

Structural Equation Model on Employee Engagement of Restaurants in Region XII

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Abstract:

The study aimed to identify the best fit model on employee engagement among 400 food chain workers in Region XII using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). The constructs covered in the study include human resource management practices, service climate, communication and employee engagement. The study employed a quantitative non-experimental research design using descriptive-correlation. Stratified random sampling technique was used in selecting the respondents. Statistical tools applied in the study were Mean, Pearson Product Moment Correlation, Multiple Regression and Structural Equation Modelling to attain its objective. Very high results of three exogenous variables namely: human resource management practices, service climate and communication were observed. The endogenous variable which is employee engagement got also a very high result. Significant relationships of the three constructs with employee engagement were established. However, in the final analysis, service climate was not supported in the model 5 as best fit model. Based on the model fit, human resource management practices as indicated by rewards and benefits and work life balance; and communication as indicated by task communication, career communication and personal communication best predict employee engagement as indicated by vigor and dedication.

Keywords: Communication, Human Resource Management Practices, Service Climate, Employee Engagement, Philippines.

I. Introduction

Employee engagement pertains to the employee level of involvement and commitment in their organization (Anitha, 2014). In contrast, employee disengagement is an emerging phenomenon in the workplace, and is defined as the absence of engagement (Johnson, 2016). Poor employee engagement can be disadvantageous in any organization because it can cause a decrease in employee productivity and well-being (Shuck & Reio, 2014). Moreover, disengaged employees are those who show up for work but contribute the bare minimum (Pech, 2009). Further, Kramer (2016) emphasized that as restaurant workers continue to forego their current jobs for positions that offer higher pay and a better work environment, restaurants must rethink workforce management strategies and place an increased emphasis on fostering employee engagement.

Employee engagement is important as it pertains to fulfilling, affective and constructive motivational state that boost job-related well-being (Bakker, Schaufeli, Leiter, & Taris, 2008; Warr & Inceoglu, 2012). Further, it is characterized by vigor, dedication and absorption. Numerous researches had suggested that engaged workers are more likely to be productive (Saks, 2006) prefer to stay with their current employer (Harter, Schmid & Hayes, 2002; Saks, 2006; Shuck, Reio, & Rocco, 2011), and respond positively with customers.

Human resource management practices (HRM), service climate and communication have some degree to do with employee engagement. HRM includes the process of hiring, training, employee performance appraisal, giving their compensation or salaries, attending to their labor concerns, workplace safety and health as well as labor fairness issues. (Dessler, 2005). Moreover, an organization's human resource system is the major driver of employee engagement (Center for Human Resource Strategy, 2009). Furthermore, creating and sustaining a service climate that motivates employees to be engaged more in their job and choosing the right workers to begin with is necessary to the service industry (Kang, 2014). On the other hand, employee engagement is also attributed by communication. It is an

organizational practice to effectively send and convey the values of the organization to its employees, and let them take part in attaining the goals of the organization thus such endeavor resulted in more engaged workers (Bindl and Parker, 2010). Additionally, communication as highlighted by MacLeod and Clarke (2009) as a critical aspect in honing employee engagement. They also cited that poor communication is a hindrance to attain employee engagement and a cause also of employee disengagement.

Considering the above context, the researcher decided to conduct the study with the three exogenous variables for employee engagement namely: HRM practices, service climate, and communication. The subject of employee engagement done by research experts were few and far between (CIPD, 2010; Mohapatra & Sharma, 2010). Further researches on employee's engagement shows its downtrend Hewitt (2011). Hence, this study responded to the prevailing issues on limited studies of employee's engagement. Additionally, the study was of superior one because it covered four variables and structural equation modeling was used. It was further hoped that a model for restaurant employees' engagement produced out of this research can meaningfully contributed to new knowledge. Also, this was the first study on restaurant employee engagement conducted in Region XII.

1.1 Research Objective

This study aimed to recognize the best fit model that predicts employee engagement of restaurant employees in Region XII. Specifically, this study has the following objectives: to assess the level of human resource management practices of restaurants in terms of: training and development; performance appraisal; work life balance; and rewards and benefits; to ascertain the level of service climate of restaurants in terms of: customer orientation; managerial support; and work facilitation; to measure the level of communication of restaurants in terms of: task communication; performance communication; career communication; communication responsiveness; and personal communication; to evaluate the level of employee engagement of restaurant employees in terms of: vigor; dedication; and absorption; to determine the significant relationship between: human resource management practices and employee engagement, service climate and employee engagement, communication and employee engagement; to discover the significant influence of human resource management practices, service climate, communication on employee engagement; and to recognize the best fit model that predicts employee engagement.

1.2 Hypotheses

The hypotheses of this research study were tested at 0.005 level of significance. It was further hypothesized that there is no significant relationship between: human resource management practices and employee engagement; service climate and employee engagement; and communication and employee engagement. Human resource management practices, service climate, and communication do not significantly influence the employee engagement of restaurant employees. There is no best fit model that can predict employee engagement.

