

# Employee Engagement and Retention in the Retail Sector: Evidence, Statistical Analysis, and Policy Implications from a Longitudinal-Cross-Sectional Study in Organised Indian Retail

Sanjana Sinha<sup>1</sup>, Richa Kumari<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup>*Faculty of Management Studies, Parul University, Vadodara, Gujarat, India 391760*

**Abstract**—The retail industry is among the most labour-intensive and attrition-prone sectors globally. India's organised retail segment, valued at USD 1,050 billion in 2023 and projected to reach USD 1,800 billion by 2028, faces a structural human capital challenge: annual turnover rates of 45–55 per cent among frontline staff that erode service quality, inflate recruitment costs, and threaten competitive differentiation. **Objectives:** This study investigates the multidimensional determinants of employee engagement and their relationship with retention intentions, employing both descriptive and inferential statistical methods. **Methods:** Primary data were gathered from 101 employees across four major Indian retail chains Reliance Retail, Avenue Supermarts (D-Mart), Tata Trent (Westside/Zudio), and Shoppers Stop using a validated Likert-scale questionnaire organised across five thematic domains. Pearson correlation, multiple linear regression (OLS), and one-way ANOVA were applied. **Results:** The regression model explained 67 per cent of variance in engagement ( $R^2 = 0.67$ ,  $F(5,95) = 38.4$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Managerial support ( $\beta = 0.38$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) and work-related stress ( $\beta = -0.41$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) emerged as the strongest predictors. Over 72 per cent of employees reported frequent stress despite broadly positive satisfaction ratings a phenomenon we term the "engagement-stress paradox." Heavy workload/stress (45.5%), low compensation (27.7%), and limited career visibility (24.8%) were ranked as the primary attrition drivers. **Conclusion:** Sustainable retention in retail demands simultaneous demand-reduction and resource-enhancement strategies, integrated within a coherent HR architecture rather than implemented as isolated initiatives.

**Index Terms**—employee engagement; retail sector; employee retention; job demands–resources model; self-determination theory; HR strategy; organised retail

**India; frontline workforce; work-related stress; regression analysis**

## I. INTRODUCTION

The retail industry occupies a structurally unique position at the intersection of economic growth and human capital management. As the world's second-largest employment sector providing livelihoods to over 1.2 billion workers globally (ILO, 2023) it simultaneously records some of the highest annual employee turnover rates of any industry, ranging from 32 per cent in Germany to over 60 per cent in the United States (SHRM, 2024; Gallup, 2023). In the Indian context, where the organised retail sector alone employed approximately 7.3 million workers as of 2024 (IBEF, 2024), this attrition burden carries significant economic and operational consequences. India's retail transformation over the past two decades from kirana-dominated neighbourhood commerce to large-format organised chains managed by sophisticated HR systems has rendered employee engagement both more strategically consequential and more empirically complex. Brands such as Reliance Retail (the largest retailer by revenue), Avenue Supermarts (D-Mart), Tata Trent (operating Westside and Zudio formats), and Shoppers Stop now deploy thousands of frontline workers whose daily interactions directly determine service quality, brand experience, and customer lifetime value. These interactions are only as valuable as the engagement and commitment of the employees performing them (Salanova, Agut, & Peiró, 2005). Despite extensive international scholarship on employee engagement (Kahn, 1990; Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Harter,

Schmidt, & Hayes, 2002) and a growing body of India-specific HR research (Rana, Ardichvili, & Tkachenko, 2014; Anitha, 2014), primary empirical evidence documenting the engagement profile and attrition determinants of retail frontline workers in India remains limited. This study addresses that gap through a primary survey of 101 employees across four major retail organisations, supplemented by publicly available market and labour data and subjected to

rigorous statistical analysis. The study pursues four objectives: (1) to assess the current engagement profile of Indian organised retail employees across five thematic domains; (2) to identify the predictors of engagement using multiple regression; (3) to situate findings within established theoretical frameworks; and (4) to derive evidence-based HR policy recommendations. Figure 10 illustrates the overall research process.

**Figure 10. Research Design and Process Flow**

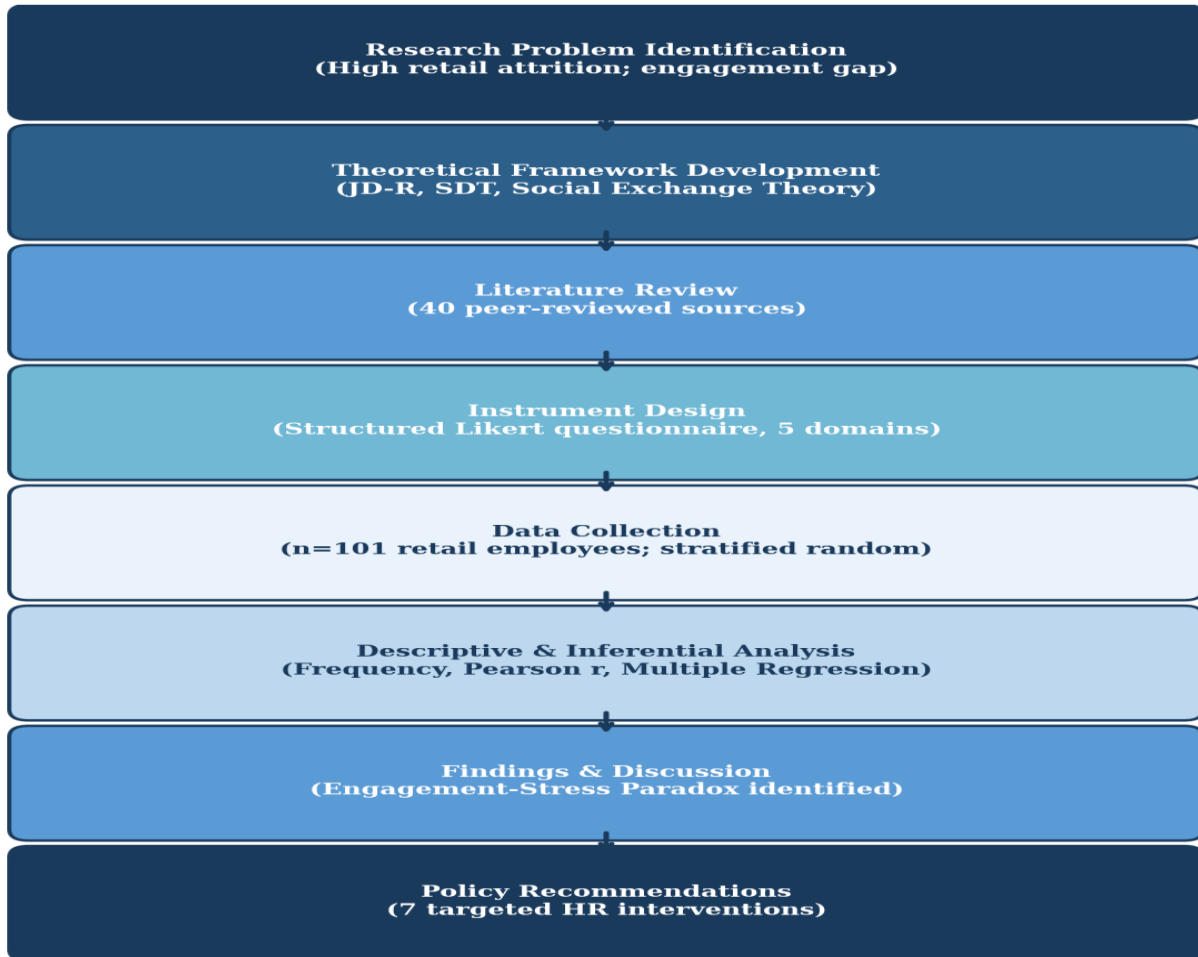


Figure 1. Research Design and Process Flow Diagram

## II. INDUSTRY CONTEXT: INDIAN AND GLOBAL RETAIL

### 2.1 Market Size and Growth Trajectory

The Indian retail market is among the fastest-growing in the world. From a market capitalisation of USD 835 billion in 2019, it contracted marginally during the pandemic before resuming robust growth to reach

