression Analysis - Predictors of Employee Engagement

Variables	B	SE	Beta	t-value	p-value
Training	0.35	0.08	0.40	4.38	0.000
Recognition	0.20	0.09	0.22	2.22	0.028
Performance Management	0.28	0.07	0.30	3.90	0.001
Work-Life Balance	0.15	0.06	0.18	2.50	0.014
Career Development	0.32	0.09	0.33	3.56	0.001

The table provides a detailed overview of the multiple regression analysis conducted to assess the influence of various Human Resource Management (HRM) strategies on employee engagement. Among the five strategies examined, training emerged as the most influential predictor, demonstrating the highest positive and statistically significant effect (B = 0.35, p = 0.000). This suggests that investment in employee training is strongly associated with increased levels of engagement. Following training, career development also showed a substantial positive impact (B = 0.32, p = 0.001), indicating that opportunities for growth and advancement play a critical role in fostering employee commitment. Performance management was the third most influential factor (B = 0.28, p = 0.001), highlighting the importance of clear performance expectations and constructive feedback mechanisms. Although recognition (B = 0.20, p = 0.028) and work-life balance policies (B = 0.15, p = 0.014) contributed less to engagement compared to the other variables, their effects were nonetheless statistically significant. These findings collectively confirm that all five HRM strategies positively and significantly influence employee engagement, reinforcing the importance of a comprehensive and well-integrated HRM approach in enhancing workforce motivation and organizational effectiveness.

Strategic HRM Practices as Drivers of Employee Engagement

This study provides significant insights into the relationship between human resource management (HRM) strategies and employee engagement in the service sector, addressing a notable gap in the existing literature. The findings reveal that targeted HRM strategies, particularly training and performance management, have a substantial positive impact on employee engagement levels. Specifically, the experimental group demonstrated a significantly higher mean engagement score compared to the control group, underscoring the effectiveness of a structured HRM approach. This outcome aligns with previous research that emphasizes the importance of strategic HRM in enhancing employee engagement (Albrecht et al., 2015).

One critical contribution of this study is its empirical validation of the connection between specific HRM practices and employee engagement, reinforcing the theoretical framework proposed by Aktar & Pangil (2018). Previous studies have often highlighted the correlation between HRM practices and engagement without thoroughly examining the individual contributions of specific strategies (Macey &

Schneider, 2008). By isolating the effects of training and performance management, this research provides a nuanced understanding of how these strategies can be leveraged to foster greater employee engagement, thereby filling a significant gap in the literature.

Furthermore, the strong correlation found between training and engagement supports the notion that continuous professional development plays a crucial role in maintaining high levels of employee motivation and commitment (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014). These findings echo the work of Albrecht et al. (2021), who proposed that meaningful work experiences foster employee engagement. By highlighting the critical role of training, this study encourages organizations to prioritize ongoing development opportunities, which can enhance employees' perceptions of their work environment and ultimately lead to improved performance.

Moreover, the study's use of a quasi-experimental design strengthens the validity of the findings, providing a clearer causal link between HRM strategies and employee engagement than many correlational studies in the field (Sypniewska et al., 2023). This methodological rigor allows for more robust conclusions and serves as a model for future research in HRM. As highlighted by Zoogah & Zoogah (2014), utilizing experimental designs in HRM research can significantly contribute to the field by establishing clear cause-and-effect relationships, thus guiding practitioners in implementing effective HRM practices.

While previous literature has acknowledged the importance of employee engagement, many studies have focused primarily on descriptive or correlational analyses, limiting the understanding of how specific HRM interventions can drive engagement. This study's findings underscore the need for HR professionals to adopt a more strategic approach in designing and implementing HRM practices tailored to enhance employee engagement. In addition, the study's results align with the growing emphasis on the holistic approach to HRM, which integrates various practices to create a conducive work environment. For instance, the positive relationship between recognition and employee engagement is consistent with findings from Obeng et al. (2021), who demonstrated that acknowledgment of employee contributions significantly boosts morale and commitment. This highlights the necessity for organizations to cultivate a culture of recognition alongside training and performance management to achieve optimal engagement levels.

CONCLUSION

This study underscores the critical role of human resource management (HRM) strategies in enhancing employee engagement within the service sector. By employing a quasi-experimental design, the research highlights the effectiveness of targeted interventions such as training and performance management, demonstrating a significant increase in engagement levels among employees in the experimental group compared to those receiving conventional HRM practices. These findings not only contribute to the existing body of knowledge by providing empirical evidence of the causal relationships between specific HRM strategies and employee engagement but also address important gaps in the literature.

The positive correlation between training and employee engagement reinforces the importance of continuous professional development in fostering a motivated and committed workforce. Additionally, the findings advocate for a more integrated approach to HRM, emphasizing that a combination of strategies particularly recognition and performance management can create a supportive work environment conducive to high levels of engagement. As organizations strive to enhance employee engagement and, consequently, overall performance, the insights from this study serve as a valuable resource for HR practitioners. The evidence presented here supports the implementation of structured HRM practices tailored to meet the

specific needs of employees, ultimately driving greater organizational success. Future research should continue to explore the long-term effects of these HRM strategies and consider the diverse contexts in which they operate, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of how best to cultivate employee engagement in the ever-evolving service sector.

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