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## Exploring the Impact of Motivation and Leadership on Employee Engagement and Retention in HRM Practices

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### ABSTRACT

This study explores the link between motivation and leadership in Human Resource Management (HRM) to improve employee engagement and staff retention. Incentives and leadership are crucial to influencing desire, behaviour, productivity, organisational attachment, and, therefore, turnover within organisations. The purpose of this study is thus to establish how various methods of motivation and leadership within HRM policies contribute to engagement and retention. The research also aims to establish which practices enhance a positive organisational environment in HRM. A survey research method using a 5-point Likert-type questionnaire was used to measure motivation, leadership effectiveness, job satisfaction, engagement, and turnover intention among the employees. Descriptive and inferential statistics on the data gathered were employed to determine how the identified practices impact key employee outcomes. Their work outlined that motivation from within, job satisfaction, and personal development opportunities have a distinct impact on the employees. Moreover, transformational leadership was more effective in increasing long-term employee turnover of the two types of leadership. Leadership behaviour and work motivators are important factors influencing positive attitudes towards work and turnover intention. To enhance employee retention and increase an organisation's overall effectiveness, business firms should ensure their objectives align with their employees' goals, corporate promotion procedures are based on merits, and the latter provide feedback and development opportunities.

### INTRODUCTION

This study investigates the critical role of motivation and leadership within Human Resource Management (HRM) practices and their direct impact on employee engagement and retention. Motivation is one of the major determinants of employee performance level, enrolment, efficiency, and satisfaction in the workplace (Sepahvand & Bagherzadeh Khodashahri, 2021). On the other hand, culture shapes the climate within an organisation's workforce, providing the direction, support, and purpose needed to create a stimulating and effective workplace environment. Today, any organisation must address the relationship between motivation, leadership and the results achieved at the enterprise level (Malik *et al.*, 2024). Consequently, this work aims to analyse the role of motivational incentives and leadership styles, as the HRM practises' core elements, in enhancing employee engagement and indicating turnover tendencies. Thus, the need for employee retention arises since companies and organisations work towards ensuring that they maintain a slave pool of workers. It is in the best interest of organisations to retain their talent because it is expensive to go out and find new talent and encourage the morale of the employees. Drawing on theories of motivation and leadership models, this research aims to identify strategies to increase workers' productivity and sustain their loyalty (Mohammad *et al.*, 2023).

The few theories used in the study are Herzberg's Two Factor Theory, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, and

Transformational Leadership. These frameworks help to understand how various types of motivation and various forms of leadership affect the satisfaction and engagement of employees. According to Herzberg, there is a difference between motivating factors that lead to satisfaction and demotivating factors that result in dissatisfaction (Alam, 2021). At the same time, Maslow speaks about five levels of human needs and how they impact staff motivation. Transaction leadership, on the other hand, is viewed as less effective in terms of morale boosting and as a means to maintain long-term employee engagement and retention in the organisation (Trivedi & Mehta, 2019).

The present study shall also utilise a quantitative research approach adopted from past studies; a 5-point Likert scale questionnaire shall also be used to collect employee response data relating to motivation, leadership effectiveness, job satisfaction, engagement and retention. Also, the analysis will develop hypotheses that show correlations between the specified aspects of HRM and employee results that could be useful for professionals in the field as well as managers of organisations. At the end of the paper, the best possible suggestions are presented to organisations interested in establishing an engaging workplace environment and improving the rate of employee turnover.

### Aims and Objectives

The primary aim of this research is to investigate how motivation and leadership within HRM practices affect

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employee engagement and retention. Specifically, the objectives are to:

- To examine the various motivational strategies and leadership styles employed by organizations.
- To analyse their impact on employee engagement, satisfaction, and retention.
- To identify best practices in HRM that contribute to a positive work environment conducive to high employee retention.

