Impact of Training and Development on Employee Engagement in
Nepalese Commercial Banks

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to examine the relationship between training and development and employee engagement in Nepalese commercial banks. This cross-sectional study employs a causal-comparative research design grounded in positivist assumptions. A survey of 384 bank employees from 10 commercial banks was conducted, and the data were analyzed using statistical package for social science (SPSS) to assess the relationship. The results reveal that training efficiency, leadership support and work alignment are significantly and positively associated with employee engagement. This study provides a clear direction to a variety of practitioners in the commercial banking industry. Developing and preserving sympathetic and emotional relationship with team members, supervisors, and other higher-ranking employees can aid in enhancing employee engagement. Business managers and planners can use this knowledge to concentrate their efforts on developing employer training practices that will effectively engage employees. This study empirically investigates the relationship between training and development practices and employee engagement in the commercial banking sector in Nepal. The findings provide valuable insights for bank management, suggesting how strategic training and development practices significantly enhance employee engagement.

Keywords: Commercial banks, Leadership support, Training efficiency, Work alignment

Introduction

Work-life balance, stress management, and psychological safety are becoming increasingly important to employers since they increase employee engagement, are truly valued, and enhance high well-being (Van De Voorde et al., 2016; Guest, 2017). The idea of employee engagement is still controversial despite its increasing popularity (Bailey et al., 2017; Lee & Ok, 2014; Shuck et al., 2017). When employees are intellectually active and committed to enhancing their work and furthering the organization's objectives, they are deemed engaged. It is directly tied to cognitive stimulation because employees are always considering how to do their tasks more successfully (Saks, 2022). Behaviorally, proactive, initiative-taking, and business-beneficial actions by engaged employees illustrate the action-oriented component of engagement (Macey & Schneider, 2022). There is an increasing correlation between well-being programs and employee engagement; companies that promote employee health report better levels of engagement (Bakker & Albrecht, 2022). Technology plays a bigger and bigger role in encouraging employee engagement. Employee happiness and engagement are increased by AI-driven systems that give customized learning opportunities, personalize engagement techniques, and deliver real-time feedback (Garg et al., 2024).

Earlier research contradictory findings (Bakker & Albrecht, 2018; Crawford et al., 2020; Mauno et al., 2021; Park et al., 2019), we now have a better knowledge of how different service organizational models might promote employee engagement. Similarly, different studies found different results (e.g. Otoo & Rather, 2024; Baiquni & Lizar, 2020; Wang et al., 2021). Some studies critically assess theoretical materials that suggest for additional investigation into the elements affecting employee engagement (Brown & Reilly, 2013; Welch, 2011). According to Albrecht et al. (2015), favorable opinions of training options boost employee engagement, improve job performance, and boost customer satisfaction. Furthermore, empirical researchers have noted that there hasn't been much focus on the elements affecting employee engagement in the setting of service-based organizations

(Presbitero, 2017; Rai et al., 2017).

Nepalese commercial banks are main service industry in banking, with 83.17% of capital utilized in banking and financial institutions coming from it (Nepal Rastra Bank, 2023). An increasing amount of capital is needed for Nepal's business and economic operations, and financial institutions are provided from the fund of Nepalese commercial banks. Although the banking sector is primarily focused on providing services, a bank's capacity to succeed depends on the quality and expertise of its employees in addition to the availability of physical resources (Masum et al., 2016). 83.17% of the capital used in banking and financial institutions comes from commercial banks in Nepal, making them the primary banking service sector (Nepal Rastra Bank, 2023). Nepal's business and economic operations require a growing quantity of capital, which is supplied by financial institutions using funds from Nepalese commercial banks. Although the primary focus of the banking industry is service provision, a bank's ability to thrive is dependent not only on the availability of physical resources but also on the caliber and experience of its workforce (Masum et al., 2016).

As a result, Nepal's total economic growth depends on the smooth operation of its commercial banks, which allow businesses to grow and secure adequate capital. This study looks at how training and development practices improve employee engagement and how they function in assessing engagement of employees in Nepalese commercial banks, as employee performance has a big impact on overall bank performance. There are many job prospects in Nepal's banking sector, according to the report of Nepal Rastra Bank (2020), The banking industry is a significant driver of Nepal's economic expansion and development.

