



# Human Resource Development Practices and Employee Engagement in Nepalese Commercial Banks

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## Abstract

*The level of employee engagement is a significant issue for many organizations globally. As a result, many organizations are using a variety of human resource development practices to enhance employee engagement. The purpose of this study is to focus on analyzing the relationship between HRD practices and employees' engagement in Nepalese commercial banks. The study's independent variables were Career Advancement, Performance Management, Reward and Recognition and Training and Development. The dependent variable is Employee Engagement. The descriptive research design is used. The population of the study was 46408, and a simple random sampling technique was used to pick 384 employees from 11 commercial banks as sample. Data were gathered by using a standardized questionnaire on Likert Scale with 1 specifying a strongly disagree and 5 a strongly agree. Descriptive statistics such as Mean, Correlation and Regression were employed to analyze the data. Chronbach's Alpha was used to test the reliability. Which was 0.65 on an average. SPSS version 26 was used to analyze the data. The study concluded that Career Advancement and Performance Management had a favorable and significant relationship with Employee Engagement, Reward and Recognition had positive but insignificant relationship and Training and Development had a negative but significant relationship with Employee Engagement.*

**Keywords:** *Career Advancement, Performance Management, Reward & Recognition, Training & Development*

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## Introduction

A highly engaged workforce can create competitive advantage of organization (Aktar & Pangil, 2017). It requires more considerations particularly in the academic literature. Based on the norms of social exchange theory (SET), employee engagement has been defined as an enthusiastic, upbeat, and career-related mental state that is demonstrated by vigor, dedication, and absorption (Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzalez-Roma, Bakker, 2002). There is positive association of employee engagement with individual and organizational performance (Nazir & Islam, 2017; Hansen, Byrne & Kiersch, 2014; Agrawal, 2014). Integrating the business enterprise's human resources practices is crucial if the firm wants to achieve a high degree of employee engagement (Chayanan, 2020). A study conducted by Kang & Sung (2017) using a sample of 438 South Korean employees in the service sector found that improving internal communication can raise employee engagement, which in turn can increase employee performance. Companies HR methods like recruitment, training and development programs, job design, and reward structures all had a significant role in attracting enthusiastic employees who were focused on the company's objectives (Mohamed, 2021).

High-performing employees are an organization's most valuable resource. They frequently outperform the disengaged workforce in terms of achievement and performance. In order to enhance creativity, increase productivity, and focus on cost-effective hiring and retention tactics for workers, highly engaged employees are a necessity (Kazimoto, 2016). Employee engagement has a favorable impact on organizational performance indicators because engaged people are more enthusiastic and productive in their jobs (Kahn, 1990). Employee engagement has a substantial impact on the organization's financial performance, return on investment, and improved employee performance (Katou, 2017; Hansen, 2014; Demerouti, 2010; Macey, 2011; Bakker, 2010). In academic papers, there is a greater emphasis on recognizing the relationship between HRM practices and employee performances (Presbitero, 2017; Vemic-Derkovic 2013).

The literature focuses on employee engagement, but provides little attention to how HR practices affect employee engagement (Chen, 2017; Karatepe, 2013). It has become clear that HRM procedures greatly improve employee engagement and foster favorable attitudes toward work and employees, which also influences employees'

behavior (Katou, 2017), (Huang, 2017), (Othman, 2013), (Ashill, 2011) & (Christian, Adela & Jerel, 2011). Employees feel motivated, exhibit more interest in their work duties, and are more focused on achieving corporate goals when they obtain economic and socioeconomic benefits through HRM processes (Van De Voorde, 2015).

In this competitive and complex business environment, it has become essential for the managers to generate high value business results. The strategic goals of the business must be in line with the degree of employee dedication. Employee contributions to the organization must be acknowledged and respected if excellent business results are to be achieved. It has been found that giving employees opportunities for professional advancement and acknowledging their exceptional work at the workplace increases employee engagement.

This study focused on the following research questions:

- Why is employee engagement important for organizational success?
- How have HRD practices an effect on employee engagement?

Therefore, the main objective of the current study is to examine the relationship between HRD practices (career advancement, performance management, rewards and recognition, and training and development) and employee engagement.

