

Developing an Integrated Employee Retention Framework for the Hospitality Industry: The Influence of Human Resource Management Practices, Perceived Organizational Support, Career Development Opportunities, and Employee Well-being through Employee Engagement

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ABSTRACT

High employee turnover rates, challenging work environments, and the competition for skilled employees are all major concerns for the hospitality industry in terms of employee retention. This study was undertaken to develop and validate the integrated framework of Employee Retention in the context of Human Resource Management Practices (HRMP), Perceived Organizational Support (POS), Career Development Opportunities (CDO) and Employee Well-being (EWB) with the mediation of Employee Engagement (EE). The design was quantitative research and data collection were carried out from 411 hospitality employees with 356 valid data being screened for analysis. Results showed that the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) was 0.923, Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was significant ($p < 0.001$), Cronbach's alpha values ranged from 0.866 to 0.893, and Composite Reliability values were higher than 0.90, and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values were higher than 0.70, indicating that the measurement model showed satisfactory psychometric properties. The results of the structural equation modeling showed that HRM Practices ($\beta = 0.284$, $p < 0.001$), Perceived Organizational Support ($\beta = 0.327$, $p < 0.001$), Career Development Opportunities ($\beta = 0.241$, $p < 0.001$) and Employee Well-being ($\beta = 0.356$, $p < 0.001$) had significant and positive effects on Employee Engagement. In addition, Employee Engagement had a significant positive effect on Employee Retention ($\beta = 0.681$, $p < 0.001$), and acted as a mediator between all organizational antecedents and employee retention. The model had good explanatory power for Employee Engagement (64.8%) and Employee Retention (46.4%). The results highlight the need for HR strategies that are integrated in hospitality organizations to improve employee engagement and

increase the chances for long-term job retention by strengthening employee well-being, organizational support, career development and effective HRM.

Keywords: Employee Retention; Employee Engagement; Human Resource Management Practices; Perceived Organizational Support; Hospitality Industry.

1. Introduction

Employee retention is certainly among the most important strategic issues faced by organisations in the world, especially those in the hospitality sector, where turnover rates tend to be higher than in most other service sectors. Staff is a key component of the labour-intensive nature of the hospitality sector, and is vital to providing a superior customer experience and service quality. Unlike manufacturing industries, hospitality organizations are extremely dependent upon human interactions to create customer satisfaction, organizational reputation, and competitive advantage. Thus, the ability to keep highly trained and dedicated staff is more critical than ever to the operation, continuity and customer satisfaction and sustainability of the business (Hom et al., 2017). However, the constant switch of employees in the hospitality industry remains as a issue for many businesses because this industry has tough work conditions, unpredictable schedules, high-pressure work environments, unpaid emotional labor, limited prospects for career growth and increased competition for skilled workers. The high turnover rate of employees can increase the recruitment and training costs, affect the productivity of the organisation, employee morale, service quality and customer satisfaction (Zopiatis et al., 2021).

In recent years, the nature of human resource management has changed because of the fast-paced globalization of the hospitality industry, technological advances, shifting employee expectations and a growing diversity of the workforce. In fact, employees today seek more than just the pay; they seek to have a supportive organizational culture and opportunities to grow, have fulfilling work experiences, psychological health and wellness and positive relationships at work. Consequently, instead of recruiting for talent, hospitality businesses are implementing a robust employee retention strategy that takes into account both their business and employee's needs. Past studies indicate that organizations that focus on employee-centered human resource practices have higher employee commitment, engagement, organizational citizenship behavior, and retention rates (Albrecht et al., 2015; Jiang et al., 2012). As a result, knowledge about the organizational factors that encourage employees to remain in the organization is an important area of research and practice in the hospitality sector.

Human Resource Management Practices (HRMP) is one of the many organizational factors identified to have significant effect on employees attitude and behaviour in the work place. Human resource management (HRM) practices such as staffing, training, performance appraisal, compensation, rewards and employee participation are also very important in improving the knowledge, motivation and commitment of employees to the organizational objectives (Vossaert et al., 2022) Organizations that strategically invest in human resource practices improve employees' abilities, boost

their motivation and offer opportunities for meaningful participation, thus leading to improved organizational performance and fewer turnover intentions, based on the Ability–Motivation–Opportunity (AMO) framework (Jiang et al., 2012). Effective HR practices are crucial in the hospitality sector, where service quality is heavily reliant on the skills and dedication of employees, to ensure that they are engaged and stay for the long haul.

Perceived Organizational Support (POS) is the employee's sense of the organization's appreciation of his or her contributions and care for the employee's welfare (Eisenberger et al., 1986) and is another key organizational factor which can affect employee retention. Organizational Support Theory proposes that employee's emotional attachment and reciprocal commitment to the organization is enhanced when they perceive that they are valued for their contributions and supported in their personal and professional lives (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). As a Hospitality worker, there are times when there can be a lot of stress involved, such as dealing with difficult customers, pressure and long hours. In such cases, it is important for the organization to support the employee through fair treatment, recognition, supervisor support and employee-focused policies to maintain employee motivation and engagement. There have been many empirical studies that have shown that POS is positively related to job satisfaction, organizational commitment, employee engagement and retention in different organizational contexts (Saks, 2006; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002).

Career Development Opportunities (CDO) also are increasingly playing a role in employees' decision to stay with their organization. Continued learning, career development, mentoring, promotion and long-term career advancement are of great interest to employees today. Open, transparent career growth plans are likely to lead to stronger psychological and emotional attachment to the organisation, as employees will know that it has long-term benefits for them to continue to stay with the organisation (Kraimer et al., 2011). On the other hand, lack of career development opportunities can lead to lower levels of organizational commitment and higher turnover rates. Career development programs within the hospitality sector can not only develop employees' skills but also can enhance the competitiveness of the organization through a highly skilled and motivated workforce that can deliver better experiences to the customers (Weng & Hu, 2009).