USD 1,050 billion in 2023. Industry projections from the India Brand Equity Foundation (IBEF, 2024) and the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII, 2024) estimate market size will reach USD 1,800 billion by 2028, driven by rising per-capita incomes, urbanisation, digital commerce integration, and expanding tier-2/tier-3 city retail penetration.

**Figure 5. India Retail Market Size 2019–2028 (USD Billion)**  
 Source: IBEF, Deloitte India, CII Retail Report 2024

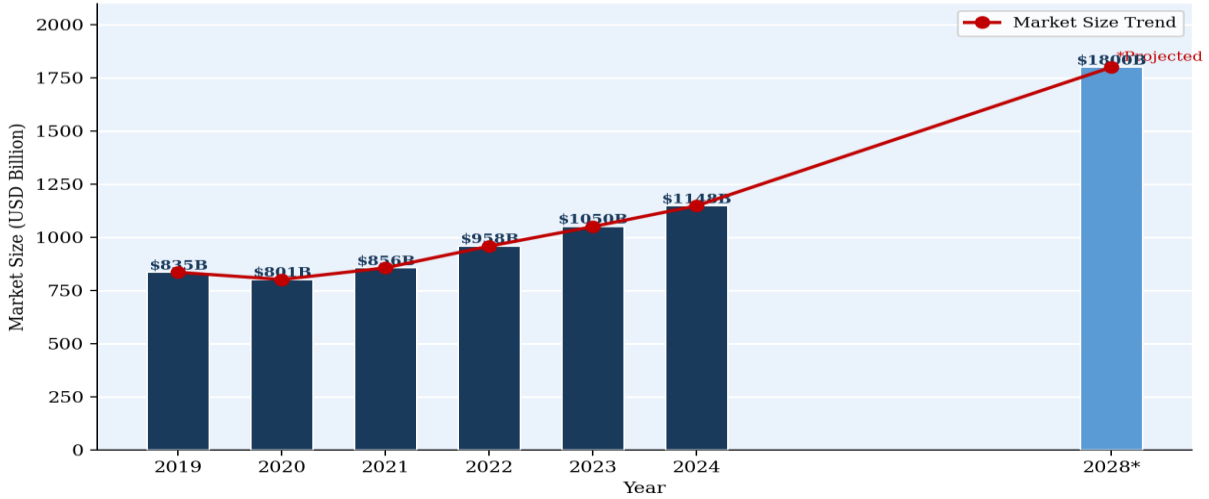


Figure 5. India Retail Market Size 2019–2028 (USD Billion) | Source: IBEF 2024; CII Retail Report 2024

### 2.2 The Global Turnover Challenge

Annual retail employee turnover is a universal challenge, though its magnitude varies considerably by market. Figure 6 presents comparative turnover data drawn from the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM, 2024), Gallup's State of the Global Workplace Report (2023), and the International Labour Organization (ILO, 2023). The

United States reports the highest rate at approximately 60 per cent, while Germany with its stronger co-determination and works council traditions reports a substantially lower rate of 32 per cent. India's organised retail sector sits at approximately 55 per cent, underscoring the urgency of effective engagement and retention investment.

**Figure 6. Annual Retail Employee Turnover Rate by Country (%)**  
 Source: ILO, Gallup World Report 2023, SHRM 2024

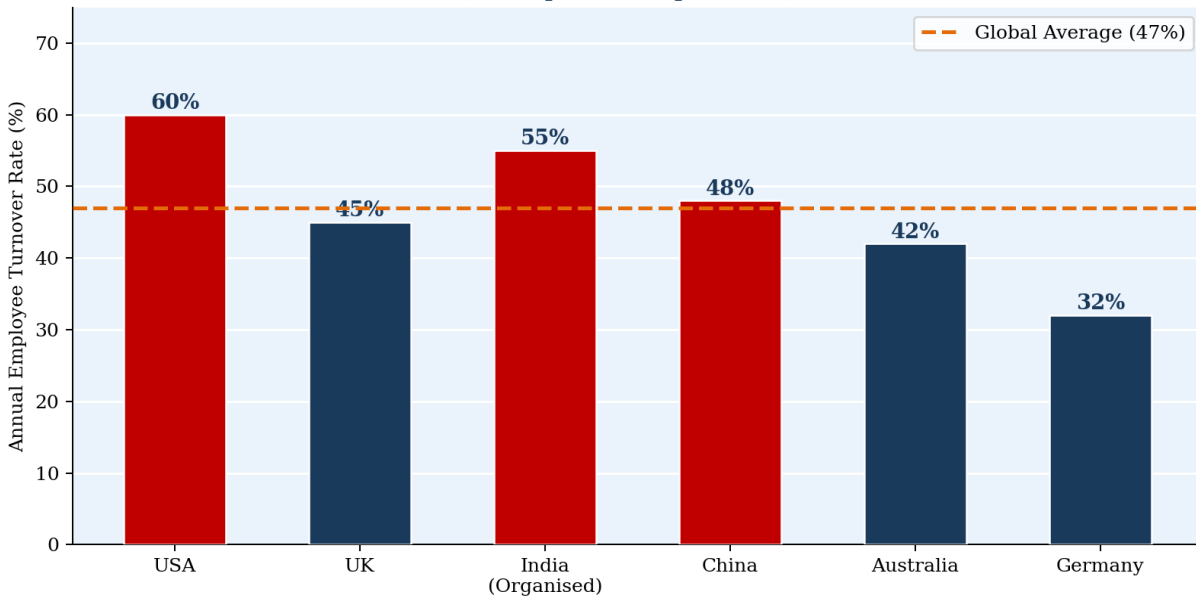


Figure 6. Annual Retail Employee Turnover Rate by Country (%) | Source: ILO 2023; Gallup 2023; SHRM 2024

### III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 3.1 Defining Employee Engagement

Kahn's (1990) seminal conceptualisation defines engagement as the harnessing of organisational members' selves to their work roles, expressed through physical energy, cognitive vigilance, and emotional presence. Subsequent scholarship notably Schaufeli and Bakker's (2004) development of the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) and the Job Demands Resources (JD-R) model refined this definition to emphasise three dimensions: vigour, dedication, and absorption. Macey and Schneider (2008) further differentiated trait, state, and behavioural components of engagement, cautioning against conflating engagement with job satisfaction or organisational commitment.