### Research Questions

1. How do different motivational strategies within HRM affect employee engagement and retention?
2. What leadership styles are most effective in enhancing employee engagement and retention within organizations?

### Rationale of the Chosen Topic

The need to pursue this research originates from the reality that the promotion and leadership styles being practised directly affect workforce commitment and productivity. HRM is now more concerned with having motivated employees who are committed and have what it takes to be retained within the organisation. Organisation promotion and leadership and the structure of these promotion concepts on employee conduct, engagement and retention at the workplace. This agenda aims to establish a link between motivational techniques, leadership types, and the outcomes that correspond with employees' levels of engagement and turnover. This study highlights key aspects of leadership related to employee motivation and turnover risk to inform appropriate best practices for human resource management. Notably, the research elaborates on the relationship between leadership approaches, including transformational and transactional leadership, in shaping employees' behaviour and attitudes towards work commitment. Also, the research will analyse if and how extrinsic and intrinsic factors increase employee satisfaction and retention. This knowledge benefits HR while designing policies and practices that can lead to better job satisfaction and lower turnover. Thus, in responding to these areas, the study aims to provide recommendations enabling organisational leaders to enhance HR practices to enhance productivity and workforce retention.

### Significance of the Study

This study's importance is that it seeks to establish the direct link between leadership, motivational practises, and retention of employees. Therefore, knowledge of these factors will be significant for any HR practitioner or business manager who wishes to improve employees' commitment, productivity and loyalty in the workplace. The conclusions drawn from this study can assist an organisation in establishing the best practices that improve and enhance the climate. Moreover, investigating leadership styles and motivational approaches to employees' outcomes should provide practical

recommendations for increasing employee satisfaction and their willingness to remain with the organisation in the long term. Ultimately, this study helps advance knowledge in matched-set HRM practises to promote employee satisfaction and retention, as these issues are crucial for establishing a stable and effective staff. This study will benefit any organisation that wishes to improve its HRM performance for increased employee commitment to serve their interests and the company's.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Motivation and Employee Engagement

The concept of motivation is one of the most extensive and well-known as the prerequisite to engaging and retaining human capital within an organisation. Employee engagement pertains to this context, which is the level of passion that an employee displays towards the place of work and his or her duties. Apart from being enthusiastic about their work, most motivated employees also desired to stay in an employment position longer (Book *et al.*, 2019). Motivation can be defined through the Two-Factor Theory, developed by Herzberg in 1959, which posits that job satisfaction arises from intrinsic factors, whereas dissatisfaction stems from extrinsic factors. Internal motivations, including higher achievement, responsibility, and personal development, are instrumental in enhancing high levels of engagement (Boutmaghzoute & Moustaghfir, 2021). On the other hand, non-instrumental aspects such as pay and security are also relevant but do not help to motivate people in the long run.

In addition to motivation, the next theory is Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory (1943). This theory builds a hierarchy of human needs that need to be met for one to satisfy his or her needs. The five levels include the physiological (which includes salary and other benefits), the safety level (security – about the job and workplace), the social level (consisting of the relations with others at the workplace), the esteem level, which is the recognition, self-esteem and finally, the self-actualisation level which involves the growth of the individual to his/her full potential (Navy, 2020). This means that before employees can pursue higher-order needs, they must first fulfil basic needs at the lower levels of the hierarchy, such as adequate pay and job security. Thus, it can be concluded that the organisations focusing on Meeting the needs of Maslow's hierarchy of needs have more engaged employees. By meeting employees' physiological and safety needs, ACA has ensured that it establishes a platform for employees to work to gain personal satisfaction and growth for the firm, enhancing engagement and retention (Chopra *et al.*, 2024). Self-determination theory, developed by Deci and Ryan, (2012), is another extension of Maslow's theory that focuses on motivation by emphasising autonomy, competence and relatedness. Thus, SDT postulates that autonomy of behaviour, perceived competence or perceived accomplishment in the working environment, and perceived relatedness to others are three fundamental psychological needs that may explain motivation. This

theory states that when employees can exercise some control over their working environment, they will exert more effort, which plays a role in determining whether they will remain with the organisation.

