

# A Study of Employee's Perception Of Human Resource Practices And Work Engagement In Hospitality Industry (Mumbai)

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**Abstract:** This study has been done to assess the association between employees' perception of HR practices and Work engagement in hospitality industry. A survey of 418 employees in hotel industry in Mumbai region was conducted to understand the relationship of Human Resource Practices (Selection & Staffing, Employee Training Opportunities, Employee Development Opportunities, Performance Management & Pay for Performance, Promotional Opportunities, Employee Decision making & participation and Communication & Coordination by HR) and Work Engagement. It has been hypothesized that Work Engagement depends upon Human Resource Practices. The model was tested by using Structural Equation Modelling and relationship analysed through Regression. The result were as expected, that all HR practices were associated with Work Engagement. Selection and Staffing, Employee Training Opportunities, Promotional Opportunities, Employee Benefits and Communication & Coordination by HR had significant impact on Work Engagement. This study will help managers identify practices which increase engagement of its workers and implement them to in accordance to fulfill the needs to employees and organization. This study has original value as it shows the perception of employees towards HR practices through empirical research rather than conceptual that has been done till date.

**Index Terms:** Employee Engagement, Human Resource Practices, Hospitality Industry, Mumbai

## 1. INTRODUCTION

THIS Today Employee Engagement is a topic that is extensively used and spoken about issue in human resource management. It primarily is about the level to which employees are aligned to the vision and mission of an organization and the involvement and commitment the employees have with their work and organization. Nonetheless employee engagement is a multifaceted concern with numerous variables influencing the engagement of an employee in an organization. Organisations and academicians have had varied views on employee engagement. Therefore for employees to be engaged each organization has to be versatile and thereby figure out what is most appropriate for them. In today's disruptive era, HR making an impact on the bottom line is not in dispute. But what is interesting is to find out the best means to make that impact. HR has a key role to play as a partner in developing practices which help in achievement of business goals. Employee engagement is one of the variables which effect organisational performance. Therefore HR can create practices which lead to employee engagement and hence organisational objectives.

An incredible effort is also being made to promote India through its tourist offices all over the world. Hotels industry is an important service industry in India. Its significance is undoubted. One of the key drivers for growth of Indian economy in services sector today is the Indian tourism and hospitality industry. Considering the rich cultural heritage, natural beauty and variety of terrains and ecology; Indian tourism has immense potential. It also is a significant employment generator and also is a substantial source of foreign exchange for the country. Moreover due to intensified business opportunities the last decade and a half, there has been a rush of people coming to India to scope these opportunities. This has increased the room rates and occupancy levels in hotels across India. This amazing story of growth of Hotel industry in India comes only next to China in Asia Pacific region. The hotel industry is highly employee intensive and dependent upon high quality service. It is the employees of the hotel which drive the competitiveness and productivity of the organisation. Therefore the industry has realised that employee education, training, development, well-being are critical for future of the industry. Zohar (1994) recognized that one of the most stressful jobs are found in hospitality industry. It was the quality of direct and indirect customer – employee interaction that gives one hospitality business an advantage over the other business thus ensuring sustainability of business (Sachdev et al., 2004). It is the intangible resources, specifically human resources, of an organisation which cannot be imitated that become a competitive advantage for a business for it is these employees who are engaged can provide a quality of service which cannot be imitated (Hitt et al., 2001). Maxwell and Quail (2002) argue that though hospitality managers know that the important issue and concern is the human resource in the industry, but they still do not value employees enough which results in decreasing the levels of commitment to the job as well to the firm. Chand (2010) in the study of 52 hotels in India established that human resource practices have a affirmative impact on the service quality, customer satisfaction and hotel performance. He suggests that it is the human resource practices which helps in increasing the service effectiveness in the hotels and this gets replicated in hotel's performance. One

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of the most troubling issue for hospitality industry today is to attract and retain its competent employees. Hospitality managers everywhere in the world agree that human resource concerns are consistently the most important and numero-uno item of worry in hotel and restaurant operations (Enz, 2004; Enz, 2001). Lee-Ross (2013) noted that high labour turnover, low skills, inconsistent service delivery and low wages in hospitality sector is because of not having an effective rounded HRM strategy. Therefore it becomes imperative to understand the relationship between HR practices, which in turn result in policies and programs in an organization, and work engagement. In this study we try to understand the relationship of HR practices with Work Engagement. This study tries to address the deficiency of the specific HR practices and its relationship with work engagement. In this paper we have first reviewed the literature on Employee Engagement & Human Resource Practices. Then based on that we have formulated the hypothesis to study. To analyze and understand data we have used SEM and regression.