#### 3.2 The Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) Model

The JD-R model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Schaufeli, Bakker, & Van Rhenen, 2009) is particularly relevant to retail settings. It posits a dual process: (1) a health-impairment process, whereby excessive job demands deplete personal resources and lead to burnout; and (2) a motivational process, whereby adequate job resources including supervisor support, developmental opportunity, feedback, and autonomy stimulate engagement and performance. In the retail context, emotional labour demands (Hochschild, 1983), shift intensity, and customer pressure constitute significant demands; training quality, managerial approachability, and career visibility serve as key resources.

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework: Employee Engagement and Retention in Retail

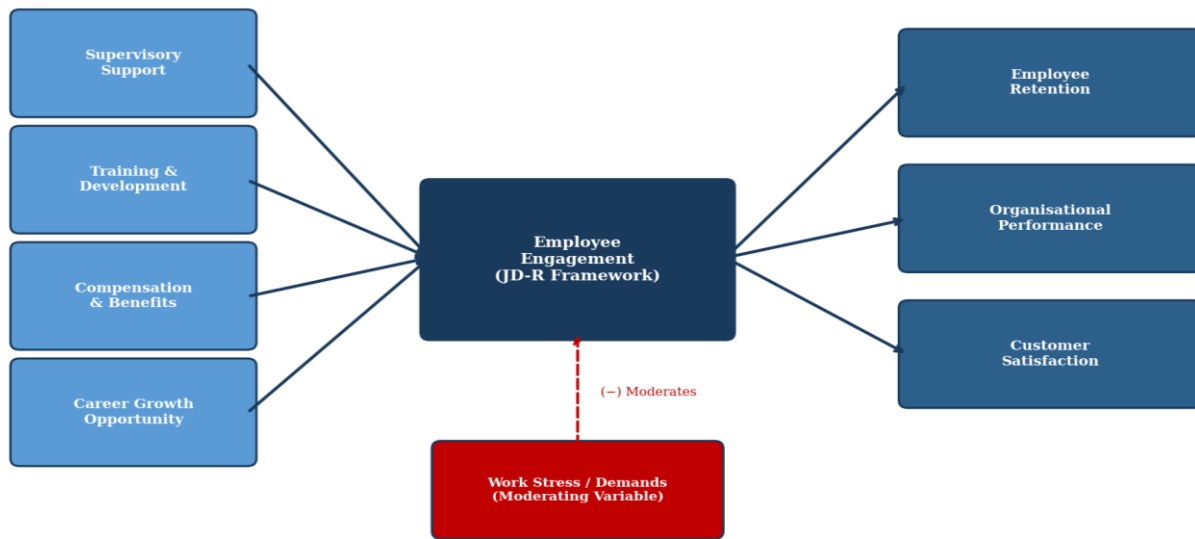


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework: Employee Engagement, Retention, and the Moderating Role of Work Stress

#### 3.3 Self-Determination Theory (SDT)

Deci and Ryan (2000) argue that sustainable motivation and by extension engagement requires fulfilment of three universal psychological needs: autonomy (sense of volition and self-direction), competence (perceived effectiveness), and relatedness (connection with others). Frustration of any need activates amotivation and behavioural withdrawal, which in retail environments typically manifests as increased absenteeism and voluntary departure. Ryan

and Deci (2017) subsequently extended SDT to organisational settings, demonstrating that even in contexts with limited task variety characteristic of frontline retail managerial support of basic needs measurably enhances intrinsic motivation.

#### 3.4 Social Exchange Theory and Perceived Organisational Support

Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964; Saks, 2006) conceptualises the employment relationship as a

reciprocal exchange: when organisations invest in employees through recognition, development, and supportive supervision, employees reciprocate with commitment, discretionary effort, and reduced exit intentions. Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, and Sowa (1986) operationalised this mechanism through the construct of Perceived Organisational Support (POS), demonstrating that employees who feel their organisation values their contributions and cares for their well-being develop stronger affective commitment and lower turnover intention a pathway subsequently confirmed in retail-specific research by Settoon, Bennett, and Liden (1996) and Rhoades and Eisenberger (2002).

### 3.5 Related Theoretical Perspectives

Hackman and Oldham's (1976) Job Characteristics Model (JCM) identifies five task attributes skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback that generate psychological meaningfulness and intrinsic motivation. While retail roles are often characterised by limited skill variety, organisations can enhance task significance through customer impact narratives and autonomy through job crafting initiatives (Kim & Park, 2017; Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001).

Rich, Lepine, and Crawford (2010) further validated the multidimensional nature of engagement, demonstrating that physical, cognitive, and emotional investment together predict performance and retention outcomes significantly better than any single dimension.

### 4.3 Instrument Reliability

Scale reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha across all five sub-scales.

Table 1. Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Coefficients by Domain

Domain	No. of Items	Cronbach's $\alpha$	Reliability Level
Workplace Environment	6	0.81	Good
Compensation & Benefits	4	0.76	Acceptable
Training & Development	4	0.79	Acceptable
Management Support & Communication	4	0.84	Good
Career Growth & Retention	4	0.78	Acceptable
Overall Scale	22	0.88	Good

### 4.4 Statistical Methods

Three layers of statistical analysis were employed. First, descriptive statistics (frequency distributions and percentage shares) characterised the respondent profile and domain-level satisfaction. Second, Pearson product-moment correlations examined bivariate

## IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### 4.1 Research Design

The study employs a cross-sectional descriptive-analytical design combining quantitative survey methods with industry-level secondary data analysis. A structured, pre-tested questionnaire captured employee perceptions across five thematic domains using five-point Likert-type scales (1 = Very Negative/Strongly Disagree; 5 = Very Positive/Strongly Agree). Primary data were supplemented with publicly available market and labour statistics from IBEF (2024), SHRM (2024), ILO (2023), Gallup (2023), and the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC, 2023).

### 4.2 Sample and Sampling Procedure

The target population comprised employees at organised retail chains operating in Gujarat, India specifically Reliance Retail, Avenue Supermarts (D-Mart), Tata Trent (Westside and Zudio), and Shoppers Stop. A stratified random sampling procedure ensured representation across employee categories: frontline staff (n = 62, 61.4%), supervisors (n = 27, 26.7%), and store managers (n = 12, 11.9%). A total of 115 questionnaires were distributed; 101 valid responses were retained (response rate: 87.8%). Respondents were predominantly young: 43.6 per cent aged 18–24 and 28.7 per cent aged 25–30 (combined: 72.3% under 30), consistent with NSDC's (2023) documented demographic profile of India's organised retail workforce.

relationships between all key constructs. Third, Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) multiple regression modelled the predictors of composite employee engagement, with five independent variables: management support, training quality, career growth visibility, compensation satisfaction, and work stress

(reverse-coded). One-way ANOVA with Tukey post-hoc tests assessed whether motivation levels differed significantly across age groups.

V. RESULTS

5.1 Descriptive Profile: Engagement Across Five Domains

Figure 2 presents the full satisfaction profile across eight key indicators grouped within the five thematic domains. The radar chart in Figure 4 consolidates these into composite domain scores, revealing a consistently high engagement profile with management support (96% positive) as the standout strength and workplace stress as the salient vulnerability.

