Original Researcher Article

"Drivers Of Employee Engagement And Retention In Hubli's Organised Supermarkets"

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ABSTRACT

In the competitive retail landscape of Tier-2 cities like Hubli, employee stability has emerged as a key concern. Despite the Indian retail sector's projected 9% growth and its significant contribution to GDP and employment, organized supermarkets face challenges such as high attrition and inconsistent engagement. This study explores how employee engagement and retention strategies impact workforce stability in Hubli's supermarkets. A mixed-method approach—comprising exploratory interviews and a descriptive survey of 111 employees—was used. Statistical tools like regression, MANOVA, ANOVA, and Chi-square tests revealed that while supervisor feedback and salary alone didn't significantly influence retention, factors like job role and work-life balance strongly affected satisfaction and engagement. The findings highlight the need for a holistic, employee-centric HR approach emphasizing psychological safety, recognition, and career development. These insights are valuable for HR professionals and retail managers aiming to build a stable and motivated workforce in India's semi-urban markets

Keywords: Employee Engagement, Workforce Stability, Organized Supermarkets....

1. INTRODUCTION:

In today's rapidly evolving business environment, employee stability has emerged as a strategic priority, particularly for labor-intensive sectors such as organized retail. Supermarkets, as key players in this sector, depend heavily on a motivated and stable workforce to maintain service quality, operational excellence, and customer satisfaction (Ahmad, Islam, & Kaleem, 2025). However, the growth of retail in Tier-2 cities like Hubli has led to emerging workforce challenges, including increasing attrition rates, limited career advancement, and rising employee dissatisfaction (Arora & Damarla, 2025).

Employee engagement is defined as the emotional and cognitive commitment employees exhibit towards their job and organization, and it is a fundamental driver of individual performance and organizational success (Kahn, 1990). Engaged employees tend to be more productive, adaptable, and loyal, contributing positively to the workplace culture and organizational goals (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008). In parallel, employee retention strategies, including professional development, recognition programs, competitive compensation, and work-life balance initiatives, serve to reduce voluntary turnover and enhance organizational continuity (Allen, Bryant, & Vardaman, 2010).

In cities like Hubli, where retail job quality varies widely and employment alternatives are expanding, the synergy between engagement and retention becomes critical. Engaged employees are more inclined to stay with their employers when they perceive support, career growth, and recognition—factors that directly influence employee

stability (Chaurasia & Shukla, 2020). Moreover, effective retention strategies reduce the recurring costs and operational disruptions associated with high employee turnover, thus ensuring a more experienced and stable workforce (Singh & Kassa, 2016).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW:

Employee engagement and retention have increasingly become central themes in organizational behavior, particularly within the dynamic and competitive retail and service industries. Recent studies emphasize innovative approaches, technological integration, and cultural factors impacting engagement and retention outcomes. Arora and Damarla (2025) conducted a comprehensive review on Generative AI-powered talent management, revealing its significant role in enhancing employee engagement and retention. Their study highlighted how AI tools facilitate personalized development pathways and predictive analytics, thereby streamlining HR functions and improving satisfaction. Ahmad, Islam, and Kaleem (2025) examined the impact of playful work design within the hospitality sector. Their findings indicated that creating enjoyable and engaging tasks fosters employee engagement and proactive behavior, with contrived fun playing a moderating role in sustaining work enthusiasm. Wiegand and Morgan (2025) contributed to the person-environment fit theory by analyzing the importance of alignment with job, organization, and vocation. Their results showed that such alignment significantly improves employee engagement and job performance. Presbitero, Fujimoto, and Lim (2024) explored cultural intelligence in multicultural teams. They found that both employee and supervisory cultural

intelligence enhance engagement and retention, underlining the necessity of cross-cultural competence in a globalized workforce.Chavan (2024) investigated leadership styles in Indian retail, concluding that transformational leadership has a positive impact on employee motivation and retention. The study emphasized the importance of adopting people-oriented managerial approaches.Khan et al. (2024) analyzed compensation and feedback mechanisms in Indian retail and found that transparent performance appraisal systems and monetary rewards are vital for employee loyalty and reduced turnover.Pal and Krithika (2023) evaluated retention strategies in the Indian retail sector, emphasizing the increasing need for employee-centric HR practices that nurture trust, career development, and work-life balance.Shetty and Hiremath (2023) examined internal branding practices in organized retail. They discovered that employee engagement significantly mediates the relationship between brand alignment and positive employee outcomes, highlighting the internal impact of branding strategies.Jain, Mathur, and Agrawal (2022) focused on job satisfaction at Vishal Mega Mart, concluding that higher satisfaction levels directly influence employee retention and organizational commitment in the retail context.Makhija et al. (2022) proposed an empirical model linking employee engagement and service innovation to enhanced marketing performance. Their findings indicated that engaged employees contribute to better customer service and brand percept. Tiwari (2021) explored job satisfaction in Lucknow's retail sector and confirmed that satisfaction is a critical factor for retention, especially in tier-2 cities where career mobility options may be limited.Ghosh, Rai, and Sinha (2014) analyzed the relationship between organizational justice and engagement in public sector banks, emphasizing that fairness and equity in managerial practices are foundational to employee engagement.Singh and Prakash (2013) offered early insights into retention strategies in organized retail, particularly in two-tier cities, highlighting the importance of stable career opportunities, reward systems, and a sense of belonging.Sumathi (2017) studied the role of Human Resource Development (HRD) practices in retail engagement. Her findings revealed that structured training and development initiatives significantly enhance both engagement and employee performance.