## 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Employee Engagement

We still do not have a widely acknowledged definition for the term employee engagement. Harris (2006) has spoken about how engagement as a concept evolved in mid-90's. It was Kahn (1990) who conceptualized as individual's attachment to their work roles. He espoused that if people are invested and are able identify with their roles more likely will they put in greater effort in their work. Perrin's Global Workforce Study (2003) defines "employees' willingness and ability to help their company succeed, largely by providing discretionary effort on a sustainable basis". Gallup (2006) organization defines employee engagement as the "involvement with and enthusiasm for work". Schaufeli et al. (2002) define engagement as "positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigour, dedication, and absorption". W.H. Macey and B. Schneider (2008) in their research have shown that engagement is a disposition in which individuals have the affinity to view world in a particular way (e.g. negative affectivity) and it is this trait that gets revealed as psychological state engagement. Shuck et al. (2010) have defined engagement as "an individual employee's cognitive, emotional, and behavioral state directed toward desired organizational outcomes". According to Saks (2006) the ways employees are engaged is highly dependent on the resources they get from the organisation and becomes a method of repayment to the organisation. He talked about how concept of engagement can be understood through social exchange theory. Research by Hay group (2012) has shown that firms in leadership positions use engaged employees for managing performance cost. They found that high levels of engagement resulted in a revenue growth of 2.5 times as compared to their compatriots and they could see a reduction of 40% in employee turnover. Rana et al. (2014) based on numerous studies and using Dublin method has found that the factors that affect employee engagement

- Job Design and characteristics
- Supervisor relationships
- Co-worker relationships
- Work place environment such as adequate physical resources, safety, supportive climate
- Employee perception of HRD practices

### 2.1.1 Theoretical Framework of Employee Engagement

In engagement literature there is no standard theoretical framework for employee engagement. Researchers have used their own perspectives to study and explain engagement. There are presently four major approaches to understand employee engagement presently: (a) need-satisfying approach, (b) burnout-antithesis approach, (c) satisfaction-engagement approach, and (d) multidimensional approach, (Shuck ,2011). For this study we have used burnt-out antithesis approach and multi-dimensional approach. Based on these framework following literature was found relevant as given in Table 1.

Author	Year	Findings
Maslach et al.	2001	Gave definitions of Employee engagement and talked about engagement as an anti-thesis to burnout
Schaufeli et al.	2002	Used the burnout model of Maslach et al. to understand engagement and found that burnout and employee engagement had negative relationship and came up with their model of engagement.
Shirom	2003	Studied earlier models and talked about engagement being a different psychological state.
Britt et al.	2005	While studying combat soldiers it was found that employees who are engaged tend to feel less stress and fatigue.
Schaufeli et al.	2006	Defined employee engagement as "positive work related state of mind characterised by vigour, dedication and absorption". They built the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale.
Saks	2006	Studied both the factors that lead to engagement and the outcomes of employee engagement.
Macey and Schneider	2008	Did a conceptual study and established that trait engagement, state engagement and behavioral engagement as different but related concepts. They also found various variables effect employee engagement
Wefald & Downey	2009	Found engagement as an important work related construct.
Shuck and Wollard	2010	Did a review of literature on various researches on employee engagement and conceptualized engagement as cognitive, behavioral and emotional state to achieve organisational objectives.

### 2.2 Human Resource Practices

Fisher et al. (2006) specified that in order for an organisation to be competitive there are multiple resources that are required such as physical, financial, human as well as capability for marketing. One of the important variables that will give competitive advantage to an organisation will be its human resources and how human resources is organised. Armstrong (2007) define human resource management as "strategic and coherent approach to the management of an

organization's most valued assets – the people working there who individually and collectively contribute to the achievement of its objectives." In the resource based view (RBV) it states that it is the human resource practices that add to sustained competitive advantage by enabling that competencies are developed that are specific to organizations, manage relationships between employees, which is a part of organizational culture, and thus create tacit organizational knowledge. While reviewing the literature it was found that employee engagement and in organisation is primarily dependent on either organization related elements or discrete elements related to individuals as given in Table 2.