However, there is a shortage of skilled human resources in this sector. Therefore, boosting employee involvement in this area is necessary to fortify the nation's financial and economic sectors (Nepal Rastra Bank, 2021). Since then, Nepalese commercial banks have become more aware of their employees' engagement value propositions in an attempt to close these disparities. The strategic instruments of these banks increasingly depend on training and development. To evaluate their relationship in Nepalese commercial banks, this study employs an experimental methodology, with employee engagement as the dependent variable and training effectiveness, managerial support, and job alignment as independent variables, to answer the following research questions:

- What is the relationship between training and development practices and employee engagement in Nepalese commercial banks?
- What is the specific relationships of training effectiveness, managerial support and job alignment with employee engagement in Nepalese commercial banks?

Literature review and hypothesis formulation

Training and development and employee engagement

Saks (2022) asserted in the earlier study that training and development gives employees the chance to advance, satisfies their need for competence, and increases their personal efficacy. Training and development, according to Siddiqui and Sahar (2019), are crucial for raising employee engagement levels in the banking industry. This is accomplished by putting in place strategic and tactical practices that meet training requirements and the expectations of the contemporary workplace. Previous studies have shown that the most important component of organizational practices to improve employee engagement is training and development (e.g. Saks, 2022; Aktar & Pangil, 2018; Kavyashree et al., 2023; Kwon et al., 2024; Bakuni & Saxena, 2023).

However, a study by Kwon et al. (2024) found gaps in the clear relationship between employee engagement and training and development. Additionally, according to the integrative model study, training and development can have an impact on employee engagement; however, the relationship is complex and influenced by a variety of factors, such as the workplace, interpersonal relationships, and personal characteristics. Tanwar and Prasad (2024) assert that the importance of employer branding and organizational culture, as well as employee identification with the company, may significantly impact T&D's capacity to improve employee engagement. As a result, it seems that different people have varied opinions about how training and development may increase employee engagement in the workplace.

Training efficiency and employee engagement

The extent to which training practices enhance employees' knowledge, abilities, and competencies, hence enhancing job performance and organizational success, is known as training effectiveness (Salas et al., 2020; Ford & Meyer, 2021). Furthermore, a substantial amount of earlier research has shown that the effectiveness of training can be a powerful predictor of employee engagement (Osborne et al., 2020; Kavyashree et al., 2023; Saks, 2022). Training programs that successfully enhance employees' skills and competences can increase employee engage-

ment levels and foster a stronger sense of achievement and job satisfaction Kuvaas and Dysvik (2023).

Another study by Zheng et al. (2023) argued that if training is consistently supported by chances for on-the-job learning and development, it can continue to have a favorable impact on employee engagement over time. Additionally, coaching, mentoring, and on-the-job training are examples of chances for continuous development that tend to enhance training and extend employee involvement (Kang, 2023). Despite different views on training effectiveness impacting employee engagement, the result oriented training plays an important role to enhance employee engagement, which leads to the formation of the following hypothesis:

H1: Training efficiency is positively related to employee engagement

Leadership support and employee engagement

Manager must support to their employee by offering resources, support and encouragement to improve work satisfaction, performance, and organizational commitment (Gomes et al., 2021; Park et al., 2020; Rathi & Lee, 2021). Previous empirical studies have shown that supportive management practices are associated with higher job satisfaction and lower turnover intentions, and that managerial support is a powerful predictor of employee engagement (Kang & Sung, 2023; Luu, 2023).

Similarly, research by Rodriguez and Walters (2023) and Johnson and Chen (2023) claimed that continuous feedback and acknowledgment from supervisors are essential for sustaining high levels of employee engagement, especially in busy, high-pressure work settings. Additionally, employee engagement increases significantly when managers encourage career advancement, especially when employees see internal promotion chances (Nguyen & Parker, 2023; Patel & Singh, 2023). Despite being different views, managerial support is the key to enhance employee engagement in the organizations, which could lead to the formation of the following hypothesis:

H2: Leadership support is positively related to employee engagement
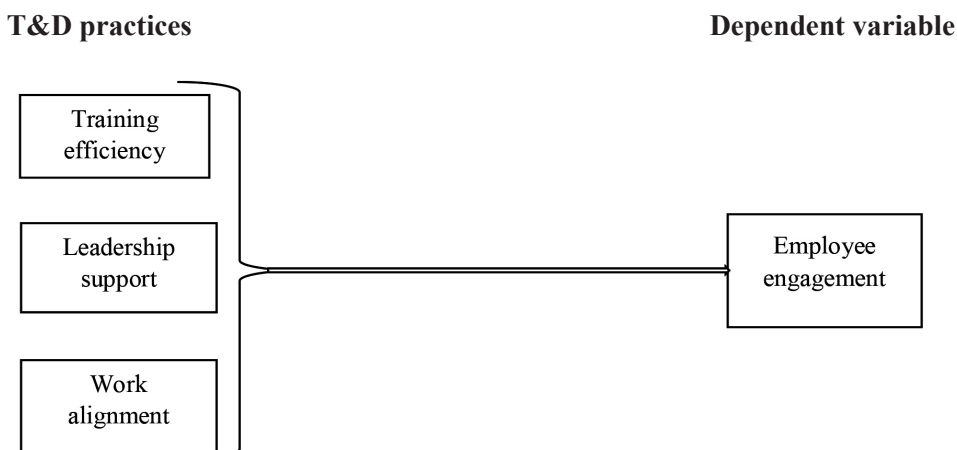
Work alignment and employee engagement