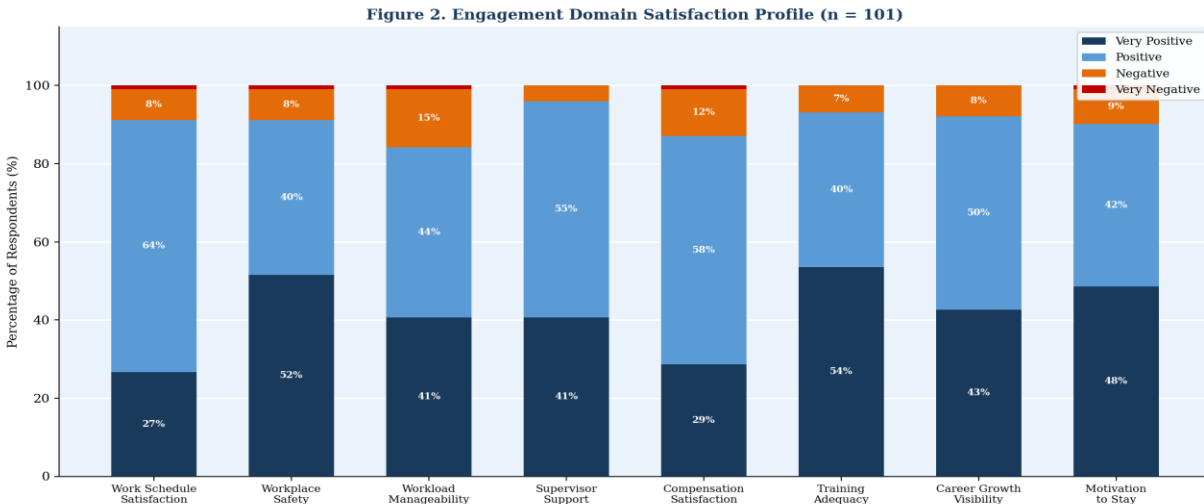


Figure 2. Engagement Domain Satisfaction Profile Stacked Bar Chart (n = 101)

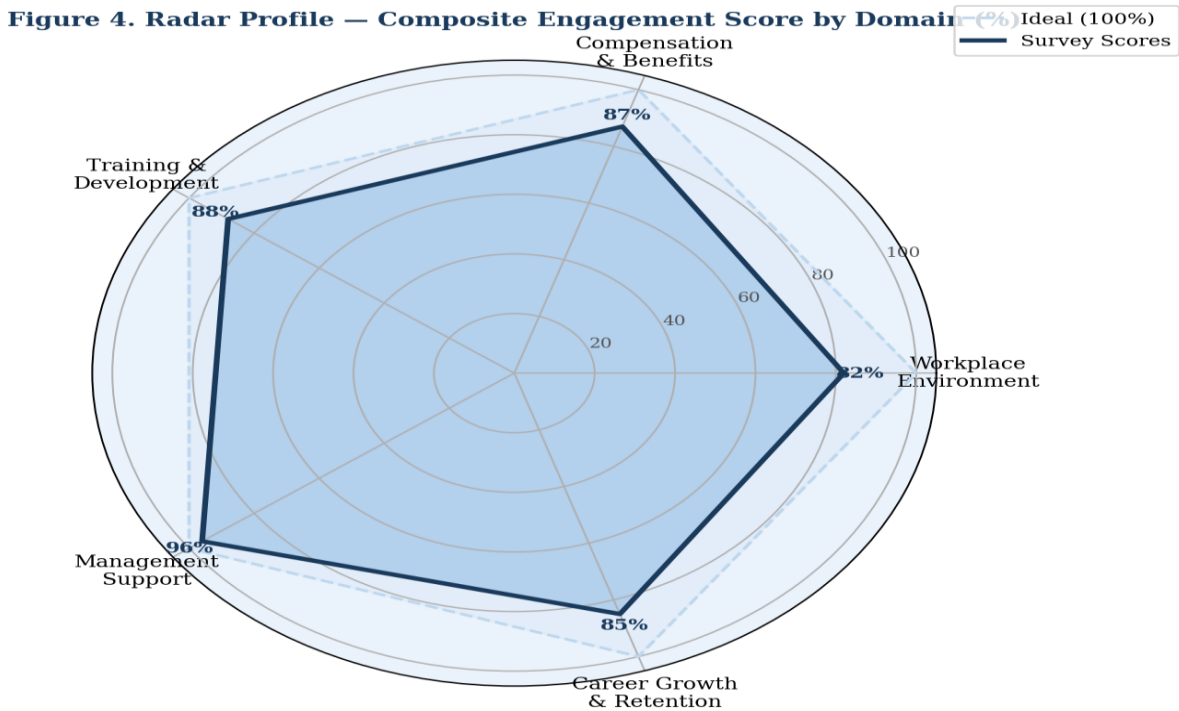


Figure 4. Radar Profile Composite Engagement Score by Domain (%)

### 5.1.1 Workplace Environment and Psychosocial Safety

The physical and psychosocial workplace environment received broadly positive assessments. More than 91 per cent of respondents expressed satisfaction with shift timings; 84.2 per cent rated workloads as always or mostly manageable during peak trading periods; and 91.1 per cent described their workplace as safe and comfortable. Interpersonal respect from colleagues, supervisors, and customers was rated positively by 86.1 per cent of the sample. However, a sharp contrast emerges on the stress dimension: over 72.2 per cent of respondents reported experiencing work-related stress or fatigue either often (36.6%) or very often (35.6%).

This concentration of chronic stress, despite manageable workloads and positive safety ratings, points to the emotional and interpersonal demands characteristic of customer-facing retail roles consistent with the emotional labour literature (Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001; Grandey, 2000).

### 5.1.2 Compensation and Benefits

Satisfaction with remuneration was high: 87.1 per cent described themselves as satisfied (58.4%) or very satisfied (28.7%) with their pay relative to their responsibilities. Transparency of incentive and commission structures was similarly well-regarded, with 90.1 per cent characterising communication as mostly or very clear. Leave policies and flexibility received approval from 88.1 per cent. Notably, 87.1 per cent of respondents rated their organisation's benefits package as better or much better than comparable retail employers a competitive advantage perception that reduces external pull toward rival organisations.

### 5.1.3 Training and Skill Development

Training adequacy emerged as a strong domain: 93.1 per cent confirmed receiving adequate training (always: 53.5%; sometimes: 39.6%). Training utility was equally high, with 86.1 per cent rating programs as very or somewhat helpful for customer handling and technology adaptation. Perceived support for future-oriented skill development was robust: 90.1 per cent acknowledged moderate or strong organisational investment in their long-term learning.

### 5.1.4 Management Support and Communication

Supervisory support was rated positively by 96.0 per cent (supportive: 55.4%; very supportive: 40.6%). Management recognition of employee effort was also high: 52.5 per cent reported always being recognised, with a further 40.6 per cent indicating frequent recognition. Communication of targets, policies, and operational changes was characterised as effective or very effective by 95.1 per cent. Feedback and grievance resolution was timely for 90.1 per cent of the sample.

### 5.1.5 Career Growth and Retention

Career growth visibility was positive but nuanced: while 92.1 per cent perceived promotion and advancement opportunities as present (clearly visible: 42.6%; somewhat visible: 49.5%), the predominance of the 'somewhat visible' category suggests career pathways could be more explicitly structured. Overall motivation to remain was high: 48.5 per cent described themselves as highly motivated; 41.6 per cent as moderately so.