1.3 Significance of the Study

This research study makes numerous contributions. The results will provide significant scientific information on employee engagement considering HRM practices, service climate and communication as experienced by restaurants' employees in order to retain the best asset which lead to the increase on productivity and success of the organization in the dynamic business environment not just locally but in the international fora. Moreover, the result can be used as basis in policy creation and organization's work setting standards enhancement that will result in boosting employee positive work-related well-being.

Also, this study provided a new theoretical model of employee engagement in the service industry context specifically restaurant businesses which also demonstrates the relevance of employee's levels of engagement in the organization that contributes to the enhancement of employee satisfaction. Thus, retained them in the organization which in turn will help the business gained its competitive advantages over its competitors. Restaurant employees will become invigorated, dedicated and fascinated doing their jobs. As mentioned by Gallup (2013) in the result of his survey that the first six months in the job is considered as the highest engagement period for any employee, regardless of his/her education. Subsequently, engagement tends to flat-line.

The result of the study can be used as one of the references of the foodservice industry specifically by the restaurants managers in strengthening the restaurant employee service performance which will lead to the increase of customers' expenditures. As stated by Rothbard and Patil (2011) that the engagement of employee is an important component affecting performance and organizational financial success. Finally, the result can be used as baseline

information and served as secondary data for the researchers and academicians who want to conduct further investigation in employee engagement.

II. Method

2.1 Research Design

This study utilized a quantitative non-experimental research design employing the descriptive-correlational and structural equation model to generate the best-fit-model on employee engagement. Descriptive-correlational research design is used to explain the subject phenomenon and to articulate what variables, conditions and attributes were present (Abbott & McKinney, 2013). Moreover, non-experimental research, often called correlational research, seeks causes of behavior by looking for correlations among variables (GumbayiSorm, 2018). In correlation research, relationships are studied among variables. Specifically, this study utilized a correlational research and regression analysis approaches since the study seeks to establish the relationship as well as the influence of HRM practices, service climate and communication on employee engagement of food chain employees in Region XII, Philippines. The study also employed structural equation modelling (SEM) to develop the best fit model for the phenomenon under study. Further, this research study includes three exogenous or independent variables: the HRM practices, service climate, communication and an endogenous or dependent variable: the employee engagement.

This study was conducted in the Region XII, one of the regions in the Philippines situated on the South-Central Mindanao. It is represented by four provinces namely: North Cotabato, South Cotabato, Sarangani Province and Sultan Kudarat. The respondents of this study were the food chains restaurants employees in Region XII.

2.2 Population and Sample

In order to choose the respondents, scientific process was followed. To determine the number of food chain restaurants in the region, the researcher sought the information from Business and Licensing Office of the identified cities and municipalities where food chains are located in order to get comprehensive lists of registered restaurants of their respective localities. The said lists were used as basis to ascertain the number of food chains operating in region XII that could possibly be considered as respondents. Stratification of food chain was done by the researcher in order to get an appropriate representation of the respondents per province. A total of four hundred three (400) employees from 36 food chain restaurants in Region XII were randomly selected to serve as the respondents of this study. Of the 400 respondents, 143 were from Food Chain A, 99 were from Food Chain B, 39 were from Food Chain C, 70 from Food Chain D, and 52 from Food Chain E. Majority of the sample were from Food Chain A, since it operates more stores around region XII and allowed their employees to take part in the survey. Data gathering was conducted from October to November 2019.

2.3 Research Instrument

Primary data were used in the study which covers and measures the constructs, namely: HRM practices, service climate, communication and engagement of employees. The survey questionnaires utilized in the conduct of the study were taken from various related researchers. Restructuring was carried out to make the instrument more applicable in the current undertakings and in the local business setting. To ensure the appropriateness of the instrument, it was validated by six experts in the field of business management and garnered an overall rating of 3.85 or Good. After validation, pilot testing was performed. Cronbach alpha was utilized to check the reliability of the questionnaires with the following results of alpha coefficients: human resource management practices (.734), service climate (.714), communication (.758) and employee engagement (.726). Cronbach alpha consistency co-efficient customarily ranges between zero to one (Taber, 2018).

The survey instrument on HRM practices was adapted from the study of Jafri (2013). The instrument was designed to measure the HRM practices of restaurants as perceived by employees based on four factors, namely: *training and development, performance appraisal, work life balance, rewards and benefits*. The survey instrument on service climate was adapted and modified from the study of He et al., (2010). The instrument was designed to measure the service climate of restaurants as perceived by employees based on managerial support, work facilitation and customer orientation. The survey instrument on communication was adapted from Penley and Hawkins (1985). The instrument was designed to measure the organizational communication of restaurants as perceived by employees with reference to the five factors,

namely: task-communication, performance-communication, career communication, communication-responsiveness and personal communication. The survey on employee engagement was adapted Schaufeli and Bakker (2003). The instrument was designed to measure the engagement of employee as perceived by employees as indicated by the three factors, namely: vigor, dedication, and absorption.