Effective work alignment is essential for enhancing organizational performance and engagement since it connects specific job duties to fundamental organizational goals (Hansen & Toh, 2023). Similarly, McKay et al. (2022) stress the significance of job alignment in promoting employee retention and happiness by making sure that employees' career goals line up with company objectives. Prior empirical research indicates that incorporating employees in the organization's setup and enhancing employee satisfaction depend heavily on job alignment, organizational culture, and employee engagement (Jones & Smith, 2023; Brown et al., 2023; Martinez & Wang, 2023).

According to Liu and Chen (2023), work alignment is essential for sustaining high levels of employee engagement in remote work environments where traditional methods of relationship-building and supervision are scarce. Similarly, White and Moore (2023) found that job alignment has a substantial impact on millennial employees' engagement because they are especially inspired by roles that correspond with their own values and professional objectives. However, there is different views on job alignment and employee engagement but the job alignment is an inherent part of employee engagement, which could lead to the formation of the following hypothesis:

 H3: Work alignment is positively related to employee engagement

Research framework

On the basis of literature furnished. The research framework of this study is adapted from the study by Siddiqui and Sahar (2019)

T&D practices   **Dependent variable**

Training efficiency

Leadership support

Work alignment

Employee engagement

Figure 1. Research framework

Research Methodology

Sampling techniques and sample characteristics

The study's data was obtained from Nepalese commercial banks that are listed on the Nepal Stock Exchange (NEPSE). This study used a causal comparative research design, cross-sectional data collection, and judgmental sampling (Khasawneh & Al-Zawahreh, 2015; Creswell, 2013). Judgmental sampling was used because the population characteristics of employees in Nepalese commercial banks were unknown. Nepal has twenty commercial banks: three public limited commercial banks, five joint venture banks, and twelve private commercial banks and employed 46508 employees (Nepal Rastra Bank, 2023).

When examining the banking employees of ten commercial banks—two public limited, three joint venture, and five private commercial banks—the researchers consider the branches' locations around the country. The respondents were taken on a proportional basis from each bank. Only 392 of the 430 survey forms were finished and added to the study (Uakarn et al., 2021). It was found that 38 surveys were useless since respondents left the pages or the questions unanswered. Consequently, the 38 unfinished surveys were deemed inadequate and eliminated from the study. According to Bougie and Sekaran (2019), research investigations should aim for a response rate of thirty percent or above. 91.16% of the respondents were 392 employees of Nepalese commercial banks.

According to the demographic information, there were 61% male and 39% female respondents among the 392 respondents. The demographic information of the study shows a sample that is slightly skewed toward gender; the reason could be due to the lower participation rate of women at bank branches. The age group below 25 years had the lowest response rate (12.20%), while the age group between 36 and 45 years had the highest response rate (43.10%). Executives and departmental managers, branch managers, senior assistants and assistants, and junior assistants were the four categories into which organizational jobs fall. Out of the 392 respondents, assistants and junior assistants accounted for the largest number (30.40%), while executives and departmental managers were in the smallest number (15.10%). The lesser percentage of executives and managers in departments revealed that there was no sufficient opportunities for professional development inside the banks. Of the respondents, the largest number (34.90%) had experience ranging from 11 to 15 years, while the lowest number (12.50%) had experience below 5 years.

Measure

Employee engagement. The one-dimensional,5-items (Johari et al., 2019) scale consists of (I feel enthusiastic about my job, I am proud of the work that I do. etc.) which are used to measure employee engagement. Using a five-point Likert scale that ranges from 1= strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree, respondents were asked to rate how much they agree or disagree with the provided engagement statements. The findings indicate that internal consistency of employee engagement is (α 0.743), and the R^2 value of employee engagement construct is 0.228.