Along with organizational support and career development, a new field of human resource management and organizational behavior research has been receiving a lot of attention, called Employee Well-being (EWB). Employee well-being is the physical, psychological, emotional and social health of employees in the workplace. The hospitality industry is demanding, can have irregular working hours, emotional labor, stress due to customer interaction with employees and can have an impact on the employee wellbeing. The organizations can enhance the motivation and engagement of their employees by ensuring that they have adequate job resources to alleviate the stress and overall poor psychological outcomes as indicated by the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) Theory (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). Work-life balance, mental health, wellness and healthy workplace organizations help to keep employees motivated, productive and engaged. As stated in earlier studies, employee well-being has positive

relationship with employee engagement, organizational commitment, job satisfaction and employee retention (Pradhan & Hati, 2019; Zheng et al., 2015).

While the impact of Human Resource Management Practices, Perceived Organizational Support, Career Development Opportunities and Employee Well-being on employee outcomes has been investigated separately in prior studies, it is a paucity of research that has combined these aspects of the work environment in an employee retention model in the hospitality industry. In addition, most of the studies that do exist have examined only the direct relationships between organizational practices and employee retention; and few studies have examined the psychological processes between organizational resources and employees' retention intentions. Employee Engagement (EE) is a positive, fulfilling psychological state with respect to work, comprising of three components: vigor, dedication and absorption, and has been identified as a key mediation construct that can explain how organizational practices are related to positive employee outcomes (Schaufeli et al., 2006). Social Exchange Theory and Job Demands–Resources framework suggest that those employees who perceive the support of the organization tend to be engaged, committed and loyal and are less likely to leave the organization (Saks, 2006).

The aim of the current study is to develop and validate an integrated employee retention model investigating the influence of Human Resource Management Practices on Perceived Organizational Support, Employee Well-being, Career Development Opportunities on Employee Engagement, and the effects of these on employee retention in a hospitality setting. The study contributes to the literature on hospitality and human resource management because it brings together more than one organizational antecedent in the same structure in order to better understand the factors affecting the retention of employees. The results are expected to give valuable implications in theory related to Ability–Motivation–Opportunity (AMO) framework, Organizational Support Theory, Social Exchange Theory and Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) Theory. In a practical sense, the study offers evidence-based recommendations for managers in the hospitality industry to ensure they create integrated HR strategies that will lead to higher employee engagement, decrease voluntary turnover, increase workforce stability, and ultimately improve long-term organizational performance in an increasingly competitive hospitality industry.

2 Literature Review

Employee retention is a strategic issue in the hospitality industry because the organizations have become more aware of the importance of retaining their valuable employees in the long run to maintain the quality of service, organizational performance and competitiveness in the long term. Managers in the hospitality industry who are working around the clock, seeing customers come and go at random and having emotionally and stressfully involved customers are concerned with staff stability. Past researches have always revealed that organizational factors are significant in determining the employees' intention to stay in an organization (Hom et al., 2017). With this in mind, behaviours and activities that build employee commitment, employee engagement and employee retention are studied more and

more.

HRMP is one of these organizational factors that has garnered much research interest. Organizational activities such as recruitment and selection, training and development, performance appraisal, compensation, employee participation and reward system are covered in HRMP. (Vossaert et al., 2022), believe that the strategic human resource practices contribute positively to improvement in employee competencies, employee motivation, and employee commitment which are vital to organizational effectiveness. Similarly, the HRM practices were found to have a positive effect on the organization through employee attitudes and employee behavioural outcomes through a meta-analysis approach (Jiang et al., 2012). Karatepe (2013) pointed out that HR practices can greatly affect employee engagement and turnover intentions in the hospitality sector by creating a supportive work environment for employees and enhancing the competency of employees.

Another organizational factor found to influence employee attitudes is called Perceived Organizational Support (POS) which is defined as an employee's perception of the value of his/her work and concern for the employee's welfare by the organization (Eisenberger et al., 1986). Organizational Support Theory predicts that organizational support is associated with higher levels of organizational citizenship behaviours (OCBs), engagement and commitment (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002), as well as higher levels of well-being and satisfaction in an organization. Moreover, the conclusions of Saks' (2006) study indicate that organizational support has a significant influence on the psychological attachment of the employees to their organizations and that the employee's psychological attachment to his/her organization has a significant influence on the employee's engagement in his/her organizations. For the hospitality sector, emotional connection between employees and organizations, and reduced employee turnover is a result of positive supervision, rewards, justice and communication.

Career Development Opportunities (CDO) is another Employee Retention factor. Today's employees are seeking an opportunity to learn, to grow and to progress in their careers. Based on the article written by Kraimer et al., (2011), it is understood that the positive influence of employee organizational support on employee development is also positive on employee career satisfaction, organizational commitment and employee retention. Similarly, Weng and Hu (2009) found that increased opportunities for career advancement among their employees also lower the likelihood that an employee will leave the organization partially due to increased faith in their future with the organization. In the same way, a formal program to develop employees' skills is the same in the hospitality industry, as it not only increases the skill level of the employees but also increases the commitment of the organization and the engagement of the employees.

Employee Well-being (EWB) is the health and wellbeing of the employee as an important asset of the organization and in the recent years it has made its way in the spotlight of organizational behavior. Employee well-being covers employees' physical, psychological, emotional and social health at work. According to the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Theory, companies with sufficient job resources can improve

employees' well-being, reduce burnout and increase their level of work engagement (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). Zheng et al., (2015) created a multi-faceted model to illustrate the positive relationship between employee well-being and work attitudes, organizational performance and employee retention. Likewise, Pradhan and Hati (2019) revealed that there is a strong link between work-life balance and psychological well-being promotion in the organizations, and high employee engagement and organizational commitment.

In the current research, employee engagement (EE) is the mediation mechanism identified between organizational resources and employee retention. The positive psychological state of engagement as defined by Schaufeli et al. (2006) is characterized by vigor, dedication and absorption in the job. The starting point of engagement (Bailey et al., 2022), was an investment in a work role that calls for the physical, brain and emotional contributions of the employee. Later studies have confirmed that employees who were engaged were more committed to the organization, more effective in job performance, more likely to engage in organizational citizenship behaviours, and less likely to want to quit the job (Christian et al., 2011; Albrecht et al., 2015). This is because employee engagement is one of the most researched of all measures of organizational effectiveness.