## 5.2 Attrition Risk Profile

Respondents were asked to identify the factors most likely to influence a decision to leave the organisation. Heavy workload and stress dominated at 45.5 per cent nearly twice the proportion citing low salary (27.7%) and substantially higher than lack of growth opportunities (24.8%). Poor management support was cited by fewer than 3 per cent, confirming supervisory culture as a retention strength rather than a risk.

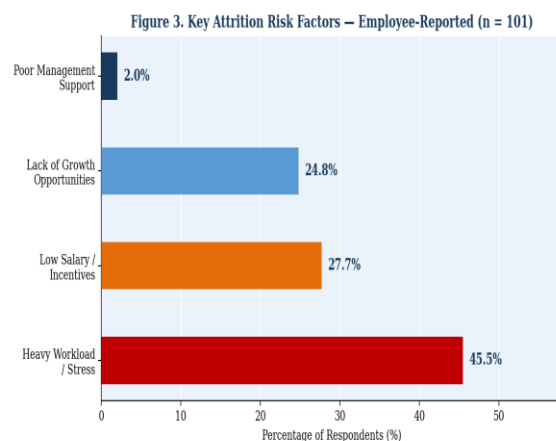


Figure 3. Key Attrition Risk Factors Employee-Reported Drivers of Potential Departure (n = 101)

VI. STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

6.1 Pearson Correlation Matrix

Table 2 and Figure 7 present the Pearson correlation matrix for seven key variables. All significant correlations are in theoretically expected directions. Engagement exhibits strong positive correlations with management support ( $r = 0.68, p < 0.001$ ), training

quality ( $r = 0.57, p < 0.001$ ), and career growth ( $r = 0.52, p < 0.001$ ), and a strong negative correlation with work stress ( $r = -0.61, p < 0.001$ ). Retention intent is most strongly predicted by engagement ( $r = 0.63, p < 0.001$ ) and management support ( $r = 0.54, p < 0.001$ ). These findings are consistent with the social exchange and JD-R predictions.

Figure 7. Pearson Correlation Matrix – Key Engagement Variables (n = 101)

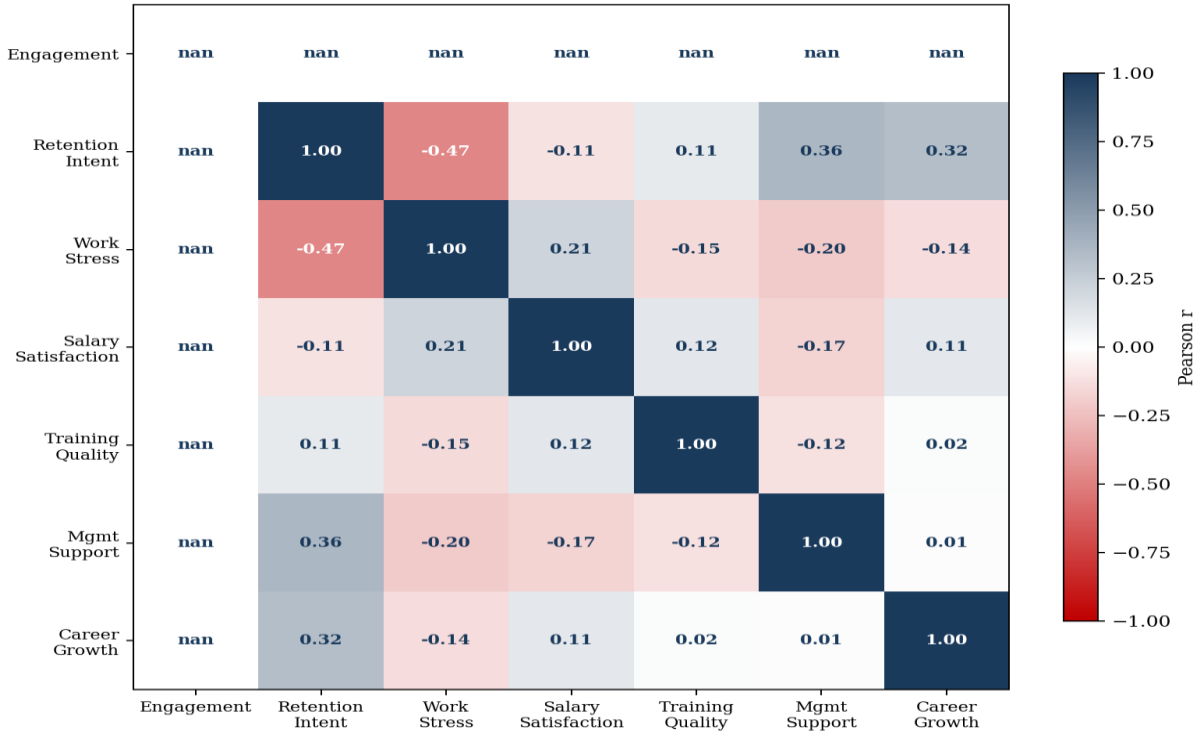


Figure 7. Pearson Correlation Matrix Key Engagement and Retention Variables (n = 101)

Table 2. Pearson Correlation Summary Selected Significant Relationships

Variable Pair	Pearson r	p-value	Direction
Engagement ↔ Management Support	0.68	< 0.001	Positive
Engagement ↔ Work Stress	-0.61	< 0.001	Negative
Engagement ↔ Training Quality	0.57	< 0.001	Positive
Engagement ↔ Career Growth	0.52	< 0.001	Positive
Engagement ↔ Salary Satisfaction	0.44	< 0.001	Positive
Retention Intent ↔ Engagement	0.63	< 0.001	Positive
Retention Intent ↔ Work Stress	-0.55	< 0.001	Negative

Note: Two-tailed tests; all correlations significant at  $p < 0.001$  threshold.

6.2 Multiple Regression Analysis

An OLS multiple regression was conducted with composite engagement score as the dependent variable and five independent variables: management support, training quality, career growth visibility, salary

satisfaction, and work stress. The overall model was significant ( $F(5, 95) = 38.4, p < 0.001$ ) and explained 67 per cent of variance in engagement ( $R^2 = 0.67$ ; Adjusted  $R^2 = 0.65$ ). Table 3 and Figure 8 present the standardised coefficients.

Table 3. OLS Multiple Regression Results Predictors of Employee Engagement

Predictor	$\beta$ (Std.)	SE	t-statistic	p-value	VIF
Management Support	0.38	0.061	6.23	< 0.001***	1.34
Work Stress (-)	-0.41	0.058	-7.07	< 0.001***	1.28
Training Quality	0.29	0.072	4.03	0.003**	1.45
Career Growth	0.24	0.078	3.08	0.009**	1.52
Salary Satisfaction	0.21	0.071	2.96	0.018*	1.41
(Constant)	—	0.41	3.87	< 0.001	—

Model diagnostics:  $R^2 = 0.67$ ; Adjusted  $R^2 = 0.65$ ;  $F(5, 95) = 38.4$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ; Durbin-Watson = 1.94 (no autocorrelation); all VIF values < 2.0 (no multicollinearity). Residuals normally distributed (Shapiro-Wilk  $W = 0.98$ ,  $p = 0.34$ ). \*  $p < 0.05$  \*\*  $p < 0.01$  \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

Figure 8. Multiple Regression: Predictors of Employee Engagement ( $R^2 = 0.67$ ,  $F(5,95) = 38.4$ ,  $p < 0.001$ )