Training and development practices. Three training and development practices are examined in this study: training efficiency (five items, such as "The training environment was conducive to learning and supported my ability to focus"), leadership support (five items, such as "My manager shows concern for my well-being") and work alignment (five items, such as "The tasks and responsibilities of my task align well with my skills and abilities"). These constructs which have 15 items in an aggregate are an adaptation of several earlier researches (e. g. Akthe & Rahman, 2022; Eisenberger *et al.,* 2002; Kristof-Brown *et al.,* 2005) respectively. Respondents were asked to provide answers on a five-point Likert scale, with 1 indicating strongly disagree and 5 indicating strongly agree. The Chronbach's alpha values are 0.863, 0.870 and 0.898 respectively.

Data analysis strategy

This study used Statistical Package for Social science for analyzing data. A popular program for statistical analysis in social science research is called SPSS. It provides capabilities for predictive analytics, inferential statistics, descriptive statistics, and data management. In order to facilitate data-driven decision-making, SPSS enables researchers to manage enormous datasets, carry out intricate statistical analyses, and produce visualizations (Pallant, 2020).

Results and analysis

Correlation of the variables

A more complete understanding of the facts is made possible by correlation. It helps researchers identify relationships and patterns between variables that might not be immediately obvious, which improves empirical study

hypotheses (Field, 2018).

Table 1: Correlation coefficient of variables

Constructs	TE	LS	WA	EE
TE	1			
LS	0.557**	1		
WA	0.225**	0.249**	1	
EE	0.420**	0.390**	0.244**	1

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2 tailed).

Note: Data processing

Note: TE, training efficiency; LS, leadership support; WA, work alignment; EE, employee engagement

Table 1 shows correlation coefficients between the constructs. The correlation between training efficiency and employee engagement is 0.420, the correlation between leadership support and employee engagement is 0.390 and the correlation between work alignment and employee engagement is 0.244. So, the table 1 clearly shows that there is acceptable ranges of correlation between predictor variables and criterion variable.

Analysis of variance

Analysis of variance is a statistical method used to compare among two or more groups to determine whether there are significant difference between them. it assesses the variability within groups to analyze the influence of one or more independent variables on a dependent variable (Field, 2018).

Table 2: Analysis of variance

Model	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	92.702	3	30.901	38.089	0.000
Residual	314.775	0.811			
Total	407.477	391			

Dependent variable: EE

Predictors: (Constant), WA, TE, LS

Note: EE, employee engagement; WA, work alignment; TE, training efficiency; LS, leadership support

Note: Data processing

Table 2 shows that the sum of square for regression is 92.702, the sum of square for residuals is 314.477, the mean square is 30.901, the F statistics is 38.089, and the significance value is 0.000. These figures, as indicated in Table 2, confirm the model fit in this study.

Regression analysis

 Regression analysis determines whether the independent variables have statistically significant impacts on the dependent variable, which aids hypothesis testing. when it comes to managerial decision making (Hair et al., 2010).

Table 3: Regression coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t		Tolerance	VIF
1 (Constant)	1.069	.213		5.013	.000		
TE	.304	.059	.278	5.137	.000	.682	1.466
LS	.238	.064	.203	3.735	.000	.674	1.483
W	.121	.043	.131	2.818	.005	..927	1.079

a.   Dependent Variable: EE

Note: EE, employee engagement; TE, training efficiency; LS, leadership support; WA, work alignment; VIF, variance inflation factor

Note: Data processing

Table 3 shows beta coefficient, t values and p value of training efficiency are (.304), (5.137) and (0.000 < 0.05) respectively, the alternative hypothesis is accepted at five percent level of significance, which confirms that the training efficiency significantly impacted employee engagement in Nepalese commercial banks. Similarly the beta coefficient, t value and p values of leadership support are (0.238), (3.735) and (0.000 < 0.05) respectively, the alternative hypothesis is accepted at five percent significance level, which conforms that leadership support significantly impacted employee engagement in Nepalese commercial banks. Similarly, the beta coefficient, t value and p value of work alignment are (0.121), (2.818) and 0.005 < 0.05) respectively, the alternative hypothesis is accepted at five percent level of significance, which confirms that the work alignment significantly impacted employee engagement in Nepalese commercial banks.