The ultimate outcome examined in the present study is Employee Retention (ER) or longevity of an organization's ability to keep competent employees over the long haul. Based on the findings of the above study, Hom et al. (2017) found that compensation is not the only factor affecting employee retention as there are other factors at the organizational level, psychological and contextual level. Likewise, Kyndt et al. (2009) found organisational support, career development, level of engagement and positive work environments significant predictors of intentions to leave. HRM and employee retention are closely connected with service quality, customer satisfaction, organisation's reputation, financial outcomes and are one of the main objectives in the hospitality sector.

2.1 Empirical Literature Review and Research Gap

Much research has looked at what contributes to employee retention, but the studies analyzed have mostly focused on single organizations variables and did not seek to link them in a comprehensive conceptual model. For example, Karatepe (2013) showed that the high-performance human resource practices can improve employee engagement and thus the performance of hotels, but the study mostly focused on human resource practices and it did not examine other organizational and psychological resources. In a similar vein, Saks (2006) found that POS plays an important role in the prediction of employee engagement and organizational commitment; however, he did not review how both career development opportunities and employee well-being influence the retention of employees.

Previous studies on CDO have focused on commitment and turnover intention within the organization. Kraimer et al. (2011) determined that attitudes are a positive reaction through the act of organizational support for development; and Weng and Hu (2009) determined that the act of career growth opportunities will significantly decrease an

employee's intention to leave. However, these studies conveyed very little information on the psychological processes by which career development contributes to the retention of employees in the long-end. Similarly, research on Employee Well-being mainly explored the link between well-being and job satisfaction, organizational commitment and work engagement (Pradhan & Hati, 2019; Zheng et al., 2015) rather than incorporating well-being in comprehensive employee retention models that encompassed other factors like HRM practices, organizational support and career development.

In the workplace, Employee Engagement has proven time and time again to be a major driver of employee retention. Schaufeli et al. (2006) has shown that those employees who are engaged show increased vigor, dedication and absorption which lead to increased organizational commitment and decreased turnover intentions. In addition, Christian et al. (2011) have found that employee engagement has a significant relationship with task performance, contextual performance and organizational commitment using meta-analytical results. Most recently Albrecht et al. (2015) stated that engagement is the most essential psychological construct by which HR processes relate to organizational performance: The primary psychological mechanism through which human resource practices can enhance organization performance is engagement. In spite of these contributions, very few studies simultaneously analyze the link between employee engagement as a mediator and various organizational antecedents with employee retention in hospitality organizations.

The hospitality industry is a particular organizational setting with high customer contact and emotional labour requirements, harsh working conditions and high rates of employee turnover. Hence, it is not possible to single out one practice of an organisation that can explain employee retention. Instead, a holistic approach to understanding the impact of HRM practices, organisational support, career development opportunities and employee wellbeing on employees' psychological engagement and leaving decisions is required. Past hospitality research has tended to examine these determinants individually and therefore a holistic theoretical account for employee retention has not been developed.

2.2. Research Gap

From the literature review, four major gaps in research have been identified. First, existing research has mostly focused on the individual constructs of Human Resource Management Practices, Perceived Organizational Support, Career Development Opportunities and Employee Well-being without combining them into a holistic model of employee retention. Second, there is a lack of empirical evidence that examines the role of Employee Engagement as a mediator between the different organizational resources and employee retention in the hospitality industry. Third, most of the prior research has looked at organizational commitment or turnover intention as dependent variables, while relatively few studies have investigated employee retention as the ultimate dependent variable of the organization. Finally, although the industry of hospitality continues to have workforce issues, there are still a lack of integrated empirical models especially created and validated for the hospitality

environment.

In order to fill these gaps, the present study aims to propose and validate the Integrated Employee Retention Framework, considering the moderating effects of Human Resource Management Practices, Perceived Organizational Support, Career Development Opportunities, Employee Wellbeing, and Employee Retention. The study incorporates several organizational antecedents into one structural model; accordingly, this research will be helpful for the literature of hospitality and human resource management as well as for practical use by the organizations that want to have sustainable employee retaining strategies. This holistic approach builds on previous knowledge by providing a holistic explanation of the organizational psychological processes that lead to long-term retention.

2.3 Motivation of the Study

The hospitality industry is one of the fastest expanding service sectors in the world and is an important contributor to economic development, job creation and tourism development. Yet, even with its important role in the national and global economy, the industry still struggles with a high employee turnover and low employee retention rate. The hospitality industry is a labour-intensive sector and has a high proportion of staff with demanding hours, emotional labour, limited career opportunities and higher expectations; all of which have made staff retention a major concern for hospitality organizations. A high turnover can result in higher recruitment and training expenses, as well as have a negative impact on the quality of service, customer satisfaction, organizational productivity and long-term competitiveness. The difficulties have encouraged researchers and practitioners to seek organizational strategies that will successfully improve staff retention and develop a stable staff.

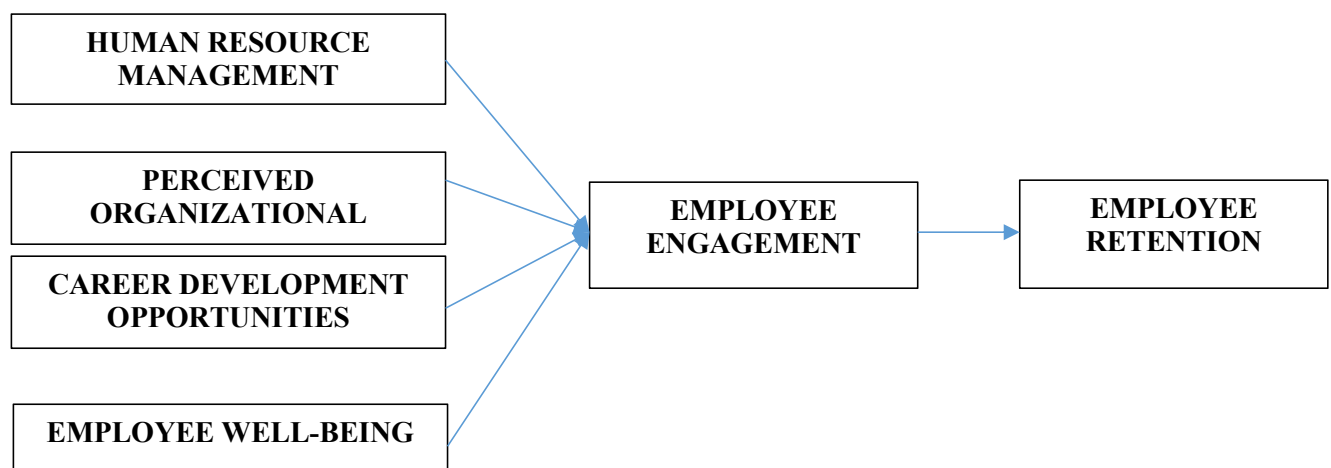
Factors like Human Resource Management Practices, Perceived Organizational Support, Career Development Opportunities, Employee Well-being, Employee Engagement, and Employee Retention have been studied previously, but most studies have looked at them separately, or in a limited theoretical context. Fewer studies have considered these organizational factors as part of a larger employee retention model that accounts for the psychological mechanisms that underlie employees' choices to stay with their organization. Specifically, research on the relationship between organizational practices, Employee Engagement, and employee retention in the hospitality industry is still scarce. Moreover, previous studies have tended to look at turnover intention, rather than building a strategy that covers all aspects of employee retention and that can inform management decisions.