2.4 Data Collection

Several procedures were performed in collecting the data used in the study. The first procedure was the acquisition of consent to administer the study, it was secured from the University of Mindanao Ethics Review Committee last September 29, 2019 and letters to conduct the survey approved by the dean of university’s professional school. The researcher proceeded to the mayors’ offices of the different cities and municipalities of Region XII to seek approval for the release of lists of their registered restaurants through the Business and Licensing Offices of their respective localities. It was done by the researcher in order to determine the population and compute the sample size of the study.

Upon determination of the sample size, reproduction of 400 survey questionnaires followed and was facilitated. Request letters signed by the adviser was distributed to the selected branches of food chain restaurants. Then a time table was set for the duration of the floating and retrieval of questionnaire. Gradual administration and retrieval of data, collation and tabulation of data were conducted wherein a screening was done to lessen the possible outliers during the analysis. All 400 sets of completely answered questionnaires were retrieved. After which, encoding, tabulating, and analyzing followed. Lastly, result analysis and interpretation of 400 data sets were done based on the objective of the study.

The researcher used several statistical tools for the analysis of the collected data. Mean was used to measure the level of HRM practices, service climate, communication and employee engagement of food chain employees. Pearson Product Moment Correlation (Pearson R) was utilized to determine the interrelationships between HRM practices, service climate, communication and engagement of employees. Multiple Regression was used to determine the significant predictors of employee engagement. Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) to explore the best fit model. The essence of this test is to make sure that the elimination of attributes with low result correlations with the attributes of the other latent variables in the final SEM.

The researcher observed ethical standards in the conduct of the research study in order to protect the respondents’ rights and the confidentiality of data provided by them. Assessment of study protocol and standardized criteria under ethical considerations when applicable were highly observed.

III. Result and Discussion

Presented in this section are the data and deconstruction of findings based on the responses of the respondents on the work engagement of restaurant employees in Region XII.

Table 1. Human resource management practices

Indicator	SD	Mean	Descriptive Level
Training and Development	0.50	4.59	Very high
Performance Appraisal	0.58	4.41	Very high
Work Life Balance	0.79	4.23	Very high
Rewards and Benefits	0.61	4.29	Very high
Overall	0.51	4.38	Very high

Shown in Table 1 is the level of HRM practices of restaurant employees in Region XII. The overall mean score obtained on HRM practices is 4.38 with a standard deviation of 0.51, described as very high. This means that the HRM practices is always observed. Specifically, the mean ratings of the indicators of HRM practices are reveal as follows: training and development obtained a mean rating of 4.59 or very high; performance appraisal attained a mean rating of 4.41 or very high; work life balance has a mean rating of 4.23 or very high; rewards and benefits garnered a mean rating of 4.29 or very high. The overall high response of restaurant employees means that the domain of HRM practices are observed most of the time.

Structural Equation Model on Employee Engagement of Restaurants in Region XII

The result is supported with the study of Almarzooki, Khan and Khalid (2018) & Chiang et al., (2011) that comprehensive and complete training and development are aimed at developing employees' professional and technological employee knowledge and abilities. Moreover, human resource management practices enable knowledge enhancement in an organization as well as developing key employees, improving performance of the organization, task related skills as well as behavioral skills (Wang, Chiang, & Tung, 2012, Yang 2012). This also substantiates with the findings of researches conducted by Melcrum Employee Engagement Survey (2007/2008); Center for Human Resource Strategy (2009) that human resource practices such as employees' training and development, appraisal of performance, work-life-balance and rewards and benefits- are in the center stage of employment relationship in organization, hence, they send signals to employees that what is valued in organization and expected from employees. Moreover, if employees felt that HRM policies and practices are good enough to satisfy employee's need and expectations, employees enable to reciprocate with employee loyalty (Lok & Chin, 2019).

Table 2. Service climate

Indicator	SD	Mean	Descriptive Level
Customer Orientation	0.47	4.55	Very high
Managerial Support	0.54	4.53	Very high
Work Facilitation	0.55	4.40	Very high
Overall	0.45	4.49	Very high

Presented in Table 2 is the summary of the level of *service climate* of employees. The overall mean score is 4.49 with standard deviation of 0.45, described as *very high* which means that *service climate* is always observed by the respondents. The mean ratings of the indicators of *service climate* are revealed as follows: *customer orientation* got a mean rating of 4.55 or *very high*; *managerial support* acquired a mean rating of 4.53 or *very high*; *work facilitation* had a mean rating of 4.40 or *very high*.