	Year	Factors effecting Engagement
Kahn	1990	Group Dynamics, management processes, norms, task and role characteristics
Harter et al.	2002	Direct supervisor, Colleagues, work environment
May et al.	2004	Job role fit, supportive co-worker and supervisor, job enrichment
Schaufeli & Bakker	2004	Job resources such as performance feedback at task level, support from colleagues at interpersonal level, supervisory coaching at organisational level.
Bakker & Demerouti	2008	Job resources e.g. autonomy, performance feedback, social support, supervisory coaching etc.
Salanova & Schaufeli	2008	Job control, Feedback and Job Variety effect engagement
Xanthopoulou	2009	Job resources and personal resources effect engagement

It can be seen that burn-out anti-thesis and multidimensional approach are able to explain the organizational elements that effect employee engagement. Burud and Tumolo (2004) in their analysis have shown positive association between human resource practices which emphasized on engagement of employees and the financial achievement of the firm. Research by Huselid (1995) suggests that HR practices by influencing attitudes and behaviour is able to effect organisational results. Mone and London (2009) as a result of path analysis found 8 direct predictors of engagement -

autonomy, company communication, job resources, leadership, career progression and promotion, compensation and benefits in line with work experience, managerial trust and performance management and feedback. Mone & Eisinger (2011) further have studied performance management and how activity such as setting performance and developmental goals, providing regular feedback, employee development, conducting appraisals at mid-term and year end and building an environment of trust and empowerment; helps in creating employee engagement. Kahn (1992) identified communication as an important factor for employee engagement. MacLeod and Clarke (2009) have shown that one of the critical factors for employee engagement is Communication. They argue that an organisation needs a clear, good quality internal communication to enhance engagement in employees. Srivastava & Bansal (2016) see compensation/monetary benefits, work-life balance, scope of advancement, employee relations as important predictors of employee engagement. Ling et al. (2013) in study of Malaysian electronic firms found that employee development was a huge predictor of employee engagement followed by rewards and recognition. Zhang & Enemark (2015) have in their study found that professional education has an impact performance in hotels and thus it is important to have right selection and staffing practices. This is in support with the studies conducted by Xanthopoulou et al. (2009) that there is relationship between job resources, personal resources and employee engagement. According to Armstrong (2007) the important characteristics that help in motivating, engaging and retaining employees are Pay, Benefits, learning and development and the working environment. In Hotel industry, to remain relevant and competitive it is known that it is through quality of service and customer satisfaction which leads to the performance of the hotel and this can be successfully achieved through supportive HRM practices. Budhwar et al. (2018) found that performance of hotels is positively related to the human resource practices of recruitment and selection, manpower planning, job design, training and development, quality circle, and pay systems. Kuslivan et al. (2010) has talked about poor conditions of human resource practices specially in medium and small scale hotels. This industry faces severe difficulties in sourcing and retaining competent employees and systems need to be created to reduce skill shortages and high turnover and one such method is employee engagement.

### 3 RESEARCH GAP

According to Lee-Ross (2013) it is extremely difficult to have an effective HRM practice due to labour market and working conditions. Even though various studies have been conducted relating to different variables and factors which effect work engagement. An in depth empirical study of different human resource practices as perceived by employees as a bundle and as well as individually which results in different work factors, and their effect on work engagement in hospitality industry in India has not been carried out. Huselid and Becker (1996) have said that what an organisation says it does and what employees actually experience is usually divergent. So it becomes important to understand Human resource practices as perceived by employees as they are the recipient of these practices and policies. Also what various researches have suggested and what organisations actually do is different. It is therefore critical that a study is done on engagement which is academically useful as well as can be used practically by

managers. This study tries to fill the gap that exists in the area today.

#### 4 HYPOTHESIS

From the review we can generate following hypothesis:

$H_1$  :Selection and Staffing(SS) is positively associated with Work Engagement(WE).

$H_2$  :Employee Training opportunities (T) are positively associated with Work Engagement.

$H_3$  :Employee Developmental (DV) opportunities are positively associated with Work Engagement.

$H_4$  :Performance Management and Pay for performance(PFP) are positively associated with Work Engagement.