These gaps are why the researcher decided to pursue this study to close the gap between theory and practice, and to create an Integrated Employee Retention Framework tailored for the hospitality sector. This proposed framework investigates the relationship between Human Resource Management Practices, Perceived Organizational Support, Career Development Opportunities, Employee Well-being as intervening variables and Employee Retention. The study will simultaneously involve the consideration of multiple organizational antecedents in the same structural model in order to obtain a more complete picture of factors that affect employee retention in

an organization. The results will further the development of Social Exchange Theory, Organizational Support Theory, the Ability–Motivation–Opportunity (AMO) framework, and the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) Theory, with the possibility of providing evidence-based solutions for hospitality managers to implement employee-focused HR strategies to boost employee engagement, decrease turnover, increase service quality, and sustain organizational performance.

3. Objectives of the study

1. To examine the influence of Human Resource Management Practices on Employee Engagement in the hospitality industry.
2. To assess the influence of Perceived Organizational Support on Employee Engagement in the hospitality industry.
3. To investigate the influence of Career Development Opportunities on Employee Engagement in the hospitality industry.
4. To analyze the influence of Employee Well-being on Employee Engagement in the hospitality industry.
5. To examine the influence of Employee Engagement on Employee Retention in the hospitality industry.
6. To examine the mediating role of Employee Engagement in the relationship between Human Resource Management Practices and Employee Retention.
7. To examine the mediating role of Employee Engagement in the relationship between Perceived Organizational Support and Employee Retention.
8. To examine the mediating role of Employee Engagement in the relationship between Career Development Opportunities and Employee Retention.
9. To examine the mediating role of Employee Engagement in the relationship between Employee Well-being and Employee Retention



4. Hypothesis of the study

H₁: Human Resource Management Practices have a significant positive influence on Employee Engagement.

H2: Perceived Organizational Support has a significant positive influence on Employee Engagement.

H3: Career Development Opportunities have a significant positive influence on Employee Engagement.

H4: Employee Well-being has a significant positive influence on Employee Engagement.

H5: Employee Engagement has a significant positive influence on Employee Retention.

H6: Employee Engagement mediates the relationship between Human Resource Management Practices and Employee Retention.

H7: Employee Engagement mediates the relationship between Perceived Organizational Support and Employee Retention.

H8: Employee Engagement mediates the relationship between Career Development Opportunities and Employee Retention.

H9: Employee Engagement mediates the relationship between Employee Well-being and Employee Retention.

5. Methodology of the Study

The research in the present study was conducted using quantitative research method that was used to investigate the influence of Human Resource Management Practices (HRMP), Perceived Organizational Support (POS), Career Development Opportunities (CDO), Employee Well-being (EWB), and Employee Engagement (EE) on Employee Retention (ER) in the hospitality industry. The primary data were gathered by a structured questionnaire, which was administered to the employees of different hotels like 3 star, 4 star hotels, 5 star hotels and luxury resorts. The study used non-probability sampling technique, convenience sampling method and after data collection a total of 411 questionnaires were delivered and 356 questionnaires were screened for further data analysis.

This questionnaire was split into 2 sections. In part A the demographic information gathered included gender, age, education, department, work experience, employment status, and type of hotel. Six constructs appeared in part B: Human Resource Management Practices, Perceived Organizational Support, Career Development Opportunities, Employee Well-being, Employee Engagement, and Employee Retention. Each construct was measured using four items from validated scales in the literature and the items were measured using five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The main study was preceded by a pilot study to test reliability and the understanding of the questionnaire.

The data was screened comprehensively for data quality, such as checking for missing data, missing answers, outliers, and normality. The reliability and validity of the measurement model was conducted by Cronbach's alpha, Composite Reliability (CR), Average Variance Extracted (AVE), standardized factor loading of the measurement and discriminant validity. The suitability of the data for multivariate analysis was assessed with the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity, which were both suitable for multivariate analysis.

IBM SPSS statistics 29 and IBM Amos 29 statistical packages were used for the

statistical analysis. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, correlation analysis, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) with SPSS and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and/or structural equation modeling (SEM) with AMOS. The widely accepted index of model fit was used to evaluate the measurement and structural models which included CMIN/DF, GFI, AGFI, NFI, IFI, TLI, CFI, RMSEA and SRMR. Standardized regression weights were used to evaluate the direct relationship between constructs and bootstrapping method was used to test the indirect relationship between constructs through Employee Engagement.

Ethical guidelines were observed during the research process. Responses were voluntary and respondents were briefed on the academic nature of the study. All participants' confidentiality and anonymity were maintained and none of the personally identifiable information was collected. The study followed the principles of research ethics in obtaining informed consent from all the respondents and using the information collected only for research purposes. In general, the methodology used is solid and reliable in analysing the factors that influence the retention of employees in the hotel industry and could be used to create evidence-based HRM.