## **Review of Literature**

According to Fleming, & Asplund (2007), employee engagement is the art of captivating workers' minds, feelings, and souls in order to cultivate an intrinsic drive and passion for excellence. Similarly, Deorah (2022) revealed that employee engagement describes a person's enthusiasm for and interest in their workplace. Employee engagement allows you to monitor and manage the key facets of your workplace culture. Robinson, Perryman & Hayday (2004) found that an engaged employee collaborates more actively and thoughtfully with coworkers to enhance performance at work for the benefit of the organization as a whole. Ahmad (1990) found all motivated employees participate in and express themselves on all levels: physically, cognitively, and emotionally, while carrying out their responsibilities in organizational activities. Niraula (2022) found each engaged employee has a positive relation with work related activities and endeavors of the organizations. Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzalez-Roma & Bakker, 2002) found that employee engagement is

made up of three factors: Vigor, or acting passionately and consistently, is the first. The second characteristic is task-specific interest, sometimes known as immersion. The third is devotion, which encompasses employee knowledge, pride, and fervor for their jobs. Aktar & Pangil (2017) it requires more considerations particularly in the academic literature. Based on the norms of social exchange theory (SET) found HRM practices must be highly detailed and geared toward the desired outcome, the ongoing improvement of employee-related skills and knowledge necessary for their job functions should be the main goal of HRM procedure. Barrick (2015) and Simon-Albrecht (2018) found HRM tactics include extensive scope and possibilities for training and development selection procedures, and keeping the workforce informed about the organization's performance.

Kibui, Gachunga & Namusonge (2014) found that in order to recruit and keep the most qualified personnel, business organizations have come to realize that career advancement is a continuous process that involves switching jobs within an organization in order to acquire new skills and information. Alnaqbi (2011) found people have the knowledge to complete their responsibilities as a result of career development, it exhibits the employers' dedication to their employees. Huang (2017) found opportunities for career development at work are associated with positive employee attitudes and behaviors and increase their enthusiasm and dedication while doing their duties. Alima-Aktar (2017) found employers can send clear signals to employees that they value and acknowledge them by implementing effective HRM practices, opportunities for career development demonstrate management's dedication to its employees.

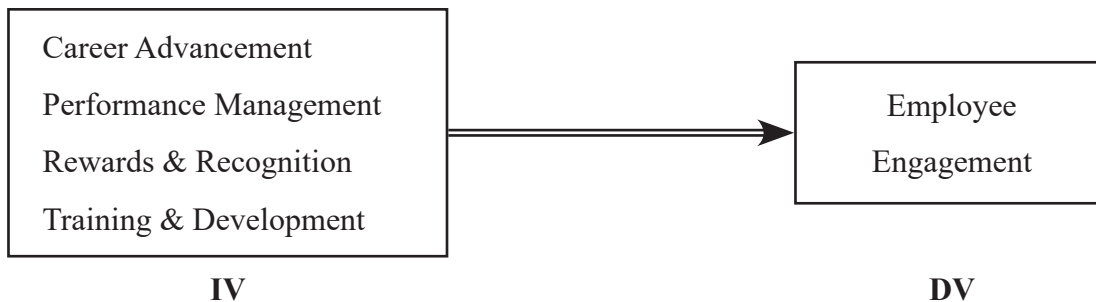
Albrechi, Bakker, Gruman, Macey, Saks (2014) found that one of the management techniques that is known to have a stronger impact on employee engagement is the performance management system. Alima Aktar (2017) found that feedback on performance is the degree to which the workforce has the opportunity to gather significant information about their performance which may help in constant improvement, learning and developing required skills while actually performing the job which is assigned. Rao (2017) found that adequate and appropriate performance management system is provided on the performance of employees it helps them to capture on their strengths, helps in overcoming their weakness and make them committed in their assigned work roles.

According to Jones (2019) Employee recognition is a type of acknowledgment for workers that excel in their positions. According to a recent survey, 90% of workers believe that a recognition program affects their levels of engagement and drive. Rewards and recognition are crucial tools for inspiring workers to meet organizational objectives. According to Karatepe (2013) Programs for rewards and recognition are likely to improve how employees behave when providing services. Organizations in business use reward and recognition programs as a technique of appreciation that improves employee performance, is likely to have a favorable effect on employees' behavior, and increases the level of engagement. Karatepe (2013) further added that employees get passionate about working for the company and feel very engaged when they believe they are entitled to incentives and recognition from their superiors and business leaders.