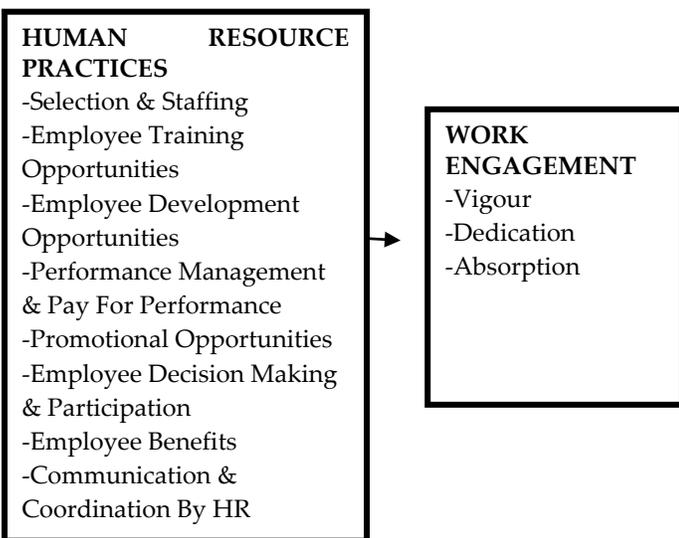
$H_5$  :Promotional Opportunities (P) are positively associated with Work Engagement.

$H_6$  :Employee decision making and participation(DM) are positively associated with Work Engagement.

$H_7$  :Employee Benefits (B) is positively associated with Work Engagement.

$H_8$  :Communication and Coordination by HR (CH) is positively associated with Work Engagement.

#### 5 THEORETICAL CONSTRUCT



**Fig 1 :** Theoretical Construct of Human Resource Practices and Work Engagement

#### 6 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in Mumbai and surrounding areas in different hotels with different ratings. Questionnaires were given to employees working in hotels in-front of the house and at - back of the house at different levels in different hotels. 425 responses have been obtained after sending 600 questionnaires with a response rate of 71%. After data cleaning, 418 useful samples have been used for data analysis purpose different levels in different departments was taken. As we were looking at the relationships between Human Resource Practices and Work Engagement, two sets of questionnaires were given. While deciding the method it is essential that the measurement tools that are used are according to the context that is being studied, in our case HR practices in a work environment. Work Engagement was assessed by three scales developed by Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzalez-Roma, and Bakker (2002) to assess vigour(V),

dedication(D) and absorption(A). Scale for HR practices was developed by the researcher using few existing measures on HR practices and few were developed by the researcher. This measured Staffing & Selection (SS), Training (T), Development (DV), Performance Management & Pay for Performance (PFP), Promotions (P), Benefits (B), Employee Decision making & Participation (DM) and Communication & Coordination by Human Resource Department (CH).

#### 7 ANALYSIS

Data obtained was coded and analyzed through SPSS & AMOS. Tables and figures were generated to summarize the data and understand patterns and relationships. 55 percent of the sample is taken from male respondents and remaining 45 percent of the sample represented by female respondents. 58.9 percent of the respondents have age between 20-30 years, 34.7 percent of the respondents are have age between 31-40 years, , 6.5 percent of the respondents are have age between 41 and above.