Furthermore, the Goal Setting Theory advanced by Locke and Latham, (2015) underscores how goals are set to motivate and improve performance. The performance of employees is likely to improve if they are provided with targets to achieve and are allowed to work independently on those targets since it makes them feel fulfilled once they have achieved the said goals. When the goals set by employees are in harmony with the organisational goals, the passion for the CH work will increase and thus reduce staff turnover.

### **Leadership Styles and Employee Engagement**

Leadership is another major factor related to employee engagement and turnover. There is evidence that shows that leadership behaviour in an organisation influences the level of employee motivation, satisfaction, and productivity. Transformational Leadership Schneider (2001) is one of the most widely researched leadership styles that is useful for encouraging employees (Singh & See, 2022). Transformational leaders engage the employees through writing and/or speaking to convince and encourage them to embrace the change, promote idea generation, and facilitate the process for change. Namely, these leaders ensure open communication, esprit de corps, reporting, and cooperation by valuing workers and delegating (Southgate *et al.*, 2023). Studies (AL-Dossary, 2022; Al-Kasasbeh, 2024; Zanzabazar *et al.*, 2023) have revealed a positive relationship between transformational leadership and organisation commitment and employee turnover intention, where the employees tend to remain with an organisation if their efforts are appreciated and encouraged for their capabilities (Rabiul *et al.*, 2022).

On the other hand, Transactional Leadership emphasises reward and punishment depending on the performance (Adnan *et al.*, 2022). However, it can spur performance in the short term; it does not foster commitment in the long term. Transactional leaders mainly concentrate on getting the organisation to adhere to what has been established to get incentives for compliance and penalise them for noncompliance. This may lead to many of the members leaving the organisation or to lower levels of job satisfaction, creating a negative organisational culture that gives a shorter working life to the organisation (Quadri *et al.*, 2024; Windi & Utama, 2024).

It is also important to analyse the relationship between leadership and employee engagement from the perspective of the Social Exchange Theory suggested by Blau in 1964. This theory holds that exchanges between employees and their leaders form the basis of the relationship (Raziq *et al.*, 2025). Therefore, employees who have received support, feedback, and rewards from the leaders will feel obliged to respond by increasing their engagement level and commitment to the organisation. Supportive leader-employee relations allow employees to

go all-out in providing their best to the company, hence growing retention rates (Umrani *et al.*, 2024).

### **The Role of Motivation and Leadership in Employee Retention**

Motivation and leadership play significant roles in the retention of employees. Employee turnover is a costly affair both in the short and the long run since it impacts issues like recruitment costs, training costs, loss of expertise, and morale among remaining employees (Rajãa & Mekkaoui, 2025). The study reveals that motivation leads to organisational commitment because most employees are emotionally attached to their positions. Motivation is one of the best predictors of organisational commitment, resulting in retention. An organisation can benefit when its employees have a good reason to remain attached to that company as far as possible, when people feel a commitment to the organisation because that place offers them a purpose in life (Hyder *et al.*, 2024).

On the other hand, organisations that do not meet employees' motivational needs or have poor leadership may record high turnover. Organisational commitment among the workforce, indicating that employees who do not feel supported or fostered will resign. This is especially the case in scenarios where lower-order needs of workers are not fulfilled, resulting in employee dissatisfaction and low commitment to the job. Employees who complain that there is no chance for them to be appreciated or promoted will start looking for other companies to work for (Bannya & Bainbridge, 2022).

