
Antecedents of Employee Engagement among Machine Operators in Apparel Industry

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Employee engagement is considered as one of the most vital factors of the organizational success as engaged employees boost productivity, increase customer satisfaction and inculcate strong organization culture. Despite organizations expect utilizing highly engaged employees, the majority of employees are disengaged at work. Apparel industry is the largest foreign currency earner and a main employment opportunities generator in the Sri Lankan economy. High degree of Employee engagement is important in the apparel industry as the industry often deals with overseas partners. Low level of employee engagement among machine operators has become the grave concern of the Human resource practitioners particularly in the Sri Lankan context. The purpose of this paper is to explore the antecedents of the employee engagement of the machine operators with special reference to Kash Garments (Pvt) Ltd. Based on the extant literature, five antecedents were identified: working environment, leadership, employee loyalty, team performance and internal communication. The theoretical population for the study is all machine operators in the apparel sector and the study population is machine operators in the Kash Garment (Pvt) Ltd. Simple random sampling was used to select the respondents and a total of 275 questionnaires were distributed and 204 valid responses collected. Regression analysis was used to estimate the relationships. It was found that all the identified factors were predictors of employee engagement ($r^2 = 0.295$), however, the variables that had major impact were working environment, senior leadership and team performance. Special attention is required to pay specifically on the factors of working environment, team performance and senior leadership as they have shown significantly higher impact on employee engagement. Organizations shall focus on presenting the conducive working environment for employees to work and promoting programs that would enhance leader member relationships. Moreover, it is required to inculcate a culture that fosters team performance.

Keywords: Employee engagement, Internal communication, Leadership, Team performance, Working environment