The result is in consonance to the study of Gracia, Cifre, & Grau, (2010) that when employees and customers interact, employees pass the value of the organization's customer orientation to the customer through the quality of their services, and they can received direct feedback from customers. Hence, organization's service climate provides employees' specific signals about the value of customers and the requirement for excellent service provisions like service manuals, knowledge of customers' needs and managers' support. Result of the study of He et al., (2018) & Schneider et al. (1998) pointed that business organizations that give close attention to their customers' expectations and needs tend to make service climates that possess positive employee behavior which leads to building positive service climate in this effect, a positive and pleasant service climate, employees recognize that they can be rewarded for providing high quality of service and can receive managerial support to perform efficiently and effectively. Additionally, this is also supported by the study of Schulte et al. (2009) & Kuslivan, et al. (2010) that organizations should project a strong service climate because it guides service employees' behaviors and attitudes, and considered as a vital factor in organization performance and results.

Table 3. Communication of restaurant employees

Indicator	SD	Mean	Descriptive Level
Task Communication	0.60	4.52	Very high
Performance Communication	0.63	4.44	Very high
Career Communication	0.72	4.32	Very high
Communication Responsiveness	0.62	4.40	Very high
Personal Communication	0.95	3.86	High
Overall	0.54	4.30	Very high

Structural Equation Model on Employee Engagement of Restaurants in Region XII

Presented in Table 3 is the level of *communication* of restaurant employees in Region XI. The overall mean rating is 4.30 with a standard deviation 0.54, described as *very high* which means that *communication* is always observed by the respondents. The mean score of the indicators of *communication* are conveyed as follows: *task communication* earned a mean of 4.52 or *very high*; *performance communication* garnered a mean rating of 4.44 or *very high*; *communication responsiveness* has a mean rating of 4.40 or *very high*, *career communication* got a mean rating of 4.32 or *very high* and *personal communication* has a rating of 3.86 or *high*.

The study outcome conforms to the study of Hartog, Boon, Verburg & Croon (2013) that managers are usually the primary accountable for communication with employees about their performance in work and on organizational information like policies disseminations, decisions, job procedures, and policies. Also, the study of Laff, (2006) & Madlock (2008) explains that accurate communication between a supervisor and an employee is just as important as a communication between an employee and a customer, thus, allows business organizations to be inventive and successfully functions. Additionally, Keyton et al., (2013) emphasizes that workplace communication is very significant for the organization because workers can be involved and experienced an increase in performance, morale and dedication if they can be able to communicate the information among their colleagues and the top management.

Table 4. Employee Engagement

Indicator	SD	Mean	Descriptive Level
Vigor	0.52	4.30	Very high
Dedication	0.47	4.59	Very high
Absorption	0.65	4.26	Very high
Overall	0.40	4.39	Very high

Indicated in Table 4 is the level of *employee engagement* of restaurant employees in Region XII. The overall mean score is 4.39 with a standard deviation of 0.40, described as *very high* which means that *employee engagement* is always manifested by the respondents. The mean rating of the indicators of *employee engagement* are elaborated as follows: *vigor* obtained a mean rating of 4.30 or *very high*; *dedication* has a mean rating of 4.59 or *very high*; and *absorption* attained a mean rating of 4.26 or *very high*.

The result is consonance with the study of Truss et al (2006), that sound and factual engagement of employees occurs when all of them in the business organization are passionate about business policy and strategy and are highly dedicated to its success. Moreover, workforces that have more than work satisfaction been gratified to serve their organization and customers and are advocates of the products and brand names (Right Management, 2006). Also, Caplan, (2013) cited that there is evidence that employee engagement favors overall performance and increases productivity. It also creates a better and more productive work environment, reduces absences and employees exit from the organization.

Table 5. Significance on the Relationship between Human Resource Management Practices and Employee Engagement

Human Resource Management Practices	Employee Engagement			
	Vigor	Dedication	Absorption	Overall
Training and Development	.309** (.000)	.361** (.000)	.136* (.015)	.346** (.000)
Performance Appraisal	.293** (.000)	.316** (.000)	.111* (.048)	.308** (.000)
Work Life	.272**	.253**	.208**	.327**

Structural Equation Model on Employee Engagement of Restaurants in Region XII

Balance	(.000)	(.000)	(.000)	(.000)
Rewards and Benefits	.313**	.370**	.228**	.400**
	(.000)	(.000)	(.000)	(.000)
Overall	.357**	.385**	.213**	.417**
	(.000)	(.000)	(.000)	(.000)

*p<.05

Table 5 displays the data on the results of significance on the relationship between human resource management practices and employee engagement of restaurants in region XII. The overall r- value attained by the said measures is 0.417 with a p-value is less than 0.05 rejecting the null hypothesis of no significant relationship.

Moreover, it is observed that *training and development, performance appraisal, work life balance, rewards and benefits* as indicators of *HRM practices* when correlated to *vigor*, the overall r- value is 0.357 with p< 0.05 hence, *significant*. When the indicators of *HRM practices* are correlated to *dedication*, the overall r- value is 0.385 with p<0.05 hence, *significant*. Moreover, when the *HRM practices* indicators are correlated to *absorption*, it has an overall r- value is 0.213 with p<0.05 hence, *significant*.