This indicates that organisational culture is also equally important and can be enhanced by the leaders to promote retention. This social solidarity enables employees to feel hopeful, secure and protected at the workplace; hence, they do not search for other jobs with other companies. Proactive working environment management is effective in terms of lighting up the challenges that the employees are going through in their work (Zainab *et al.*, 2022). In contrast, employee motivation aims to ensure employees feel valuable within that particular organisation. It was also established that the leaders who invest in their employees' human capital promote employee retention since the recipients are most likely to remain with the organisation that offers growth prospects (Ahmad *et al.*, 2023).

### **Best Practices in Motivation and Leadership for Enhancing Employee Engagement and Retention**

It will also refer to pre-eminent measures of motivation or attractive incentives for the target employee groups and the effective staff control methods based on the leadership techniques to develop the ultimate HR management recommendations. First, it is imperative that one work on the basic requirements as defined in Maslow's pyramid on the needs of people. This includes remuneration, employee tenure, and workplace safety, among others. After these physiological and safety needs have thus been attained, organisations can address other higher-order needs, such as self-actualisation (Mainali & Tantry, 2022).

Another concept is to establish suitable organisational learning and development for employees. Thus, providing training, mentoring, and opportunities for promotion indicates that organisations are concerned with employees' careers. Noe (2017) argued that the development of schemes not only increases organisational performance but also improves employee retention, as employees feel valued (Adriyanto, 2023). In addition, leadership should encourage reward and feedback as a focal under organisational goals. Organisations can keep their workers motivated in their duties if they show appreciation for their work. Organisations appreciating their workforce through structured or unstructured methods foster the workforce's morale. Wright, (2022) conclude that positive recognition contributes to the motivation and engagement of workers and, in this way, increases retention levels. The last common factor revealed is work-life balance. Adopting working options, providing long-time and rest breaks, and supporting the promotion of work-life balance show that the organisation is sensitive to the well-being of its employees. In essence, Employee engagement is more likely to stay when an employee balances the demands of his or her career and personal life goals (Manga *et al.*, 2025; Urme, 2023).

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

### Reason for Research Design

To address the research objectives, this study employs a quantitative approach to data collection and analysis to examine the influence of motivation and leadership on employee engagement and turnover intention. It has been crucial to opt for a quantitative research method since measuring the required variables across the recommended demographic questionnaire will be easier and subject to statistical analysis of the relationship between the identified variables. The selected research methodology of the 5-point Likert scale is helpful in data collection since it provides a uniform method of data collection that can be easily generalised to other organisations and among various groups of employees.

### Philosophy

The study is based on Positivism and Pragmatism research philosophy. Positivism is employed to use statistical data to establish the level of employee engagement and attraction with a given company. This leads the research to be evidence-based and sets up data-based facts regarding the impact of HRM practices on employee outcomes. On the other hand, applying pragmatism is helpful in matters involving the realisation of the application of the analysis or the use of different means, such as survey questions and cases, to develop the end product that constitutes the comprehension of the propositions.

### Data Collection and Analysis

Self-administered questionnaires was distributed to employees in various organisations using a 5-point Likert scale. This survey assessed their view on leadership

styles, motivational factors, job satisfaction, engagement, and intentions to continue with the organisation. In the present study, the Likert scale adopted the 5-point scale with possible responses from the respondents ranging from Strongly Disagree = 1 to Strongly Agree = 5 for motivation and leadership.

This study employs descriptive statistics to generalise the results of the questionnaires. Data is also analysed using inferential statistics, focusing on correlation and regression analysis between the significant variables. The current study aims to determine the relationship between the motivation of workers and leadership behaviour towards the level of workers' engagement and their retention rates. The data collected through surveys would be analysed using statistical tools like SPSS or Excel. At the same time, hypothesis testing would allow the researcher to understand the effect of the practices in HRM.

### Ethical Considerations

This research adheres to some principles of ethics, and all the participants were informed before being involved in the study. Informed consent has been sought from participants regarding the purpose of the study to ensure that they provide voluntary consent. Also, anonymity has been observed, and the survey results are coded to ensure the privacy of the respondents is not violated. The information collected is solely used for this study; respondents have a right to withdraw from the study without influence from the researcher.