Kavyashree, Sridevi, Nagesh & Nanjudeshwarasamy (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 found one of the crucial business enterprise functional systems that focuses on improving individual performance is training and development (T&D), which focuses the employees to achieve business goals and objectives. According to Alima Aktar (2017) organizations create training and development programs to improve employees' knowledge, skills, and capacities, which in turn enables them to manage challenging work conditions better. According to Kahn (1990) organizations help employees maximize resources by providing training and development opportunities so that they can perform better, which raises employee engagement levels. The study used the following conceptual framework based on the literature discussed so as far.

**Figure 1**

*Conceptual Framework*



**Research Methodology**

The objective of this study is to examine the relationship between human resource development practices and employee engagement in Nepalese commercial banks. The descriptive research design is used. A total of 46408 (NRB, 2023) employees of Nepalese commercial banks made up the study's population. The workforce, who were now employed in various departments in Nepalese commercial banks across the country served as the samples for the study. To gather the responses, a simple random sample technique (Hakuduwal, 2019) under probability sampling method was used. The responses were collected using a standardized questionnaire in Likert Scale, varying from 1 specifying strongly disagree to 5 strongly agree. (Cochran, 1977) responses from managerial and operational positions of the banks were collected as sample from 11 Nepalese commercial banks (Niraula, 2022).

All items were derived based on the earlier published articles. The statements, however, were changed for clarity and to elicit the right reaction from the respondents. With the help of a thorough literature analysis, HRD practices, including Career Advancement (CD), Performance Management (PM), Rewards and Recognition (RR), Training and Development (T&D) and Employee Engagement (EE) with a total of 25 items were implemented. The effect of human resource development practices on employee engagement was described using descriptive, correlational, and linear regression analysis. IBM, SPSS version 26 was used to analyze the data.

The effect of independent variables on the dependent variable was examined by using the F-test. For a reliability test, Cronbach's Alpha values linked to Career Advancement, Performance Management, Reward and Recognition, Training and

Development and Employee Engagement were evaluated. The average Chronbach's Alpha values for all the items in the questionnaire were .661. For a reliability test, the values of Chronbach's Alpha of all variables are more than .65 is enough to accept the items in the questionnaire (Eonseong, 2016).

**The Model**

This study realized the effects of human resource development practices on employee commitment in Nepalese commercial banks. Therefore, it was based on the following regression model.

$$EE = f(CA, PM, RR \text{ and } TD)$$

Specifically,

$$EE = \beta_0 + \beta_1 CA + \beta_2 PM + \beta_3 RR + \beta_4 TD + e_t \dots \dots \dots I$$

Where,

- EE = Employee Engagement,
- CA = Career Advancement
- PM = Performance Management
- RR = Reward and Recognition
- TD = Training and Development
- $e_t$  = Error term,
- $\beta_0$  = Intercept of dependent variable,
- $\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3, \beta_4$  are beta coefficient of the predictor variables to be estimated.

**Results and Discussion**

**Demographic Profile of Respondents**

Table 1 shows that there were 300 males (78.12%) and 84 females (21.88%) among the 384 of the respondents. The age group between 26-30 had the highest number of respondents whilst the age group above 41 years had the fewest number of respondents. Positions in organizations were divided in two groups: managerial positions and operational positions. Except for managerial positions, all positions were classified as operational positions. Table 1 showed that out of the 384 respondents, 40 (10.41%) were in the managerial positions and rest 344 (89.59%) were in the

operational positions. The experience of respondents between 6-10 years had the highest number (28.65%) whilst the experience of respondents more than 21 years had the lowest (10.16%).

**Table 1**

*Demographic Profile of respondents*

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Gender		
Male	300	78.12
Female	84	21.88
Age Group		
20-25	90	23.44
26-30	125	32.55
31-40	106	27.60
41 years and More	63	16.41
Positions in the Organizations		
Managerial Positions	40	10.41
Operational Positions	344	89.59
Respondents' Experience		
Below 5 years	105	27.34
6-10 years	110	28.65
11-15 years	80	20.83
15-20 years	50	13.02
Above 21 years	39	10.16

*Source:* Field Survey, (2023)

**Descriptive Analysis of the Study Items**

The items of human resource development practices, such as career advancement, performance management, rewards and recognition, and training & development were adapted from various authors listed below. However, they had been made to fit in the Nepalese context.