The result is line with Social Exchange Theory (SET) of Homans (1958) that is found to affect employee engagement. Moreover, the result of the study corroborates the findings of the study conducted by Jafri (2013) which depicts that human resource management practices – training and development, performance appraisal, work life balance and rewards and benefits positively and significantly predicts employee engagement. Human resource management practices contribute in creating workers' engagement in the organization. This further means that the better HRM practices of restaurants, more will be the engagement level of employees. Moreover, this validates with the findings of researches (Center for Human Resource Strategy, 2009 & Melcrum Employee Survey, 2008) that HRM practices are in the center stage of employment relationship in organization, thus it sends signal to employees feel that what is valued in organization and expected employees. If employees feel that HRM policies and practices are good enough to satisfy employees needs and expectations, enables employees to reciprocate with employee engagement.

Table 6. Significance on the Relationship between Service Climate and Employee Engagement

Service Climate	Employee Engagement			
	Vigor	Dedication	Absorption	Overall
Customer Orientation	.343**	.463**	.081	.371**
	.000	.000	.147	.000
Managerial Support	.341**	.492**	.025	.351**
	.000	.000	.663	.000
Work-Facilitation	.366**	.387**	.162**	.395**
	.000	.000	.004	.000
Overall	.406**	.517**	.105	.432**
	.000	.000	.062	.000

Table 6 exhibits the data on the results of significance on the relationship between *service climate* and *employee engagement*. The overall r-value obtained from the aforementioned measures is 0.432 with a p-value of less than 0.05 which is lesser than .05 level of significance. The result is *significant*, and the null hypothesis of no significant relationship is rejected.

Furthermore, when the indicators of *service climate* namely: *customer orientation, managerial support and work facilitation* were correlated with the *vigor*, the r- value was .406 with a p-value of less than 0.05 which is lesser that 0.05 level of significance. The result entails that it is *significant*. Additionally, the indicators of *service climate* when correlated

Structural Equation Model on Employee Engagement of Restaurants in Region XII

with *dedication* it revealed that *r*-value is .517 with $p < 0.05$ thus, *significant*. However, when the indicators of *service climate: customer orientation and managerial support* are correlated with *absorption*, it garnered a *r*-value of .105 and *p*-value of .062. Hence, accepts the null hypothesis. The overall result between *service climate and employee engagement* is found to be *significant*. Thus, it rejects the null hypothesis.

The result of the study is congruent with the exploration conducted by Kang and Busser (2018) that referred service climate has a strong relationship on the engagement of employees. Positive work outcome is a result of positive work-related experiences, feelings and emotions. Engaged workforces are more energetic, passionate, and dedicated to their organization than disengaged employees. Further the study of Schneider and Barbera (2014) connotes that a pleasant service environment inspires employees to perform well because the signals received from the work environment indicates that this behavior is acceptable and valuable to the organizations and customers which can also be accounted to employee engagement. In addition, Brummelhuis et al. (2012) & Barnes & Collier (2013) results showed that service climate strongly influenced employee engagement because it sends signals that work engagement is not merely a personality trait that has to be evaluated in the interviewing process. Instead, a business firm can make a working atmosphere where engagement thrives and succeed. Basically, the present time service firms need to create a working environment and work processes where employees feel energized, motivated and enthusiastic, because their works are both active and pleasurable.

Table 7. Significance on the Relationship between Communication and Employee Engagement

Communication	Employee Engagement			
	Vigor	Dedication	Absorption	Overall
Task Communication	.339** (.000)	.432** (.000)	.106 (.059)	.370** (.000)
Performance Communication	.365** (.000)	.427** (.000)	.183** (.001)	.420** (.000)
Career Communication	.274** (.000)	.344** (.000)	.174** (.002)	.344** (.000)
Communication Responsiveness	.411** (.000)	.464** (.000)	.163** (.004)	.444** (.000)
Personal Communication	.384** (.000)	.237** (.000)	.352** (.000)	.446** (.000)
Overall	.468** (.000)	.482** (.000)	.276** (.000)	.537** (.000)

* $p < 0.05$

Table 7 Shows the data on the results of significance on the relationship between *communication* and *employee engagement*. The overall *r*-value is 0.537 with $p < 0.05$ which is significant rejecting the null hypothesis of no significant relationship.

Additionally, it is observed that *task communication, performance communication, career communication, communication responsiveness* as indicators of *communication* when correlated to *vigor*, the overall *r*-value is 0.468 with $p < 0.05$ hence, *significant*. Likewise, when indicators of *communication* are correlated to *dedication*, the overall *r*-value is 0.482 with $p < 0.05$ hence, *significant*. Moreover, when indicators of *communication* are correlated to *absorption*, the overall *r*-value is 0.276 with $p < 0.05$ hence, *significant*. The probability values showed significant correlations.