### LIMITATIONS

A limitation of this research is that some of the findings are based on participants' self-reports; using self-reports may result in socially desirable or inaccurate self-estimations. The study is also restricted by the number of participants and types of industries in the survey. To avoid this, an attempt will be made to make the sample representative; however, this study could not necessarily cover all the sectors in Tanzania. Moreover, the study will use a single data collection technique, a survey, which yields good quantitative data but does not entertain qualitative views that would have enriched the study.

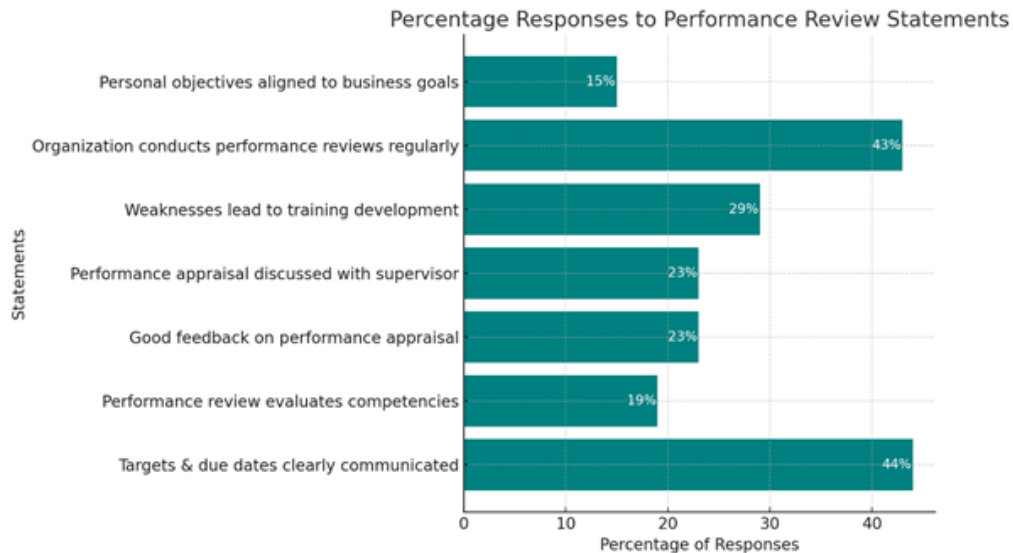
## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### Performance Management

This bar chart in figure 1, shows the percentage indicating various responses to statements relating to the performance review in the organisation concerning aspects of performance appraisal. The first statement, 'Targets and due dates are communicated', was also considered the strongest strategy by participating respondents, with 44% affirming the same. The statements "My organisation conducts performance reviews regularly" and "The weaknesses detected in the appraisal lead to training development" got 43% and 29%, respectively, which show somewhat more positive responses from the participants about the regularity of performance

appraisal and the developmental feedback. However, on average, the lowest recorded satisfaction percentage of 15% was registered for the statement, “My objectives are geared toward the achievement of the business objectives.” This may suggest that the employees do not easily relate to the organisation’s big picture. For instance, a performance review evaluates competencies, and a performance appraisal

was discussed with the supervisor, implying a moderate acceptance of the aspects of competency assessment and discussion. In general, the chart offers insight into where a person may excel and where a person may lack; in this case, communication and regular reviews are being done effectively. However, the creation of personal objectives must be aligned with business objectives.