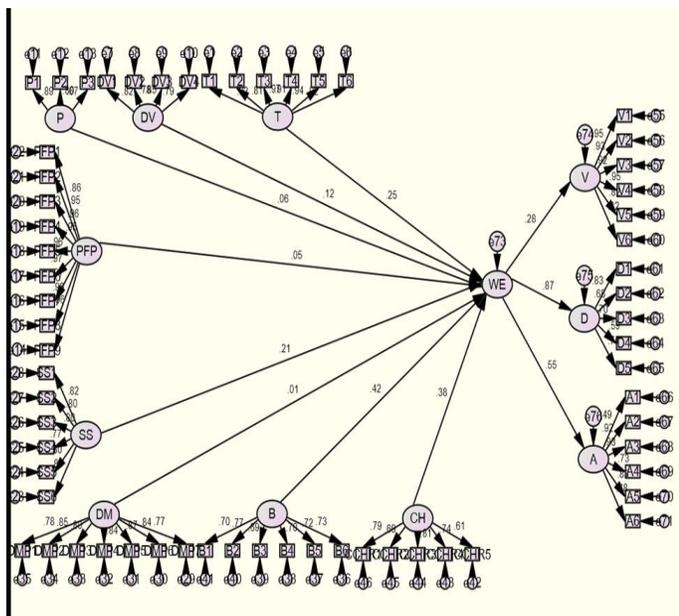
##### 7.1 Reliability and Validity

Table 3 below shows the Average Variance Extracted and Reliability of constructs. It can be seen from the table that all reliability value is greater than 0.7. The Standardized Regression weight for each of the variables are found nearer to 0.5 and all AVE values are greater than 0.5 indicating confirmation to convergent validity. It can be concluded that all variables are contributing in explaining the fair amount of variance in factors. Hence it can be concluded that all scales are reliable and valid.

##### 7.2 Structured Equation Modelling

The conceptual model used was tested by using Structural Equation Modelling (Figure 2). The model shows goodness of fit as shown by indices:  $\chi^2 = .000$ , RMSEA=.08, CFI=.92, NFI=.91, RFI=.91, IFI=.91, IFI=.91, PCFI=.73, PNFI=.72 and all values are above standard cut off values.

Sr. No	Construct	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	Reliability
1	Vigour	0.81	0.92
2	Dedication	0.58	0.85
3	Absorption	0.62	0.91
4	Training	0.83	0.95
5	Development	0.66	0.79
6	Pay for Performance	0.90	0.96
7	Selection and Staffing	0.64	0.81
8	Promotion	0.62	0.71
9	Decision Making and Participation	0.68	0.85
10	Benefits	0.51	0.85
11	Communication and Co-ordination by HR	0.53	0.81



**Fig 2: SEM - Human Resource Practices and Work Engagement**

shows that the relationship is not significant. The standardised regression weight of Employee Benefits (B) is 0.402.

	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
WE< ----- SS	0.103	0.049	2.125	0.045
WE< ----- T	0.149	0.049	3.048	0.002
WE< ----- DV	0.102	0.064	1.582	0.114
WE< ----- PFP	0.008	0.044	0.186	0.852
WE< ----- P	0.122	0.057	2.148	0.032
WE< ----- DM	0.01	0.062	0.168	0.867
WE< ----- B	0.402	0.091	4.423	***
WE< ----- CH	0.505	0.113	40483	***

**7.3 Hypothesis Testing**

The Table 4 shows that result of hypothesis testing. The standardised regression weight is of Selection and Staffing(SS) is 0.103. The positive sign is according to the theory that Selection and Staffing(SS) is positively associated with Work Engagement(WE). The P value is less than 0.05 which shows that the relationship is significant. Hence it can be concluded that Selection and Staffing(SS) is positively associated with Work Engagement(WE). The standardised regression weight of Employee Training Opportunities(T) is 0.149. The positive sign is according to the theory that employee training opportunities(T) are positively associated with Work Engagement(WE). The P value is less than 0.05 which shows that the relationship is significant. Hence it can be concluded that employee training opportunities(T) are positively associated with Work Engagement(WE). The standardised regression weight of Employee Development Opportunities is 0.102. The positive sign is according to the theory that employee development(DV) opportunities are positively associated with Work Engagement(WE) but the P value is not less than 0.05 which shows that the relationship is not significant. The standardised regression weight of Performance Management & Pay for Performance(PFP) 0.008. The positive sign is according to the theory that Performance Management & Pay for performance(PFP) are positively associated with Work Engagement. The P value is not less than 0.05 which shows that the relationship is not significant.. The standardised regression weight of Promotional Opportunities (P) is 0.122. The positive sign is according to the theory that Promotional Opportunities (P) are positively associated with Work Engagement (WE). The P value is less than 0.05 which shows that the relationship is significant. Hence it can be concluded that Promotional Opportunities (P) are positively associated with Work Engagement (WE). The standardised regression weight of Employee Decision making and participation (DM) is 0.010. The positive sign is according to the theory that Employee decision making and participation (DM) are positively associated with Work Engagement (WE). The P value is not less than 0.05 which

The positive sign is according to the theory that Employee Benefits (B) practices is positively associated with Work Engagement (WE). The P value is less than 0.01 which shows that the relationship is significant. Hence it can be concluded that Employee Benefits (B) is positively associated with Work Engagement (WE). The standardised regression weight of Communication and Coordination by HR (CH) 0.505. The positive sign is according to the theory that Communication and Coordination by HR(CH) is positively associated with Work Engagement (WE). The P value is less than 0.01 which shows that the relationship is significant. Hence it can be concluded that Communication and Coordination by HR(CH) is positively associated with Work Engagement (WE).