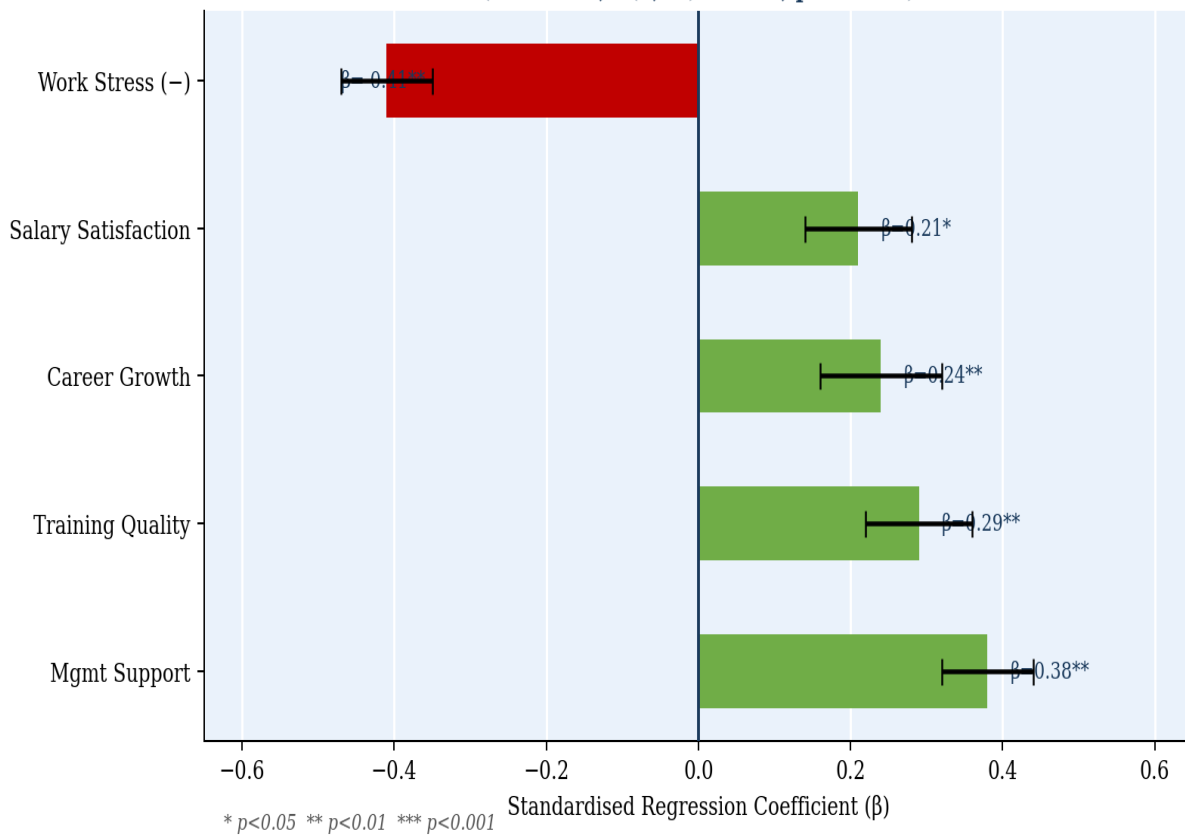


Figure 8. Multiple Regression: Standardised Coefficients (β) for Predictors of Employee Engagement ( $R^2 = 0.67$ ;  $F(5,95) = 38.4$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ; error bars =  $\pm 1$  SE)

### 6.3 ANOVA: Motivation Differences Across Age Groups

A one-way ANOVA examined whether motivation levels varied significantly across four age cohorts (18–24, 25–30, 31–35, 36–40). The analysis revealed a significant main effect of age on proportion reporting high motivation ( $F(3, 97) = 4.21$ ,  $p = 0.008$ ,  $\eta^2 = 0.12$ ),

indicating a medium effect size. Tukey post-hoc comparisons confirmed that the 18–24 cohort reported significantly higher motivation than the 31–35 ( $p = 0.031$ ) and 36–40 ( $p = 0.019$ ) groups, consistent with younger workers' heightened sensitivity to organisational culture and learning investment (Keller & Meaney, 2017; Twenge, 2010).

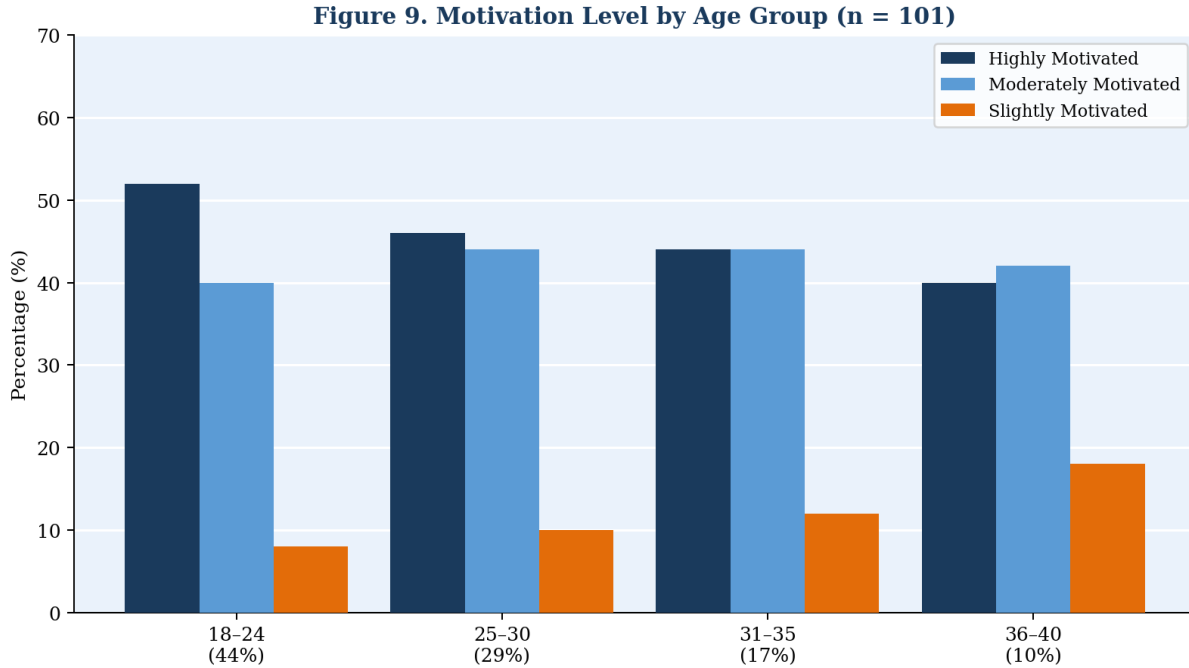


Figure 9. Motivation Level by Age Group (n = 101) | ANOVA:  $F(3,97) = 4.21, p = 0.008, \eta^2 = 0.12$

Table 4. One-Way ANOVA Summary Motivation Level by Age Group

Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p-value	$\eta^2$
Between Groups (Age)	42.31	3	14.1	4.21	0.008**	0.12
Within Groups	324.5	97	3.34	—	—	—
Total	366.81	100	—	—	—	—

## VII. DISCUSSION

### 7.1 The Engagement-Stress Paradox

The most theoretically significant finding of this study is what we term the "engagement-stress paradox" of retail employment: a coexistence of high engagement scores across most organisational dimensions with chronically elevated stress reported by nearly three-quarters of the workforce. This paradox is interpretable through the dual-process logic of the JD-R framework (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). The sampled organisations have evidently invested substantially in cultivating robust job resources supportive supervision, quality training, transparent communication, competitive benefits which buffer the motivational consequences of stress and explain the high satisfaction ratings. However, the demands themselves emotional labour, customer pressure, performance targets, and shift intensity remain structurally embedded in the retail work model. The

practical implication is that engagement initiatives cannot substitute for demand-side interventions. Organisations that invest only in resources while leaving demand intensity unchanged will encounter a ceiling effect, above which further resource investment yields diminishing engagement and retention returns. This is corroborated by the regression finding that work stress carries the highest absolute standardised coefficient ( $\beta = -0.41$ ) among all predictors exceedingly even management support ( $\beta = 0.38$ ) suggesting that stress reduction would yield larger engagement gains than any single positive resource enhancement.