The result of the study is supported by the model of Job -Demand-Resource (JD-R) Model of Demerouti & Bakker (2001) that communication has relationship with employee engagement. This is also consistent with the result of the study of Karanges, Johnston, Beatson and Amanda (2015) that communication and employee engagement are correlated. They pointed out that communication enable to facilitate interaction between organization, managers and workforces which can create workplace relationships significantl to employee engagement. Likewise, MacLeod and

Clarke (2009) highlight communication as a relevant aspect for performance enhancement through employee engagement. The study of Bindl and Parker (2010) also revealed that communication within the organization involved practices designed to encourage employee understanding of the goals of the business firm and allow them to identify the value of the organization. These practices are considered as significant influences for workers engagement since they enable to practice and internalized organizational values and involved in the attainment of organizational goals, resulting in more engaged workers.

Table 8. Significance on the Influence of Exogenous Variables on Employee Engagement

Exogenous Variables		Employee Engagement			
		B	B	T	Sig.
Constant		2.250		11.116	.000
Human Resource Management Practices		.130	.165	2.832	.005
Service Climate		.054	.060	.884	.377
Communication		.307	.407	6.152	.000
R	.560				
R ²	.313				
ΔR	.307				
F	47.756				
P	.000				

Presented in Table 8 is the results of regression analysis showing the significant influence of exogenous variables: *human resource management practices, service climate and communication on employee engagement*. The result revealed that the three exogenous variables are found to be significant predictor of employee engagement having an F- value of 47.756 with a p-value less than 0.05.

The analysis reveals that when *HRM practices, service climate and communication* are regressed with employee engagement, it generates a computed R² value or coefficient of determination value of 0.313, meaning 31.30 percent of the variance of *employee engagement* is attributed to *HRM practices, service climate and communication*. This means that 68.70 percent of the variation can be attributed to other variables not covered in the study. As revealed in the F-value of 47.75 (p<0.01) *HRM practices, service climate, and communication influenced employee engagement*. The result is significant hence the null hypothesis of no significant influence is rejected.

Moreover, on a singular capacity of the independent variables- *communication and human resource management practices* significantly influence the *employee engagement* of restaurants with their p- values < 0.05. Of the two variables, *communication* was noted to be the best predictor of employee engagement based on the beta standardized coefficients.

The result can actually can be supported by The Social Exchange Theory (SET) which includes the most influential theoretical paradigms to understand workplace behavior, this study applies the social exchange perspectives to further explain the relationships between HRM practices, communication and employee engagement (Aktar&Pangil, 2018). Based on SET, a reciprocal employee- employer relationship could be found through a series of interactions between two parties who are in a state of mutual interdependence. Thus, SET can be considered to explain the employee behavior and the relationship of two parties including employee and employer (Coyle-Shapiro & Conway, 2005).

The proposition of Jafri (2013) empirical research supports the influence of human resource management practices (training and development, performance evaluation, work- life balance and reward & benefits) on employee

engagement. Also, the connection between communication and engagement by Welch (2011) where communication includes task communication, career communication, and personal communication among others influenced employee engagement. The study of Welch and Jackson (2007) explained that communication between organization managers and its internal stakeholder like employees was designed in promoting commitment to the business firm, awareness of its changing environment, sense of belonging and thorough understanding of its evolving organizational goals.

Table 9 .Summary of Goodness of Fit Measures of the Five Generated Models

Model	P-value (>0.05)	CMIN/DF (0<value <2)	GFI (>0.95)	CFI (>0.95)	NFI (>0.95)	TLI (>0.95)	RMSEA (<0.05)	P-close (>0.05)
1	.000	8.469	.762	.738	.715	.684	.154	.000
2	.000	5.820	.835	.835	.809	.796	.123	.000
3	.000	4.334	.911	.911	.888	.880	.103	.000
4	.000	4.924	.866	.866	.838	.834	.111	.000
5	.054	1.489	.996	.996	.987	.989	.039	.602

Legend: CMIN/DF – Chi_Square/Degrees of Freedom
 GFI – Goodness-of-Fit Index
 RMSEA – Root Mean Square of Error Approximation
 NFI-NormedFitIndex
 TLI-Tucker-LewisIndex
 CFI – Comparative-Fit Index

Table 9 highlights the analysis on the interrelationships among HRM practices, service climate, and communication to the employee engagement of restaurants in region XII. There are five alternative models tested to achieve the best fit model of employee engagement. Every model developed a framework that could be decomposed into two sub-models which are measurements of measures loads on each factor to their latent construct while the structural model defines among the latent variables. Furthermore, the assessment of fit is used as a basis for accepting and rejecting the model. As a rule, the researcher established the relationship of the causality relationship of the latent variable towards the different latent variables. In addition, it institutes the relationship between endogenous and exogenous variables. The moment that the structured model exhibits with suitable fit, it underscores that there is consistency of the empirical relationships among variables inferred by the model. The model parameter estimates entail the magnitude and direction of the relationship among variables. Screening of variables was critically observed to give premium on the normality of the data. Variables with interval or ratio data are counted in the formulation of model. Generated model of this study is solidified with theories.