3. NEED FOR THE STUDY

The organized retail sector in Tier-2 cities like Hubli is growing rapidly, yet faces significant challenges in maintaining a stable and motivated workforce. Supermarkets, being labor-intensive, struggle with high employee turnover, low engagement, and limited retention strategies, which affect operational efficiency and service quality. Despite this, there is limited research focused on understanding the specific engagement and retention needs of employees in Hubli's supermarket sector. This study is needed to explore how effective engagement and retention practices can enhance workforce stability, reduce attrition, and support long-term growth in the local retail industry.

Objectives of the study:

To examine employee engagement drivers in supermarkets of Hubli.

To investigate the association between salary satisfaction and employee retention intentions among supermarket employees of Hubli.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research methodology refers to the structured plan of action that guides the entire research process. It outlines the approach, tools, techniques, and procedures used to collect, analyze, and interpret data to answer the research questions. Based on the literature review and study objectives, this research adopted a combination of **exploratory** and **descriptive research designs**.

Initially, **exploratory research** was used to gather preliminary insights into employee engagement and retention practices followed in the supermarket sector in Hubli. Informal interviews with store managers, HR executives, and retail employees helped identify key areas of concern, such as lack of feedback mechanisms, low salary satisfaction, limited growth opportunities, and high turnover rates. This stage helped in formulating research objectives and designing the survey instrument.

As the study progressed, a **descriptive research design** was employed to systematically describe the factors influencing employee engagement and retention and their impact on workforce sustainability. This approach enabled the researcher to quantify relationships, test hypotheses, and generate statistical inferences based on the responses collected from employees.

5. DATA COLLECTION METHODS:

The study relied on both **primary and secondary data** sources.

Primary Data: Collected through a structured questionnaire administered to employees working in various supermarkets in Hubli. The questionnaire included both closed-ended (Likert scale) and demographic questions related to engagement, feedback, salary, work-life balance, and retention intentions. Personal interactions and field visits were conducted to encourage honest responses and ensure clarity in understanding.

Secondary Data: Obtained from published research articles, reports from HR consulting firms (e.g., Gallup, Aon), government reports, websites, and literature related to employee engagement, retail HRM, and workforce sustainability in India.

Sampling Technique and Size:

To select participants for the survey, **census sampling** was adopted. This ensured that each employee in the target population had an equal chance of being selected, thereby minimizing bias.

The researcher adopted a **census sampling** method and surveyed **all 111 supermarket employees** in Hubli. After reviewing the collected responses for completeness and consistency, all **111 valid questionnaires** were considered for the final analysis.

The **sampling area** covered major organized supermarket chains in **Hubli**, such as Reliance Smart, More, and local retail supermarket outlets.

Paper Structure:

The analysis of the study is divided into **two sections**:

Section I:

This section examines the relationship between **supervisor feedback** and **employee engagement**, and analyzes the **influences of variables such as job role, salary satisfaction, work experience, and work-life balance** on employee engagement. It tests hypotheses using regression, MANOVA, Chi-square, and ANOVA to identify whether these variables significantly affect engagement and retention.

Hypothesis H_1: There is a significant impact of employee engagement drivers (such as supervisor feedback, work-life balance, recognition, and job role) on employee engagement levels in Hubli supermarkets.

6.DATA ANALYSIS:

Null hypothesis:

Supervisor feedback does not positively impacts employee engagement.

Regression Analysis Table:

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.115	.013	.004	.82697

ANOVA Table:

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	.993	1	.993	1.452	.231
Residual	74.543	109	.684		
Total	75.536	110			

Coefficients Table:

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients B	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	2.691	.297		9.056	.000
Feedback on work	.113	.094	.115	1.205	.231

Inference:

Supervisor feedback does not significantly predict employee engagement (p > 0.05). Although feedback is important, it alone may not directly influence engagement levels.

Null hypothesis:

Employee engagement levels Does not significantly differ based on job roles.

SPSS Output Summary:

Multivariate Tests Table:

Effect	Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.
Current Role	.820	1.417	15	284.739	.138
Roy's Largest Root	.130	2.725	5	105	.023

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects:

Dependent Variable	F	Sig.
I feel valued and respected in my workplace	3.996	.010
Managers listen to and act on employee concerns	3.179	.027

Inference:

While the overall MANOVA result was borderline non-significant (Wilks' Lambda), Roy's Largest Root indicates significant differences in at least one engagement dimension across job roles.

Null hypothesis:

There is no significant association between salary satisfaction and employee retention intentions.

Chi-Square Test Table:

Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.029	1

Inference:

There is no significant association between salary satisfaction and intentions to leave (p > 0.05).

Null hypothesis:

Work experience does not significantly impact the perception of employee engagement.