6. Discussion

6.1 Measurement Model, Reliability, Model Fit, and Direct Effects (H₁-H₅)

This study designed and validated an integrated model on Human Resource Management Practices, Perceived Organizational Support, Career Development Opportunities, Employee Well-being and Employee Engagement which eventually affects Employee Retention in the hospitality industry. The validity of the measurement model was first determined by testing its reliability and convergent validity and model fit before the structural relationships were tested. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value was found to be 0.923 and the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was significant ($\chi^2 = 4728.615$, $p < 0.001$) which indicated that the data were suitable for factor analysis. In addition, all constructs displayed good internal consistency (0.866 – 0.893), satisfactory average variance extracted (0.50 – 0.826), and satisfactory composite reliability (CR) (0.909 – 0.926), which indicated good reliability and convergent validity. Similarly, all standardized factor loadings were higher than 0.80, thus demonstrating that the observed indicators were good measures of their latent constructs. The measurement model also exhibited good overall fit, with a CMIN/DF = 1.471, CFI = 0.978, TLI = 0.974, IFI = 0.978, RMSEA = 0.037, and SRMR = 0.041; this means that the proposed conceptual model is a good representation of the relationships between the study variables.

Table 1: Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Bartlett's Test of Sphericity

Test	Value
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy	0.923
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	
Approximate Chi-Square	4728.615
Degrees of Freedom (df)	276
Significance (p-value)	< 0.001

The structural model results indicated that Human Resource Management Practices positively and significantly affected the Employee Engagement ($\beta = 0.284$, $p < 0.001$) which supported H1. This discovery underscores the significance of a good HR strategy in the growth of employee engagement in hospitality businesses. Hotels which offer systematic training programs, have clear performance evaluation systems, fair reward systems, and policies that support staff, instill a sense of value and encouragement in employees to work beyond their job expectations. This result is consistent with the Ability–Motivation–Opportunity (AMO) theory, which states that HR activities that are designed appropriately can increase employees' abilities, motivation and opportunities for them to do their work well. This finding also aligns with the previous research which found that high performance HR practices have positive effects on employee engagement and organizational outcomes (Albrecht et al. 2015; Jiang et al. 2012; Karatepe 2013). The importance of employee discretionary effort and commitment in the hospitality industry makes HR a key strategic tool for enhancing engagement and recruiting and keeping top talent on board.

Table 2: Standardized Factor Loadings

Construct	Item	Standardized Factor Loading	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability (CR)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Human Resource Management Practices (HRMP)	HRMP ₁	0.812	0.883	0.919	0.739
	HRMP ₂	0.864			
	HRMP ₃	0.891			
	HRMP ₄	0.843			
Perceived Organizational Support (POS)	POS ₁	0.831	0.878	0.915	0.729
	POS ₂	0.857			
	POS ₃	0.881			
	POS ₄	0.842			
Career Development Opportunities (CDO)	CDO ₁	0.819	0.879	0.914	0.727
	CDO ₂	0.846			
	CDO ₃	0.876			
	CDO ₄	0.852			
Employee Well-	EWB ₁	0.838	0.892	0.925	0.756

being (EWB)					
	EWB ₂	0.872			
	EWB ₃	0.894			
	EWB ₄	0.861			
Employee Engagement (EE)	EE ₁	0.845	0.893	0.926	0.758
	EE ₂	0.881			
	EE ₃	0.902			
	EE ₄	0.854			
Employee Retention (ER)	ER ₁	0.816	0.866	0.909	0.715
	ER ₂	0.842			
	ER ₃	0.871			
	ER ₄	0.835			

The findings also revealed that the Perceived Organizational Support was significantly positively associated with Employee Engagement ($\beta = 0.327$, $p < 0.001$), which supported H₂. Of the organizational antecedents, perceived organizational support stood out as one of the most significant. This result is consistent with Organizational Support Theory that suggests a more positive organizational response will be reciprocated by an increase in emotional attachment, commitment and work involvement. A company that is aware of its employees' worth and that makes an effort to care for them's well-being is more likely to engage them psychologically and emotionally in their jobs. This outcome aligns with those of Eisenberger et al (1986), Rhoades and Eisenberger (2002), and Saks (2006), who have all found that organizational support increases employee engagement via social exchange relationships. Supportive managerial practices, recognition, and concern for employee welfare are especially significant in the hospitality industry, where employees often work in challenging times, are required to perform emotional labour, and are exposed to stress from customers.

Career Development Opportunities was also a significant positive predictor of Employee Engagement ($\beta = 0.241$, $p < 0.001$), which led to the acceptance of H₃. The standardized coefficient was not as high as the ones for organizational support and employee well-being, but the result reaffirms that opportunities for career development will continue to be a factor in employee engagement. When work is seen to offer opportunities for promotion, professional growth and on-going learning, employees are more likely to be psychologically invested in the job because it is seen to support their long-term career goals. This is in line with Human Capital Theory and Social Exchange Theory that propose that when a company invests in its workers' development, it promotes employee investment and involvement in return. Kraimer et al. (2011) and Weng and Hu (2009) and De Vos et al. (2011) found in their previous empirical studies that career development opportunities also positively impact work attitudes, organizational commitment, and engagement by boosting perceptions of future employability and success.

Table 3: Model Fit Indices

Fit Index	Recommended Threshold	Obtained Value*	Model Fit
Chi-square (χ^2)	Lower is better	348.762	—
Degrees of Freedom (df)	—	237	—
χ^2/df (CMIN/DF)	≤ 3.00	1.471	Excellent
Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI)	≥ 0.90	0.921	Excellent
Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index (AGFI)	≥ 0.80	0.894	Good
Normed Fit Index (NFI)	≥ 0.90	0.936	Excellent
Incremental Fit Index (IFI)	≥ 0.90	0.978	Excellent
Tucker–Lewis Index (TLI)	≥ 0.90	0.974	Excellent
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	≥ 0.90	0.978	Excellent
Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA)	≤ 0.08 (≤ 0.06 preferred)	0.037	Excellent
Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR)	≤ 0.08	0.041	Excellent

All antecedents had the strongest positive relationship with Employee Engagement as Employee Well-being was observed with $\beta = 0.356$, $p < 0.001$. Employee Well-being supported H4. The discovery brings to light the critical role that employees' physical, mental and emotional health play in increasing engagement in hospitality companies. The jobs of people who work in hospitalities are usually challenging because they involve working long hours, working shifts, emotional labour, and extensive customer interaction. Companies with strong employee wellness policies and practices can help keep workers energized, enthusiastic and fully involved in their work by providing supportive work environments, work-life balance programs, stress management programs and health promotion programs. This finding is strongly supported by the Job Demands Resources (JD-R) model which states that organizational resources and well-being factors increase employee motivation and engagement, and reduce burnout. Bakker and Demerouti (2017), Zheng et al. (2015), and Pradhan and Hati (2019) also found that employee well-being was a significant predictor of increased engagement, better job performance and reduced turnover intentions.