There are five generated models presented in the study. The summary of the findings of the goodness of fit measures of these five generated models is presented in table 9 above.

In identifying the best fit model, all indices included must consistently fall within the acceptable ranges. Chi-square/ degrees of freedom value should be less than 5 with its corresponding p-value result of greater than 0.05. Root-mean square error (RMSEA) approximation value must be less than 0.05 and its corresponding P-close value must be greater than 0.05. The other indices such as the normed-fit- index (NFI), Tucker- Lewis index (TLI), comparative-fit index (CFI) and the goodness of fit- index (GFI) must all be greater than 0.95. It was further noted that the first four models failed to meet the criterion to become the best fit.

It was Model five found to have indices that consistently indicate a very good fit to the data as all the indices presented fall within each criterion. Moreover, the model fitting was calculated as being highly acceptable as presented in table 7. The Chi-square divided by the degrees of freedom was 1.489 with the P-value of .602. This indicated a very good fit model to the data. This was also strongly supported by RMSEA index of .039 which was less than to 0.05 level of significance with its corresponding P-close value greater than 0.05. Likewise, the other indices such as NFI, TLI and CFI were found to be consistently indicating a very good fit model as their values, all fall within each criterion. Thus, there was no need to find another model for testing because it was already found to be the best fit among all the tested

Structural Equation Model on Employee Engagement of Restaurants in Region XII

model. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no best fit model was rejected. It could be stated that there is a best fit model that predicts the *employee engagement* of restaurants in Region XII.

Moreover, the model clearly illustrates the importance of *human resource management and communication* as a predictor of employee engagement. However, it could be gathered from the model that out of four indicators of *human resource management practices*, only two remained as significant predictor of *employee engagement* to wit: *rewards and benefits and work life balance*. For *communication*, only three out of five indicators were found to effect employee engagement namely: *task-communication, communication-responsiveness and personal-communication*. On the part of *employee engagement*, only two out of three indicators remained to be measured these are *vigor and dedication*.

Thus, the findings suggest that *employee engagement* of restaurant employees was best anchored on: *human resource management practices* which include *rewards and benefit and work life balance*; and *communication* which was measured in terms of *taskcommunication, communicationresponsiveness and personal communication*, and *employee engagement* which was measured in terms of *vigor and dedication*

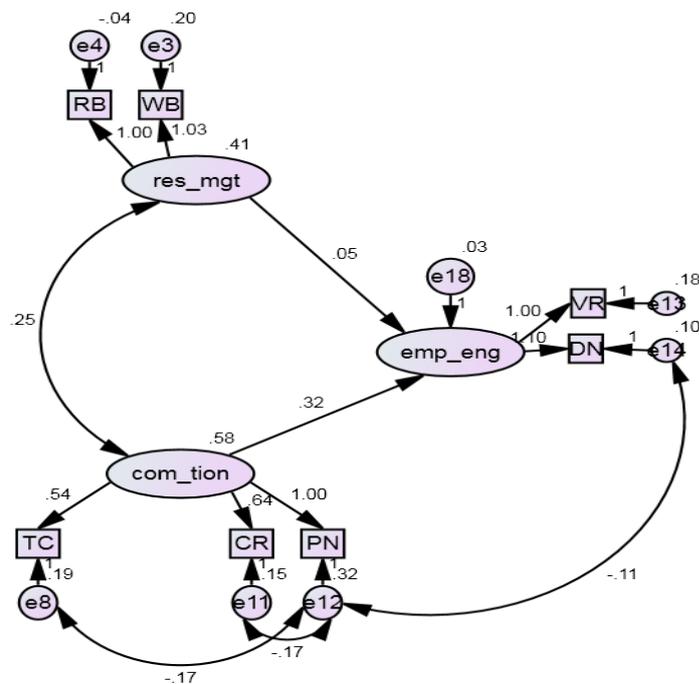


Fig. 1 The Interrelationship Between HRM Practices and Communication And their Direct Causal Relationship Towards Employee Engagement

Legend:

<i>res_mgt</i> – Human Resource Management Practices	<i>com_tion</i> - Communication	<i>Emp_eng</i> – Employee Engagement
<i>WB</i> – Work life Balance	<i>TC</i> – Task Communication	<i>VR</i> – Vigor
<i>RB</i> – Rewards and Benefits	<i>PN</i> – Personal Communication	<i>DN</i> – Dedication
	<i>CR</i> - Career Communication	

The Best Fit Model that Predicts Employee Engagement

Among five proposed hypothesized models, it was Hypothesized Model 5 found to satisfy the criteria for the best fit model. It shows the direct causal link of the exogenous variable on the endogenous variable. The endogenous variable is the employee engagement which is measured in terms of vigor and dedication.

Structural Equation Model on Employee Engagement of Restaurants in Region XII

The exogenous variables are: human resource management practices (res_mgt.) with rewards and benefits (RB) and work life balance (WB) as measures; communication (com_tion) which is measured in terms of task/communication (TC), careercommunication (CR), and personalcommunication (PN).