It is revealed that the coefficients values of training efficiency has the largest effect on employee engagement followed by leadership support and work alignment. The tolerance value for each construct is (≥ 0.1), which is considered acceptable in quantitative research (Hakuduwal, 2019). According to r^2 value (0.228), variation in the independent variables (training efficiency, leadership support and work alignment) accounts for (22.80%) of the variation in the dependent variable, employee engagement. The results show that (77.20%) of the employee engagement can be attributed to the variance of other parameters. The results clearly demonstrate that commercial banks would experience to upgrade in employee engagement if they focused on the development of the predictor variables indicated by the beta values of all the drivers of employee engagement. The variation inflation factor (VIF) values for each construct is ($2\leq.$) indicating no Multicollinearity ((Myers et al., 2012). The independent and dependent variable have positive autocorrelation (1.34) on average. According to Durbin and Watson (1950), if VIF values are ($2\leq$) or even ($5\leq$) there will be no autocorrelation.

Discussion

The primary objective of this study is to ascertain employee engagement in Nepalese commercial banks. For any organization to succeed and thrive, the training and development aspects of employee engagement are essential. these factors are particularly important when discussing commercial banks in Nepal due to their direct influence on the overall expansion of the Nepalese financial system.

Training and development practices are essential factors for employee engagement in Nepalese commercial banks. Training increases an employee's effectiveness at work and helps their organization achieve its objectives. Employees in Nepalese commercial banks receive both i.e. on- the-job and off-the-job training. Training efficiency and employee engagement in Nepalese commercial banks have positive and significant relationship as indicated by the study hypothesis, correlation and regression statistics. Employees who receive effective training are more devoted to their jobs and provide positive outcomes to their organizations. Earlier researches, conducted by Osborne et al. (2020), Kavyashree et al. (2023)especially considering employees working in HR Department. Design/Methodology/Approach: The research was cross-sectional in nature and survey method was employed to collect the data. Exploratory Factor Analysis, Confirmatory Factor Analysis, Structural Equation Modelling were used to analyse the hypothesis. Data was collected among 345 employees employed in the HR department of various private sector organizations. Results: The model fit indices were adequate and acceptable. The model fit indices obtained were: CMIN/DF = 2.909; Goodness of Fit index (GFI, Saks (2022), Zheng et al. (2023) and (Kang, 2023) have also found the same results in their empirical studies. However, Yorks (2005) and Some (2019) have different views in the relationship between training efficiency and employee engagement.

Similarly, positive relationship is revealed between leadership support and employee engagement in Nepalese commercial banks. One can argue that leadership support has a major influence on employee engagement. The statistical indicators show a good and substantial relationship between leadership support and employee engagement. The previous empirical researches conducted by Kang and Sung (2023), Luu (2023), Rodriguez and Walters (2023) and Patel et al. (2023) supported the results whereas, Boles et al. (2007) were against the idea. Similarly, positive relationship is revealed between work alignment and employee engagement in Nepalese commercial banks. One might argue that work alignment has a major impact on employee engagement. The statistical indicators provided in the study show a good and significant association between work alignment and employee engagement. The previous studies conducted by McKay et al. (2022), Sharma and Jones (2023), Brown et al. (2023), Martinez and Wang (2023) and Liu and Chen (2023) supported the results, whereas, Hansen and Toh (2023) and White and Moore (2023) have different views on the relationship between work alignment and employee engagement.

Limitations and future avenues for research

Like any empirical study, this research has several issues that need to be addressed, even though it provides valuable managerial and theoretical insights. While evaluating the data, it is important to consider the study's limitations, even if the findings may serve as a starting point for further research. Firstly, this study employs a cross-sectional approach to collect data at a single point in time during the research period (Zikmund et al., (2013). Such methodologies prevent researchers from establishing causal relationships between the key research constructs. The cross-sectional technique, unlike longitudinal or experimental research approaches, may be inadequate for causal research because it cannot always capture meaningful changes in relevant variables over time (Cohen et al., 2013). Another limitation of this study is its narrow focus on only three training and development practices to explain employee engagement. Future research should explore additional factors such as cross-functional training, social learning, leadership development, ethical training, and cultural intelligence as predictors of employee engagement to provide a more comprehensive understanding.

Conclusion

The aim of this study is to examine the potential relationships between various training and development practices and the level of engagement exhibited by employees in the Nepalese commercial banking sector. The primary objective is to determine how training and development practices influence employee engagement in the commercial banking sector. Specifically, this study found that training efficiency, leadership support, and work alignment have a significant and positive impact on employee engagement. This study builds upon earlier research on the relationship between training and development practices and employee engagement, contributing to the existing body of knowledge and addressing gaps in the literature. Research examining the impact of specific training and development practices on employee engagement remains limited. Additionally, this study highlights how training and development practices collectively enhance employees' perceptions of their organizations, which, in turn, positively affects their level of engagement.

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