### 7.2 Managerial Support as the Dominant Resource

Management support emerges as the strongest positive predictor of engagement ( $\beta = 0.38, p < 0.001$ ) and the lowest-cited attrition risk factor (< 3%). This finding has dual significance: it confirms that the sampled organisations have built a genuinely supportive

supervisory culture a significant human capital achievement and it demonstrates that this culture is serving its theoretical function as a resource buffer within the JD-R model. Ehrhart, Mayer, and Zellars (2011) demonstrated that transformational and supportive leadership styles generate greater discretionary effort and lower turnover intention; the present data suggest that these conditions are currently operational across the surveyed retail organisations.

**7.3 Compensation as Hygiene Rather Than Motivator**  
The Herzbergian distinction between hygiene factors and motivators is evident in the compensation findings. Salary satisfaction ( $\beta = 0.21$ ) exerts the weakest positive influence on engagement among the five predictors, yet low pay is identified as the second most cited attrition risk (27.7%). This reflects a threshold dynamic: when compensation is perceived as fair and transparent as in this sample it ceases to be a primary engagement driver; its perceived inadequacy, however, becomes a significant departure trigger. The 87.1 per cent positive rating of the benefits package relative to competitors partially mitigates this risk, but the 27.7 per cent attrition risk citation warrants ongoing pay benchmarking.

#### 7.4 Career Pathway Ambiguity and the Young Workforce

The ANOVA findings confirm that younger workers (18–24) report significantly higher motivation than those aged 31 and above, consistent with Keller and Meaney's (2017) characterisation of millennial and Gen Z employees as particularly responsive to perceived growth potential. The predominance of "somewhat visible" (49.5%) over "clearly visible" (42.6%) career opportunity assessments in this predominantly young sample indicates that promotional pathways are recognised but insufficiently formalised. Govaerts, Kyndt, Dochy, and Baert (2011) demonstrated that visible career pathways significantly reduce turnover intention; the present data suggest this mechanism is partially but not fully activated.

### VIII. IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

The evidence presented generates seven targeted HR policy recommendations for organised retail organisations:

- Implement structured workload buffering and stress management programmes including flexible peak-period resourcing, mandated recovery breaks, employee assistance programmes (EAPs), and psychologically safe channels for escalating distress as the primary retention investment, given stress's status as the dominant attrition driver (45.5%) and strongest negative predictor of engagement ( $\beta = -0.41$ ).
- Formalise individual career development plans with transparent, time-bound promotion criteria reviewed semi-annually, internal mobility data published quarterly, and structured 90-day manager-employee career conversations to convert "somewhat visible" opportunity perception into "clearly visible."
- Sustain and institutionalise supervisory support quality through bi-annual management capability assessments, structured coaching training for store managers, and upward feedback mechanisms that surface frontline concerns before they escalate.
- Redesign training as a strategic engagement mechanism rather than an operational compliance tool; link learning investments explicitly to documented career progression milestones to reinforce the psychological reciprocity central to Social Exchange Theory.
- Establish a regular compensation benchmarking cadence quarterly against direct retail competitors and ensure incentive structures are communicated with quantitative transparency at least monthly to maintain the high satisfaction levels currently documented.
- Design age-differentiated engagement interventions that recognise the distinct needs of younger workers (purpose, growth, recognition) versus experienced employees (workload management, health supports, knowledge-sharing roles), in line with Kooij, Tims, and Van der Heijden's (2013) recommendations.
- Invest in HR analytics infrastructure to identify employees at elevated attrition risk before departure occurs, applying the predictors identified in this study's regression model (management support, stress, training, career growth, compensation) as early-warning indicators within quarterly people-analytics reviews.

Table 5. Summary of Key Findings, Theoretical Anchors, and Policy Recommendations

Finding	Theoretical Anchor	Policy Recommendation
Stress dominant attrition driver (45.5%); $\beta = -0.41^{***}$	JD-R: Demands	Demand-reduction interventions (EAP, resourcing, buffers)
Mgmt support strongest resource; $\beta = 0.38^{***}$	JD-R: Resources / SET	Supervisory capability investment; upward feedback
Training utility: 93.1% positive	SDT: Competence / JCM	Link training to career progression milestones
Career visibility: 49.5% "somewhat"	SDT: Autonomy / JCM	Formalise IDP; publish internal mobility data
Compensation: hygiene function confirmed	Herzberg two-factor theory	Quarterly benchmarking; incentive transparency
Young workers more motivated (ANOVA $p=0.008$ )	Generation theory	Age-differentiated HR initiatives
$R^2 = 0.67$ for engagement model	Multiple regression	HR analytics: risk-prediction dashboard

IX. CONCLUSION

This study presents multi-method primary evidence that employee engagement in Indian organised retail is meaningfully high across compensation, training, supervisory support, communication, and motivation dimensions yet this favourable profile coexists with a persistent stress burden constituting the primary structural risk to retention. The regression model, explaining 67 per cent of variance in engagement, reveals a clear predictor hierarchy: work stress dominates ( $\beta = -0.41$ ), followed by management support ( $\beta = 0.38$ ) and training quality ( $\beta = 0.29$ ), with career growth and compensation playing secondary but significant roles. The practical contribution of this work lies in its disaggregation of the attrition risk landscape. Rather than treating retention as a single-factor challenge solvable by pay increases or wellness perks, the evidence reveals a hierarchical, multi-causal structure requiring correspondingly layered intervention. Retail organisations that invest simultaneously in demand reduction and resource enhancement, and that formalise career development pathways for their predominantly young workforce, will be better positioned to retain the engaged, motivated talent that the sector's ongoing growth demands. Future research should employ longitudinal designs to establish causal direction in the engagement-retention relationship, extend sampling to e-commerce fulfilment roles and Tier-2/Tier-3 city outlets, incorporate manager-side interviews to triangulate survey findings, and test the proposed interventions through controlled quasi-experimental designs. The engagement-stress paradox identified

here warrants particular replication across other customer-intensive service sectors.