ANOVA Table:

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	4.964	3	1.655	.649	.585
Within Groups	272.945	107	2.551		
Total	277.910	110			

Inference:

Work experience does not significantly influence perceptions towards employee engagement.

Section II:

This section explores the interrelation between employee engagement and workforce stability. It focuses on the extent to which engaged employees are likely to stay longer, contribute more, and foster a positive work culture in supermarkets. It also highlights how specific HR practices (e.g., recognition, development opportunities, and balanced work environments) contribute to retaining talent and reducing attrition.

HYPOTHESIS:

Hypothesis H$_2$: There is a significant association between salary satisfaction and employee retention intentions among supermarket employees in Hubli.

Null hypothesis:

Work-life balance does not positively correlated with job satisfaction.

Pearson Correlation Table:

	Work-life balance policies	I feel valued and respected in my workplace
Work-life balance policies	1	.288** (.002)
I feel valued and respected in my workplace	.288** (.002)	1

Inference:

There is a significant positive correlation between work-life balance policies and job satisfaction.

The factors influencing supervisor feedback, job role, salary satisfaction, work experience, and work-life balance, as derived from the study "Employee Engagement and Retention as Drivers of Workforce Sustainability in Hubli Supermarkets". It incorporates the statistical results (e.g., $p = 0.231$ for supervisor feedback, $p = 0.023$ for job role, $p > 0.05$ for salary satisfaction, $p = 0.585$ for work experience, $r = 0.288$, $p = 0.002$ for work-

life balance) and the main influences for each variable, such as quality and emotional support for feedback, autonomy and task variety for job role, fairness and non-financial incentives for salary, daily experiences for work experience, and flexible schedules for work-life balance.

7.FINDINGS

1.While supermarket employees in Hubli appreciate feedback from their supervisors, it does not significantly enhance their engagement unless combined with recognition, emotional support, and opportunities for development.

2.Engagement levels vary notably across job roles. Supervisors and billing staff report higher engagement compared to floor staff and helpers, indicating the need for differentiated engagement strategies based on job responsibilities.

3. Although a fair salary is essential, it alone does not guarantee employee loyalty in supermarkets. Employees emphasized that respect, career growth, and positive workplace relationships have a greater impact on their decision to stay.

4. Length of service does not necessarily translate into higher engagement levels. Employees with several years of experience did not feel more engaged than newer hires, reinforcing the importance of everyday work experiences and a supportive environment.

5.Employees who felt supported in balancing their personal and professional responsibilities—such as through flexible shifts and time-off options—reported higher levels of satisfaction, commitment, and a stronger intention to remain in their current roles

8.SUGGESTIONS

1.Supermarkets in Hubli must go beyond feedback alone by incorporating appreciation, skill-building opportunities, fair policies, and emotional support. A multi-dimensional engagement model will ensure frontline staff feel valued, motivated, and connected.

2.Employees in supermarkets—such as cashiers, shelf-stockers, and supervisors—face different pressures and expectations. Role-specific HR strategies (like tailored communication, flexible breaks, and task rotation) will improve engagement and reduce attrition among lower-tier employees.

3.While competitive salaries are important, non-financial incentives such as employee-of-the-month recognition, supportive leadership, respectful treatment, and growth opportunities play a critical role in retaining supermarket staff. Investing in intrinsic motivation enhances long-term loyalty.

4.Supermarket employees often work in shifts, which can be physically and emotionally draining. Offering flexible shift schedules, paid leaves, and support during personal emergencies helps reduce burnout and improves retention.

5. Recognizing employees regularly through verbal praise, internal newsletters, or reward programs

builds morale. Small gestures of appreciation foster a sense of belonging and reinforce commitment, especially in retail settings where work is repetitive.

9. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The study on employee engagement and retention in Hubli's supermarkets has limitations that impact its scope. Its focus on Hubli, a Tier-2 city, limits generalizability to other regions. The sample of 111 employees may not represent all retail workers, particularly in unorganized stores. Self-reported questionnaires risk response bias, and the cross-sectional design restricts longitudinal insights. The study's focus on specific engagement drivers overlooks factors like organizational culture. Future research should include multiple cities, larger and diverse samples, objective metrics, and explore AI-driven HR tools (Arora & Damarla, 2025). Longitudinal and experimental studies could validate interventions for retail workforce stability.

10. Conclusion

The study on employee engagement and retention in Hubli's supermarkets reveals that while supervisor feedback and salary are important, they do not significantly drive employee engagement or retention on their own. Instead, factors such as work-life balance, recognition, career development opportunities, and psychological safety play a more substantial role in fostering job satisfaction, commitment, and workforce stability. Engagement levels vary across job roles, with supervisors and billing staff reporting higher engagement than floor staff and helpers, highlighting the need for role-specific HR strategies. The findings emphasize that a holistic, employee-centric approach—incorporating flexible schedules, non-financial incentives, and supportive leadership—is critical for reducing attrition and building a stable, motivated workforce in Hubli's organized retail sector. These insights offer practical guidance for HR professionals and retail managers to enhance workforce stability in semi-urban markets like Hubli.**.**

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