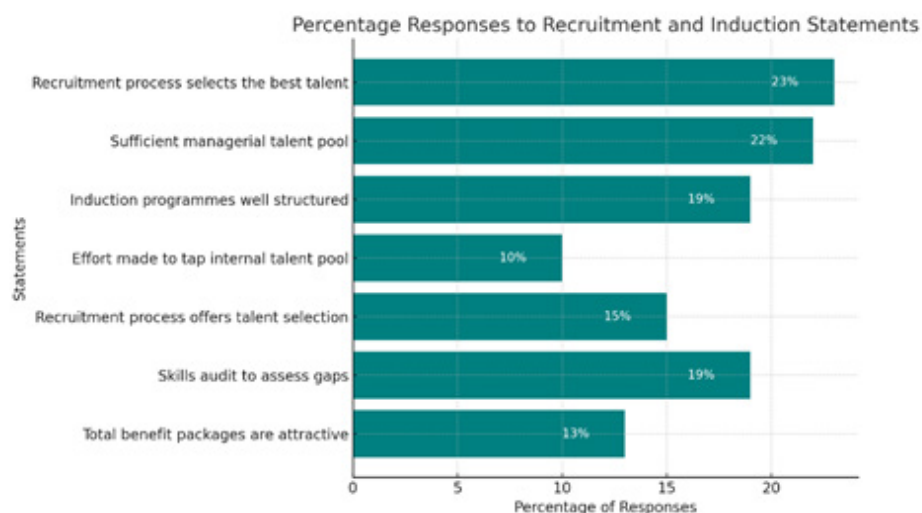
**Figure 1: Performance Management**

**Recruitment and Selection**

The bar chart figure 2, shows the percentage of respondents who agreed or disagreed with the above-mentioned statements about recruitment and induction practises in the organisation. Nevertheless, regarding the options mentioned in the questionnaire, company members had the highest rate of uncertainty over the statement: “The recruitment process provides for an extensive selection of talent”, with 42% as against 29% agreement and 15% strong agreement. This implies that the employees feel that the selection process may not be as thorough as was assumed. Conversely, ‘The total benefit packages advertised to intending employees are attractive’ scored 8% neutral, 19% agreeing, and 13% strongly agreeing were computed to give the perception of the attractiveness of total benefit packages advertised

at a moderate level of 26%. The statement that received the lowest percentage, with 29% disagreeing and 28% strongly disagreeing, was that before a vacancy is advertised, the effort is made to tap from the internal talent pool.

On the other hand, the statement “indeed, induction programmes are well-structured” had 22.0% and strongly agreed 19.0%, which shows that the employees are also cognizant of the usefulness of structured induction. Regarding managerial talent and recruitment success in selecting the best talent, the responses were also a blend of agreement, undecided and disagreement. Based on the chart, strength is indicated by categories like the induction programme and selection of talents; the category with potential concern is the utilisation of talent in an organisation and lack of intention in attracting talents.



**Figure 2: Recruitment and Selection**

### Training and Development

The bar chart in Figure 3, shows the responses to a set of statements given to the respondents about training and career advancement in the organisation. The statement “Concerning your work organisation, I can use my skills and training to do different tasks” has the highest score, where 37% strongly agreed and 22% agreed, which shows that the employees have the notion that they can apply their skills in any assignments offered to them. On the contrary, the statement “There are good training facilities for advancing in my career” elicited a bigger agreement since 33% of the employees strongly disagreed with this statement, meaning they found themselves restricted regarding training and promotion. When it comes to the statement “Job schedule exhibits flexibility for the career advancement engagements,” 27% strongly agreed because job schedule is mostly discussed in polytechnic companies

as a functional aspect to help employees progress in their careers, but 22% strongly disagreed because job schedule may not afford the desired flexibility for career pursuits. However, two of the statements, “I understand the vision and goals of my organisation” and “My planned career progression is feasible”, received moderately mixed responses, with some of the responses being undecided or disagreeing. The statement, “My Manager gives direction on how the assignments should be done”, attracted an agreeability percentage (27%), showing that the employees clearly understand what is expected of them. Thus, the chart presented above sheds light on the sectors where the employees have a sense of support in their employment growth but are concerned about the training opportunities, the work schedule, and employment development correspondence.