\*\*\*P Value < 0.01

**8 DISCUSSION AND MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The results of the present study of human resource practices on employee engagement in hospitality industry is in line with the conclusions drawn by Chand (2010) wherein it was determined that HRM practices have a positive effect in hospitality industry. As can be seen in the above study that Selection and Staffing, Employee Training Opportunities, Employee Development Opportunities, Performance Management & Pay for performance, Promotional Opportunities, Employee Decision Making and participation, Employee Benefits and Communication & Coordination by Human Resources Department are all associated with Work engagement. Therefore to have an engaged workforce these Human Resource Practices and in turn policies have to be made and implemented based on the both concern for the strategic objectives of the organization but in line with the needs of the employees. As HR practices have influence on the employee results and therefore organisational results, it becomes imperative to create practices that employees are satisfied with as they are the targeted beneficiaries of HR activities. As can be seen in the study that Selection and Staffing, Employee Training Opportunities, Promotional Opportunities, Employee benefits and Communication & Coordination with HR all have significant relationship with Work engagement. This is similar with findings of Wellins et al. (2006) that employees want to ensure that their job has the

newness and continues to be exciting by learning new skills. Also this is according to JD-R model (Bakker et al., 2004) that employee growth, innovativeness, appreciation and organisational climate are important job resources that create more engaged workforce. Choo et al. (2013) in their study of Malaysian electronic firms found that organisational practices have impact on employee engagement. Also consistent with Boon (2007) that Staffing and Selection has an impact on Employee engagement. In the study it is also seen though Employee Development Opportunities, Performance Management & Pay for Performance, Employee Decision making and participation are associated with employee engagement but the relationship does not seem to be significant. This seems contrary to earlier studies such as Parkes & Langford (2008) found that employee satisfaction with rewards and recognition, participation and involvement in decision-making were highly correlated with employee engagement. Also Bakker et al. have found that employee development is important as it gets helps in engaging employees. Also Saks (2006) states that rewards are antecedent to employee engagement. This could be so because the employees probably prefer intrinsic rewards such as recognition and other non-financial rewards. Also since being in hospitality industry it is possible that there are laid out policies and processes which employees have to adhere to. They make give their inputs but they might feel that those are not actually implemented. Also according to Chand & Ranga (2018), in their paper, found that hotels with higher number of staff gave additional importance to performance appraisal. Our study also included small and mid-sized hotels so therefore a strong association could not be seen with performance management.

## 9 CONCLUSION AND LIMITATIONS

Today organisations have come under increasing pressure to improve their business performance. But to achieve that organisations have to perform in all the areas. It cannot be excellent in only certain areas but has to cover all aspects of running the organisation. It is the individuals which forms the nuclei and very basis of the organisational success. Therefore, it becomes essential that all employees are completely engaged and thus are ready to work together towards achieving the stated vision and mission of the organisation so that they can fulfil the expectations of the customers and thus result in organisational performance. Thus companies will need to have practices to engage employees all the time and not just reflex efforts. This study has shown that if HR practices are based on the requirement of the employees and keeping employees first will result in a highly engaged workforce. The kind of HR practices managers implement should result in employees perceiving them as support mechanism instead of just an administration mechanism. Whenever a policy is implemented it has to be clear in terms of content, intent and situational awareness. It has to be consistent in all levels in the organisation. Also the managers will have to create their own specific HR policies in following areas and not just a copy based on the new buzz words in the industry such as selection and staffing, training, pay for performance, promotional opportunities, employee decision making and participation, employee benefits, communication and coordination by HR. All the respondents were part Mumbai city in Maharashtra, India. As the respondents were not keen to divulge information on the departments and the position

held, more in depth studies can be done to see the difference in the engagement levels in different department specially differentiation of departments in terms of front of the house, who are directly in touch with customers and back of the house who support these functions. This would help managers to practically create HR practices to benefit the employees and finally the organisation.

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