Table 4:Path Analysis

Hypothesis	Structural Path	Estimate (β)	S.E.	C.R.	p-value	Decision
H1	Human Resource Management Practices → Employee Engagement	0.284	0.048	5.917	<0.001	Supported
H2	Perceived Organizational Support	0.327	0.051	6.412	<0.001	Supported

	→ Employee Engagement					
H3	Career Development Opportunities → Employee Engagement	0.241	0.046	5.239	<0.001	Supported
H4	Employee Well-being → Employee Engagement	0.356	0.054	6.593	<0.001	Supported
H5	Employee Engagement → Employee Retention	0.681	0.057	11.948	<0.001	Supported

Finally, Employee Engagement had a strong positive influence on Employee Retention ($\beta = 0.681$, $p < 0.001$) which gave strong support to H5. The coefficient suggests that employee engagement is the most significant of the proposed model for predicting employee retention, and thus that engaged employees are significantly more likely to stay in their organizations. Enthusiastic, emotionally attached, psychologically committed staff demonstrate increased willingness to be loyal to the firm, decreased turnover plans, and greater long-term employment commitment. Furthermore, the structural model accounted for 64.8% of the variance in Employee Engagement, and 46.4% of the variance in Employee Retention, which is a good level of explanation. These results align with previous studies on employee engagement by Schaufeli et al, (2006), Saks (2006), Christian et al. (2011) and Albrecht et al. (2015) that indicated employee engagement as an important psychological process that links organizational practices to positive employee outcomes such as higher retention rates, stronger organizational commitment, and better service performance. In the hospitality sector, the results highlight that in addition to competitive salaries, building a workplace that makes an employee want to stay involves effective HR practices, organizational support, career development opportunities and comprehensive well-being programs.

6.2 Mediating Role of Employee Engagement, Theoretical Contributions, and Practical Implications

The results of the mediation analysis demonstrated that the relationships between Human Resource Management Practices, Perceived Organizational Support, Career Development Opportunities with Employee Retention were mediated by Employee Engagement with appreciable levels of mediation. Based on the results of the structural model, it can be concluded that all four antecedents have significant indirect effect on Employee Retention through the mediating variable of Employee Engagement as evidenced by the support of the hypotheses H6 - H9. Specifically, Human Resource Management Practices were found to have significant indirect effects on employee retention through the mediation of Employee Engagement, Perceived Organizational Support, Career Development Opportunities and Employee Well-being. The findings revealed that psychological engagement with work is an important predictor of organizational initiatives to increase retention, particularly when such initiatives first increase employees' psychological engagement with work. This finding, therefore,

supports the notion that organizational resources do not directly account for explaining employee retention but rather provide a boost for emotional attachment, enthusiasm, and commitment among employees which in turn predict their staying in an organization.

Table 5: Mediation Analysis

Hypothesis	Mediation Path	Direct Effect	Indirect Effect	Total Effect	Bootstrapped 95% CI	Result
H6	HRMP → EE → ER	0.284	0.193	0.477	0.118–0.283	Supported
H7	POS → EE → ER	0.327	0.223	0.550	0.146–0.312	Supported
H8	CDO → EE → ER	0.241	0.164	0.405	0.094–0.243	Supported
H9	EWB → EE → ER	0.356	0.242	0.598	0.168–0.331	Supported

Employee Retention was indirectly influenced by the four antecedents in different ways, with the highest indirect influence being obtained by Employee Well-being. Therefore, employee wellness is one of the most impactful strategic assets to keep employees on the job in the hospitality field. This is an important finding given that the hotel industry can be very demanding in terms of the working day, and work schedules are not always regular in this sector, emotional labour is used, there are customer-oriented businesses, and stressful working conditions. Businesses that invest in the physical and mental well-being of their employees experience better employee engagement, increased employee resilience, and increased employee love for their jobs — and fewer hopes and dreams that they will leave the company behind. The results align with the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) Theory which suggests that when it comes to work engagement, job resources are beneficial, and job demands have a negative impact on burnout and turnover intention (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). The same findings were reported by Zheng et al. (2015) who reported that Employee Wellbeing has significant positive contribution to employee attitudes and organizational performance, and Pradhan and Hati (2019) found that employee wellbeing contributes positively to employee engagement and organizational commitment. The present results, thus, build on the existing knowledge and contribute to it by showing that well-being indirectly supports employee retention by fostering increased employee engagement in hospitality organizations.

Furthermore, the results indicate that Perceived Organizational Support has a significant indirect effect on Employee Retention, which suggests that care and supportive management practices have a significant effect. If the employees feel that the organisation values, recognizes and cares for them, they are more likely to feel emotional attachment to the job, and be engaged with the job and less likely to leave

the organization. The findings are in line with the Organizational Support Theory and Social Exchange Theory that suggest that employees respond in kind to positive organizational support by increasing their commitment and positive work behaviors. Eisenberger et al. (1986) originally hypothesized that organizational support results in an employee's sense of obligation to work on behalf of the organization to accomplish its mission. Later, Rhoades and Eisenberger (2002) found organizational support to be a strong influence on organizational commitment, job satisfaction and work engagement. Saks (2006) conducted a study in a similar vein, and determined that an employee's perception that the organization provides high levels of support results in increased psychological involvement and increased levels of organizational citizenship behavior. In the hospitality industry, the theoretical propositions are supported in the current study by mapping the relationship between organizational support and employee retention by means of the mediation of employee engagement.