Figure 3: Training and Development

### Compensation and Rewards

The bar chart in figure 4, shows how respondents react to certain statements concerning the remuneration and rewards in the organisation. The statement which got the most positive response in this question was “The

remuneration package contributes greatly to my retention with the organisation”, where 27% responded strongly agree and further 32 % responded agree, indicating that the compensation package is quite influential, forcing the employee to stay with the organisation. However,

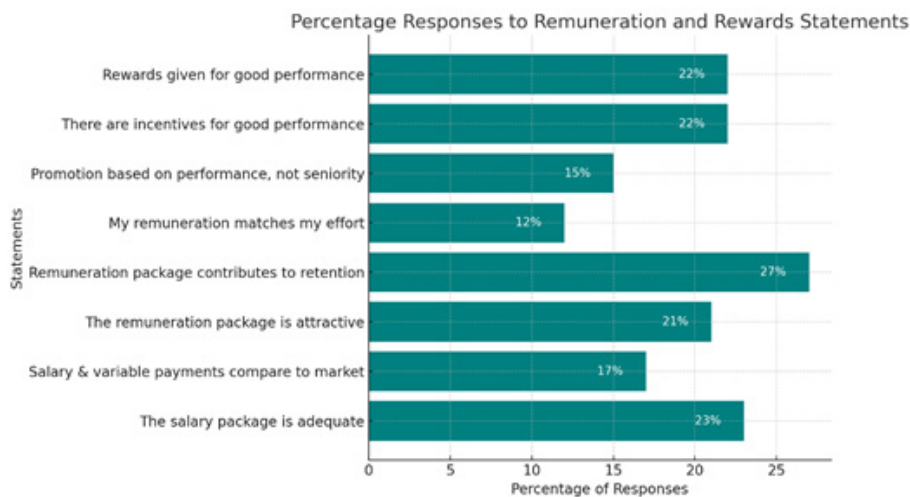


Figure 4: Compensation & Rewards

when it comes to the statement “My remuneration matches my effort in my job”, a third responded either strongly disagreed, with 33 per cent of the respondents disagreeing, implying that many employees are not content with the remuneration that they are paid regarding their productivity in their places of work. On the statement that “Promotion is not on priority to seniority but based on merits”, there was a strong disagreement from 35% of the respondents; this was probably due to dissatisfaction with the promotion criteria perceived to be more senior-based than merit-based. Responses to statements, including “There are incentives for good performance” and “Rewards given for good performance,” were moderately positive but highly unsure or disagreed, meaning that the company could use a better approach to recognising and rewarding employees’ good work. Overall, figure 1 shows that the respondents have positive perceptions regarding the remunerations offered for the retention of employees, although fairness and reward for work expectations have raised certain concerns.

## CONCLUSION

Motivation and leadership relationship and their impact on HRM practices affecting employee engagement and retention. Based on theoretical models such as Herzberg’s Two Factor Theory, Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs and Transformational Leadership, this study identifies crucial drivers of motivation. It emphasizes the need to convey target, appraisal and developmental feedback to enhance employee engagement and decrease turnover intentions. Yet it is found that in some areas, the study suggests things to be improved -- such as the alignment between personal and organizational targets and perceived inequities in promotion systems based on seniority (Malik et al., 2024). The study shows how high-quality compensation and rewards are really important in reducing employee turnover, with respondents indicating that attractive remuneration helps retain staff. Nevertheless, the report highlighted concerns about pay fairness and the rigidity of training opportunities. Organizations should incorporate motivational techniques, effective leadership practices, and competitive compensation systems in their HRM strategies to boost employee retention rates and organizational effectiveness, the study recommends. Key recommendations were to improve the alignment of organizational and individual goals, introducing merit-based promotions and advancement plans such as flexible schedules and training programs, and routine feedback. Performance management practices, promotions and work-life balance must be a priority for an energetic and dedicated workforce. These recommendations if adopted will decrease turnover and create a positive work culture.

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