**Table 2***Descriptive Statistics of the study items*

<b>HRM Dimension</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
<b>Career Advancement</b> (Kibui, Gachunga & Namusonge, 2014; Alnaqbi, 2011)		
CA is the constant process to attract and retain the best employees.	4.48	.587
CA requires switching occupation in the co. for new skills and knowledge.	4.41	.660
CA focuses on to complete the responsibilities.	3.46	1.24
CA exhibits the employers' dedication to their employees.	2.48	1.21
CA at work is associated with positive employee attitudes and behaviors.	3.83	1.07
<b>Performance Management</b> (Alima Aktar, 2017; Rao, 2017).		
PM has stronger impact on employee engagement.	4.23	.740
PM focuses on to gather significant information from the employees.	4.12	.940
PM helps in constant improvement of skills & knowledge of employees.	3.65	1.24
PM makes employees to enhance commitment to the work.	3.52	1.22
PM helps to capture employees' strengths to overcome weaknesses.	3.97	1.83
<b>Reward &amp; Recognition</b> (Jones, 2019; Karatepe, 2013).		
RR is an acknowledgment for employees to excel in their positions.	3.23	1.16
RR program affects employees' engagement and drive.	3.95	.653
RR is a crucial tool for inspiring the employees to achieve the objectives.	3.53	1.11
RR program improves employees' behavior while providing services.	3.12	.93
RR makes employees passionate about working for the organization.	2.78	1.21
<b>Training &amp; Development</b> (Alima Aktar, 2017; Kavyashree, Sridevi, Nagesh & Nanjudeshwarasamy, 2023)		
TD focuses on to improve individual performances.	3.94	1.20
TD programs aim at achieving business goals through employees.	3.68	.72
Organization creates TD programs to enhance knowledge, skills and capacities.	3.36	1.14
TD enables the employees to manage the challenges better.	2.47	1.20
TD raises the level of employee engagement at work place.	4.24	.72
<b>Employee Engagement</b> (Niraula & Kharel, 2023).		
EE is devotion of employees to work and organization.	3.96	1.03
EE includes commitment, authenticity and OCB.	3.82	1.06
EE focuses on to continuous growth and development.	3.41	1.26
EE promotes working with collaboration among employees.	3.66	.76
EE ensures success of organization in the long term.	3.46	1.10

Source: Field Survey, (2023)

All of the results shown in Table 2 show the perceptions of the employees of the sampled banks. The results for the CD dimension show that all of the five mean values were higher than 3, except for 1 item. The standard deviation values were competitive for 3 items. However, the SD values for 2 items were below 1. The results of the five measures that made up the PM dimension show that all commercial bank employees were satisfied with the PM, since all mean values were more than 3 and the standard deviation values were competitive for 3 items except for 2 items that had less than 1 SD values. All commercial banks had shown a strong status in the RR dimension, with mean values exceeding 3 except for 1 item. 2 items standard deviation values were less than 1 and 3 items' standard deviation values were more than 1 that indicates the RR status was satisfactory in Nepalese commercial banks. Similar results were demonstrated for the TD dimension with mean value exceeding 3 for 4 items and 1 item had mean value less than 3, standard deviation values were competitive for 2 items which were less than 1 and 3 items had standard deviation values more than 1. Employee Engagement dimension, which showed mean values above 3, standard deviation values were less than 1 for 1 item and more than 1 for 4 items. The findings in Table 2 showed that most of the employees of Nepalese commercial banks were satisfied with the different dimensions by their individual banks.

### **Correlation Analysis**

The correlation between the independent and dependent variables is shown in Table 3. Employee Engagement and Career Advancement had 0.372 correlation. Likewise, there was a 0.466 correlation between Performance Management and Employee Engagement. The correlation between Reward & Recognition and Employee Engagement was 0.154. Similarly, the correlation between Training & Development and Employee Engagement was 0.137 which was the lowest of any variable. According to the analysis, the majority of the Employee Engagement factors had a moderate relationship with one another.

**Table 3***Correlation between Dependent and Independent Variables*

Variables	EE	CA	PM	RR	TD
EE	1				
CA	0.372**	1			
PM	0.466**	.336**	1		
RR	0.154**	.390**	0.247**	1	
TD	0.137**	.102*	.637**	.336**	1

\*\*Correlation is significant at 0.01 level (two tailed)

\*Correlation is significant at 0.05 level (two tailed)

**Regression Analysis****Table 4***Regression Coefficients*

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t-stat	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1 (Constant)	2.080	.206		10.085	.000		
CA	.208	.051	.206	4.107	.000	.735	1.361
PM	.356	.039	.544	9.074	.000	.514	1.944
RR	.220	.055	.020	.397	.691	.751	1.332
TD	-.184	.046	-.237	-3.995	.000	.523	1.912