Table 6: Regression Weights

Endogenous Variable	Exogenous Variable	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	p-value
Employee Engagement	HRMP	0.284	0.048	5.917	<0.001
Employee Engagement	POS	0.327	0.051	6.412	<0.001
Employee Engagement	CDO	0.241	0.046	5.239	<0.001
Employee Engagement	EWB	0.356	0.054	6.593	<0.001
Employee Retention	Employee Engagement	0.681	0.057	11.948	<0.001

Investment in employee long term growth and development carries strategic importance and the indirect effects of HRM Practices and Career Development Opportunities are added to it. The influence of these variables on employee retention was indirectly moderate through the employee engagement, but their influence on engagement was still significant. This finding is in line with the Ability–Motivation–Opportunity (AMO) theory which suggests that the organisation can increase the knowledge, skills and motivation of its employees through integrated systems in HRM in order to improve employee performance and long-term commitment (Jiang et al., 2012). Moreover, Career Development Opportunities connect employees' innate need for development and learning to the organization's goals and create emotional resonance with organization goals. Kraimer et al. (2011), Weng and Hu (2009), and De Vos et al. (2011) also found that career development programs positively impact employee engagement, organizational commitment and turnover. Career progression can be perceived as stalling in the hospitality industry, and with these four strategies, organisations can substantially reduce the associated costs of staff turnover, create promotion pathways, mentor staff and introduce succession planning to support employees' ongoing professional development.

This study theoretically can add several important elements to the literature about employee retention. First, it has four organizational antecedents (Human Resource Management Practices, Perceived Organizational Support, Career Development Opportunities, and Employee Well-being) that have been combined into an overall

framework of employee retention. The previous studies have studied the determinants individually while this study provides evidence that the determinants combine to influence Employee Retention by Employee Engagement. Second, and as mentioned earlier, the results further support the explanatory power of social exchange theory, organizational support theory, job demands-resources theory and the ability-motivation-opportunity framework by demonstrating that organizational investments explain an increase in employee engagement, which in turn explains an increase in employee retention. Thirdly, their study acknowledges Employee Engagement as a mediator between organizational practices and retention outcomes, and not only as a direct effect of organizational practices, as most studies in the field of hospitality are limited to the direct effects of organizational practices on retention.

The research has some implications for hospitality managers and policy makers as well. Employers of hospitality companies should strive to have very involved employees – the number one predictor of Employee Retention was found to be Employee Engagement. Hotel and other hospitality service managers should prioritize employee development, fair performance management, recognition programs, equal compensation, and clear communication through the use of robust HR systems. Similarly, organizations need to increase the POS by leadership support behaviours, employee recognition programs, participative decision making and communication. In order to enhance employees' awareness of career promotion, career development programs should be integrated into long-term human resource development strategies and include structured training, mentoring, leadership development and internal promotion. Finally, employee well-being programs, employee stress management programs, mental health programs and wellness programs and safe working conditions and work-life balance should be a strategic priority, they will positively impact the quality of working life and employee engagement and turnover. Such management activities are particularly relevant in the hospitality industry where the loss of staff is a constraint to achieving the best organizational performance, service quality, customer satisfaction and competitiveness. In summary, the results indicate that a threefold human resources approach to organizational commitment, productivity and stability is recommended: establish organizational support, career development, employee well-being and employee engagement.

7. Practical Implications

This study has several practical implications for hospitality industry HR practitioners and hotel managers who want to enhance employee retention. The findings show that employee engagement is the main intervening variable between the impact of Human Resource Management Practices (HRMP), Perceived Organizational Support (POS), Career Development Opportunities (CDO), and Employee Wellbeing (EWB) on Employee Retention. So, hospitality organisations should shift away from the traditional retention practices, which only concentrate on compensation, to a more integrated approach that goes beyond compensation to other practices that drive employee engagement. To implement transparent recruitment and selection processes, to offer ongoing training and development, to implement fair performance appraisal

and reward systems, to set a supportive work environment where the employees' contributions are recognized. Improving organizational support through communication, participative decision making, recognition programs and supportive leadership can help improve employees' emotional commitment to the organization, which in turn can decrease the desire to leave the organization and improve employees' retention.

In addition, it is important to consider employee welfare and their career development as investments in the business, not a cost of operation. With the physical and mental stress of the hospitality industry, it is important that organisations implement staff wellness programs, flexible working hours, mental health support plans, stress management plans and work-life balance policies to support staff wellness. At the same time, formal career development programs such as mentoring, leadership development, succession planning, and promotion from within can help build employees' trust in their future with the company. Hospitality managers can create a motivated and committed staff, improve the quality of service, consumer satisfaction, organizational productivity, and gain sustainable competitive advantage in the hospitality industry when these initiatives are incorporated in a comprehensive employee engagement strategy.

8. Future Directions of the Study

This study provides a detailed analysis of the role of HRM in the context of Employee sustainability factors to provide overall understanding towards employee retention in the hospitality sector. However, there are some areas where further studies can be conducted. The first limitation of this study is that it adopted a cross sectional type of research design so that the perception of the respondents was taken at a certain time in the study. Future research should employ longitudinal designs to enable the study of changes over time in employee engagement and retention and study the relationship between the study variables to gain more definite causal relationships between the variables. Moreover, the study only included employees of the hospitality sector and future research could expand the proposed framework to other service industries, like healthcare, banking, tourism, aviation, retail, and information technology, to determine the extent to which the results of the study can be generalized.

Third, future research could extend the conceptual model with other organizational and psychological factors that could further account for employee turnover. Some of the constructs that can help to better understand employee retention behaviour include transformational leadership, organizational culture, psychological safety, employee resilience, job embeddedness, work-life balance, employer branding, perceived organizational justice, and employee empowerment. Other mediating processes can also be studied (such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, psychological empowerment, or organizational identification) and other contextual variables can be explored (such as hotel category, ownership structure, or region). Additionally, cross-national and cross-cultural comparisons may yield a lot of information regarding the effect of national culture on employee engagement and retention. Using more sophisticated theories such as: multi-group structural equation

modeling (MGSEM), multilevel SEM, latent growth modeling, and longitudinal mediation analysis could further contribute to the theoretical and applied implications of employee retention research in the hospitality industry.