It could be seen from the model that only vigor as well as dedication remained as the measurement construct of employee engagement out of three indicators. Vigor, an observed variable that predicts employee engagement, refers to employee's level of energy level and their willingness to extend more efforts in doing their work and dedication refers to how much involved the employees are in their work and absorption pertains to employee's full concentration in doing their work (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003). Furthermore, Carmeli et al. (2009) argued that employees who are invigorated were more likely to create a more pleasant and positive work atmosphere and reported higher levels of well-being and vitality. This is supported also by the theory of Shirom (2007) that vigorous workforces were likely to express a higher level of overall employee's well-being and become more diverse effective and engaging. Moreover, in the study of Kanungo (1982), & Scheider, Macey, Barbera, & Martin (2009) emphasized that employees who have high level of dedication to work enhances an organization's employee retention, among others. Employees who are highly dedicated to work always work hard, never give up, constantly look for challenges at work, and highly concentrate on work.

For human resource management, as one of the remaining exogenous variables in the best fit model, only two out of four observed variables appeared to have causal link to employee engagement. These are rewards and benefit and work life balance. Rewards and benefits refer to the provisions of fair pay based on employee's performance. Also, receiving recognition and appreciation from their managers (Jafri, 2013). These are consistent to the study of Hayes and Ninemeier (2009) that explains service rewards is considered as significant resource afforded by an organization in motivating its workers to perform towards the achievements of goals. Moreover, employees often connect their value in the eye of their employer through the rewards that they received. In contrast, Batt (2014) pointed out that comparing with other business industries, restaurants have traditionally offering few benefits to their workers. Minimal number of restaurants provide employees with paid vacation, paid sick leave, as well as subsidized health insurance.

Work life balance is another indicator of human resource management. The result supports the study of Allen, Herst, Bruck & Sutton (2000) that work-life balance is linked to the reduction of work-related stress and greater life fulfilment, with some manifestation that the family and work relationships are strengthening over time that leads to engagement of employees. Study of Mengucet al.(2013) emphasized that when the work role activities of employees benefits their personal life, they will become more attentive, dedicated and absorbed to their work and reciprocate with dynamic participation and involvement in business organization activities.

Furthermore, the communication aspect of the study, three out five indicators were included in the best fit model. These are task-communication, career communication and personal communication. The findings support prior researcher's argument that constant, open, and transparent communication would keep an organization visible, fulfills its workers' information needs, and allows employees stay well-informed of goings-on in the firm (Men & Stacks, 2014). Additionally, as stated by Jiang & Men (2015) in their study that when a business organizations openly share complete, relevant, substantial and truthful information with employees in a timely manner, motivates employee participation, and transpire balanced information that is open to worker's scrutiny and holds the business organization accountable, employees are more likely to feel engaged.

Conclusion

The use of structural equation model strengthened the consistency and reliability of the study because the analysis goes through the steps of model specification, model estimation and model evaluation. Results showed that the level of human resource management practices, service climate, communication and employee engagement are very high indicating that these variables are observed and manifested by the restaurant employees. There are significant relationships of the following variables: human resource management practices, service climate, and communication with employee engagement. Of five explored structural models, model five has the indices that consistently indicated an outstanding fit to the data; hence, it is identified as the best fit model.

This supports the Social Exchange Theory (SET) of Homans (1958) which highlights the most influential theoretical paradigms to understand workplace behavior that applies the social exchange perspectives to further explain the relationships between HRM practices, service climates, communication and employee engagement. Moreover, Aktar&Pangil (2018) stated that SET is a mutual relationship that could be manifested through successions of interactions between two parties who are in a state of reciprocal interdependence. The model of Job Demand Resource (JDR) Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, and Schaufeli (2001) extends SET by distinguishing that job demands and job resources may affect job stress and employee performance outcomes. As explain further by Jiang & Men (2015) that organizational human resources such as manager's support, work environment and communication practices are

considered critical for employees not only to deal with work related stress and job demands but also to foster their personal growth and engagement.

The significant relationship of the three variables: human resource management practices, service climate, and communication towards employee engagement indicates that these variables must be sustained by restaurant management because the higher the level of these variables will result into higher level of employee engagement. This can be done through continuously setting a strong human resource management practices to ensure that they will have efficient and effective workers in place to meet operational needs. The restaurant should foster also robust service-climate because it influences employees' attitudes and behaviors that are beneficial to the restaurant operations and employee engagement.

The best fit model showing human resource management with indicators of rewards and benefits and work life balance; and communication which include career, task and personal communications as remaining indicators and strong predictor of employee engagement implies that human resource management practices and communication can be the prime focus compared to other variables. This can be done by constant provisions of healthy working environment and management support to the work and wellbeing of their employees. Also, restaurant management must always practice open communication where supervisor can clearly discuss policy changes and direct employees on handling problems at work.

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