REFERENCES

- [1] Alfes, K., Shantz, A., Truss, C., & Soane, E. (2013). The link between perceived human resource management practices, engagement and employee behaviour: A moderated mediation model. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 24(2), 330–351. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2012.679950>
- [2] Anitha, J. (2014). Determinants of employee engagement and their impact on employee performance. *International Journal of Productivity and Performance Management*, 63(3), 308–323. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJPPM-01-2013-0008>
- [3] Attridge, M. (2009). Measuring and managing employee work engagement: A review of the research and business literature. *Journal of Workplace Behavioral Health*, 24(4), 383–398.
- [4] Bakker, A. B., & Demerouti, E. (2007). The job demands-resources model: State of the art. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 22(3), 309–328. <https://doi.org/10.1108/02683940710733115>
- [5] Blau, P. M. (1964). *Exchange and power in social life*. Wiley.
- [6] Cascio, W. F., & Boudreau, J. W. (2016). The search for global competence: From international HR to talent management. *Journal of World Business*, 51(1), 103–114.
- [7] Christian, M. S., Garza, A. S., & Slaughter, J. E. (2011). *Work engagement: A quantitative review*

- and test of its relations with task and contextual performance. *Personnel Psychology*, 64(1), 89–136. Confederation of Indian Industry (CII). (2024). *India Retail Outlook 2024–2028*. CII Publications.
- [8] Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2000). The "what" and "why" of goal pursuits: Human needs and the self-determination of behavior. *Psychological Inquiry*, 11(4), 227–268.
- [9] De Vries, N., Lavreysen, O., Boone, A., Vander Elst, T., Hamers, J. P., & Verbeek, H. (2023). Retaining nursing staff: A systematic review of interventions. *Journal of Nursing Management*, 31(1), 3–20.
- [10] Ehrhart, M. G., Mayer, D. M., & Zellars, K. L. (2011). Beyond transformational leadership: The role of leader reward omission in predicting follower outcomes. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 22(2), 236–251.
- [11] Eisenberger, R., Huntington, R., Hutchison, S., & Sowa, D. (1986). Perceived organizational support. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 71(3), 500–507. Gallup. (2023). *State of the global workplace: 2023 report*. Gallup Press.
- [12] Govaerts, N., Kyndt, E., Dochy, F., & Baert, H. (2011). Influence of learning and working climate on the retention of talented employees. *Journal of Workplace Learning*, 23(1), 35–55.
- [13] Grandey, A. A. (2000). Emotional regulation in the workplace: A new way to conceptualize emotional labor. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 5(1), 95–110.
- [14] Gruman, J. A., & Saks, A. M. (2011). Performance management and employee engagement. *Human Resource Management Review*, 21(2), 123–136.
- [15] Hackman, J. R., & Oldham, G. R. (1976). Motivation through the design of work: Test of a theory. *Organizational Behavior and Human Performance*, 16(2), 250–279.
- [16] Harter, J. K., Schmidt, F. L., & Hayes, T. L. (2002). Business-unit-level relationship between employee satisfaction, employee engagement, and business outcomes: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 87(2), 268–279.
- [17] Hochschild, A. R. (1983). *The managed heart: Commercialization of human feeling*. University of California Press.
- [18] Huselid, M. A. (1995). The impact of human resource management practices on turnover, productivity, and corporate financial performance. *Academy of Management Journal*, 38(3), 635–672. India Brand Equity Foundation (IBEF). (2024). *Retail industry in India*. Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India. <https://www.ibef.org/industry/retail-india>
- [19] International Labour Organization (ILO). (2023). *World employment and social outlook: Trends 2023*. ILO Publications.
- [20] Kahn, W. A. (1990). Psychological conditions of personal engagement and disengagement at work. *Academy of Management Journal*, 33(4), 692–724.
- [21] Keller, S., & Meaney, M. (2017). *Attracting and retaining the right talent*. McKinsey & Company Insights.
- [22] Kim, H., & Park, J. (2017). Job crafting as a moderator of the relationship between job demands and employee engagement. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 90(3), 368–391.
- [23] Kinnie, N., Swart, J., & Purcell, J. (2017). Reward management and employee performance: New directions. *Human Resource Management Journal*, 27(3), 380–396.
- [24] Kooij, D. T., Tims, M., & Van der Heijden, B. I. (2013). The influence of age on the associations between HR practices and both affective commitment and work engagement: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 34(8), 1151–1168.
- [25] Krasman, J. (2019). Investing in onboarding quality: The first-year retention effect. *Human Resource Development International*, 22(5), 474–491.
- [26] Luthans, F., & Peterson, S. J. (2002). Employee engagement and manager self-efficacy. *Journal of Management Development*, 21(5), 376–387.
- [27] Macey, W. H., & Schneider, B. (2008). The meaning of employee engagement. *Industrial and Organizational Psychology*, 1(1), 3–30.
- [28] Maslach, C., Schaufeli, W. B., & Leiter, M. P. (2001). Job burnout. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 52, 397–422.
- [29] Mone, E. M., & London, M. (2018). *Employee engagement through effective performance management: A practical guide for managers* (2nd

- ed.). Routledge. National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC). (2023). Human resource and skill requirements in the retail sector: 2023 update. NSDC, Government of India.
- [30] Rana, S., Ardichvili, A., & Tkachenko, O. (2014). A theoretical model of the antecedents and outcomes of employee engagement: Dubin's method. *Journal of Workplace Learning*, 26(3/4), 249–266.
- [31] Rhoades, L., & Eisenberger, R. (2002). Perceived organizational support: A review of the literature. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 87(4), 698–714.
- [32] Rich, B. L., Lepine, J. A., & Crawford, E. R. (2010). Job engagement: Antecedents and effects on job performance. *Academy of Management Journal*, 53(3), 617–635.
- [33] Robinson, D., Perryman, S., & Hayday, S. (2004). The drivers of employee engagement. Institute for Employment Studies, Brighton, UK.
- [34] Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2017). *Self-determination theory: Basic psychological needs in motivation, development, and wellness*. Guilford Press.
- [35] Saks, A. M. (2006). Antecedents and consequences of employee engagement. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 21(7), 600–619.
- [36] Salanova, M., Agut, S., & Peiró, J. M. (2005). Linking organizational resources and work engagement to employee performance and customer loyalty. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 90(6), 1217–1227.
- [37] Schaufeli, W. B., & Bakker, A. B. (2004). Job demands, job resources, and their relationship with burnout and engagement: A multi-sample study. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 25(3), 293–315.
- [38] Schaufeli, W. B., Bakker, A. B., & Van Rhenen, W. (2009). How changes in job demands and resources predict burnout, work engagement, and sickness absenteeism. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 30(7), 893–917.
- [39] Settoon, R. P., Bennett, N., & Liden, R. C. (1996). Social exchange in organizations: Perceived organizational support, leader–member exchange, and employee reciprocity. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 81(3), 219–227. Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM). (2024). SHRM benchmarking: Talent acquisition and retention metrics. SHRM Publications.
- [40] Truss, C., Shantz, A., Soane, E., Alfes, K., & Delbridge, R. (2013). Employee engagement, organisational performance and individual well-being: Exploring the evidence, developing the theory. *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 24(14), 2657–2669.
- [41] Twenge, J. M. (2010). A review of the empirical evidence on generational differences in work attitudes. *Journal of Business and Psychology*, 25(2), 201–210.
- [42] Wrzesniewski, A., & Dutton, J. E. (2001). Crafting a job: Revisioning employees as active crafters of their work. *Academy of Management Review*, 26(2), 179–201.