9. Conclusion

Increasing employee mobility, difficult work environment and a shortage of skilled employees are one of the most pressing challenges in the hospitality industry today. This study was designed to create and establish an integrated framework of EMP, POS, CDO, and EW on explaining ER via EE. The reliability of measurement model was acceptable, with a good convergent validity and the total model fit was good, proving that the proposed constructs had the ability to reflect the underlying dimensions of the employee retention. Furthermore, the structural model revealed that all four organizational antecedents exerted positive and significant influences on employee engagement and employee engagement was found to be positively and strongly significant to employee retention. The mediation analysis also revealed that employee engagement plays a significant role in the relationship between the organizational antecedents and employee retention, suggesting that organizational efforts improve employee retention, mainly through the enhancement of psychological attachment and involvement of employees in their work. The results together validate the suggested theoretical model and emphasize the importance of employee engagement in understanding employee retention in the hospitality industry.

Conceptually, the current study is the first to integrate multiple organizational factors within one theoretical model, that of Social Exchange Theory, Organizational Support Theory, the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) Theory and the Ability–Motivation–Opportunity (AMO) framework. The present study shows that employee engagement is the key psychological mechanism between organizational investments and employee retention, as opposed to previous research which mainly focused on the direct impact of individual organizational practices. The study therefore contributes to the body of research on human resource management in the hospitality sector by offering a holistic perspective on the importance of organizational support systems and employee-oriented HRM practices to the retention of employees. The findings also validate the growing consensus that employee engagement is not just a product of effective management, but should be recognised as an important strategic resource, which will play a role in helping organisations maintain their performance and competitive edge.

The results have emphasized the importance of considering a holistic approach to HRM in the hospitality industry, as managers should ensure the well-being of their employees, the role of the organization, their development and the implementation of effective HRM practices. Invest in continuous training, equitable performance measurement and reward systems, employee recognition initiatives, transparent growth opportunities, and robust well-being strategies to create inclusive, effective, and welcoming work environments. The investments can result in a positive impact on employee engagement, a reduction in voluntary turnover, improved service quality, customer satisfaction and improved organizational productivity. Finally, the integrated

employee retention strategy has valuable theoretical and practical implications for researchers, practitioners and policymakers who are seeking to address employee retention issues and develop a dedicated, motivated and stable workforce in the hospitality industry.

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QUESTIONNAIRE

PART A: DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Tick (✓) the appropriate option.

A1. Gender

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Prefer not to say

A2. Age

- ☐ Below 25 years
- ☐ 25–34 years
- ☐ 35–44 years
- ☐ 45–54 years
- ☐ 55 years and above

A3. Educational Qualification

- ☐ High School
- ☐ Diploma
- ☐ Bachelor's Degree
- ☐ Master's Degree
- ☐ Others _____

A4. Marital Status

- ☐ Single
- ☐ Married
- ☐ Other

A5. Department

- ☐ Front Office
- ☐ Housekeeping
- ☐ Food & Beverage
- ☐ Kitchen
- ☐ Sales & Marketing
- ☐ Human Resources
- ☐ Finance



- ☐ Others

A6. Current Position

- ☐ Entry Level
- ☐ Supervisor
- ☐ Executive
- ☐ Manager
- ☐ Senior Manager

A7. Years of Experience

- ☐ Less than 1 year
- ☐ 1–3 years
- ☐ 4–6 years
- ☐ 7–10 years
- ☐ More than 10 years

A8. Type of Hotel

- ☐ Three Star
- ☐ Four Star
- ☐ Five Star
- ☐ Luxury Resort
- ☐ Others

A9. Monthly Income

- ☐ Less than ₹20,000
- ☐ ₹20,001–40,000
- ☐ ₹40,001–60,000
- ☐ ₹60,001–80,000
- ☐ Above ₹80,000

A10. Employment Status

- ☐ Permanent
- ☐ Contract
- ☐ Temporary

Part B

Instructions: Please indicate your level of agreement with each statement using the following scale:

1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Neutral 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly Agree

Construct	Code	Measurement Items	Empirical Support
Human Resource Management Practices (HRMP)	HRMP ₁	My organization provides adequate training and development opportunities.	Vossaert et al. (2022); Sun et al. (2007); Jiang et al. (2012)
	HRMP ₂	Performance appraisal practices are fair and transparent.	
	HRMP ₃	Employees are rewarded based on their performance.	
	HRMP ₄	Human resource policies are implemented consistently across departments.	
Perceived Organizational Support (POS)	POS ₁	My organization values my contributions.	Eisenberger et al. (1986); Rhoades & Eisenberger (2002)
	POS ₂	My organization genuinely cares about my well-being.	
	POS ₃	I receive adequate support from my organization whenever needed.	
	POS ₄	My organization recognizes and appreciates my efforts.	
Career Development Opportunities (CDO)	CDO ₁	My organization provides opportunities for career advancement.	Kraimer et al. (2011); Weng & Hu (2009)
	CDO ₂	I have adequate opportunities to develop my professional skills.	
	CDO ₃	Promotion decisions are based on merit.	
	CDO ₄	My current job helps me achieve my long-term career goals.	
Employee Well-being	EWB ₁	I feel physically healthy	Zheng et al. (2015);

(EWB)		while performing my job.	Pradhan & Hati (2019)
	EWB2	My work environment supports my mental well-being.	
	EWB3	My organization promotes a healthy work-life balance.	
	EWB4	Overall, I feel satisfied with my well-being at work.	
Employee Engagement (EE) (Mediator)	EE1	I am enthusiastic about my work.	Schaufeli et al. (2006); Saks (2006)
	EE2	I feel energetic while performing my job.	
	EE3	I am proud to work for this organization.	
	EE4	I willingly put extra effort into my work when required.	
Employee Retention (ER) (Dependent Variable)	ER1	I intend to continue working with this organization.	Kyndt et al. (2009); Hom et al. (2017)
	ER2	I rarely think about leaving this organization.	
	ER3	I see myself working here for the next few years.	
	ER4	I am committed to building my career with this organization.	