R<sup>2</sup>= .30 Adjusted R<sup>2</sup> = .293 F- statistics= 41.00 Sig = 0.000 a. Dependent Variable: EE

The tolerance value of all the variables were greater than 0.1 as mentioned in table 4. The tolerance value which is more than 0.1 is considered acceptable (Chan, Leow, Bea, Cheng, Phoong, Hoong & Chen, 2022). The Darwin Watson test of the residuals of regression in this study showed positive autocorrelation (1.64). It means the relationship of human resource development practices on Employee Engagement in the commercial banks of Nepal had positive results in the future. Value of F- statistics 41.00 and F. Sig. 0.000 explained that the regression model used in this study was fit. Adjusted R<sup>2</sup> .293 means that the independent variables used in this research explain

the HRD practices on Employee Engagement by 29.30%. The negative beta value between Training & Development and Employee Engagement showed that if the firm focused on TD, the Employee Engagement decreased. It means that the Employee Engagement was explained by variation in other variables by 81.60 %. The VIF values for all the variables were below 2, as per the literature, if the VIF values are below 2, there is no Multicollinearity and the results is acceptable (Kock & Lynn, 2012).

Thus, the regression equation of the study is:

$$EE = 2.080 + 0.208CA + 0.356PM + 0.220RR - 0.184TD + e_t$$

The objective of this research was to examine the Employee Engagement in Nepalese Commercial Banks. Human Resource Development and Employee Engagement are the most crucial elements for the success and growth of any business organization, especially, Nepalese commercial banks. Due to the direct impact they have on the expansion of the country's financial sectors, these issues are crucial in the context of Nepalese commercial banks. However, the findings displayed in the regression equation appear to be different, which may have occurred as a result of the respondent's lack of understanding throughout the data collection process.

The Regression Equation explained that there was statistically significant and positive relationship between Career Advancement and Employee Engagement ( $p = 0.000$  and beta  $0.208$ ), this results was consistent with the findings of Kibui, Gachunga & Namusonge (2014) and inconsistent with Alnaqbi (2011) and Huang (2017). Similarly Performance Management had a positive and significant association with the Employee Engagement with  $p$ - value  $0.000$  and beta coefficient  $0.356$ . This result was consistent with the findings Albrechi, Bakker, Gruman, Macey & Saks (2014) and inconsistent with Rao (2017) and Alima Aktar (2017). Reward & Recognition had a positive but insignificant association with Employee Engagement in Nepalese commercial banks with  $p$ - value  $0.691$  and beta coefficient  $0.22$ . This result was consistent with the result by Jones (2019) and inconsistent with the result by Karatepe (2013). Training & Development had negative but significant association with Employee Engagement with  $p$ -value  $0.000$  and beta coefficient  $-0.184$ . This result was in line with the results by Kavyashree, Sridevi, Nages & Nanjudeshwarasamy (2023) and inconsistent with the results by Hakuduwal (2019).

## Conclusion and Implication

Employee engagement is intended to improve organizational citizenship practices and employee involvement in every organization. In Nepalese commercial banks, there was a good and substantial correlation between employee engagement and training and advancement. Employee engagement was somewhat and significantly correlated with performance management, however it was less correlated with reward and recognition as well as training and development. As a result, these elements were essential to improving the engagement's effectiveness. However, other variables showed weak relationships and negative beta values with employee engagement. Line managers, departmental managers, and senior management are therefore advised to boost employee engagement in Nepalese commercial banks. To further raise the degree of employee engagement in commercial banks, it is advised that commercial banks constantly review and enhance their human resource development policies and procedures. To guarantee that employees' needs, issues, and goals are appropriately handled, regular feedback systems, employee surveys, and open communication channels should be introduced.

A few of the limitations of this study may offer suggestions for further research. To show how employee engagement and human resource development are related in Nepalese commercial banks. In this study, four independent variables were mostly employed. Future studies should include additional aspects of human resource development as independent variables to better generalize the findings from employee engagement across all financial institutions in Nepal. Additionally, the researchers might investigate the level of employee engagement in non-banking industries and academic settings. For Nepalese commercial banks, there were several advantages to investing in human resource development and employee engagement. It can lead to increased performance levels, better decision-making, talent retention, a supportive company culture, and higher levels of customer satisfaction. These elements all complement one another to aid commercial banks in growing and be successful in advancing Nepalese development pace.

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