



Determinants of Employee Engagement among Employees of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises in Madurai District: An Empirical Study

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Abstract: The present study examines the determinants of employee engagement among employees of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in Madurai District, Tamil Nadu. A descriptive cross-sectional research design was adopted, and primary data were collected from 175 respondents through a structured questionnaire using stratified sampling. The study examines six determinants: job characteristics, intrinsic and extrinsic rewards, perceived organizational support, perceived supervisor support, procedural justice, and distributive justice. Percentage analysis and multiple regression analysis were employed to analyse the data. The findings reveal that the selected determinants collectively explain 54.8% of the variation in employee engagement ($R^2 = 0.548$). Perceived supervisor support emerged as the strongest significant predictor, followed by procedural justice, organizational support, and intrinsic and extrinsic rewards. However, job characteristics and distributive justice did not demonstrate statistically significant effects. The study highlights the importance of supportive supervision, organizational fairness, and effective reward practices in strengthening employee engagement among MSME employees.

Keywords: Employee Engagement, MSMEs, Supervisor Support, Organizational Support, Procedural Justice, Intrinsic and Extrinsic Rewards.

Introduction

Employee engagement has emerged as an important concept in human resource management and organizational behaviour, particularly in the context of increasing business competition, changing workforce expectations, and the growing importance of human capital in achieving organizational effectiveness. Organizations increasingly recognize that their success depends not only on attracting and retaining competent employees but also on encouraging their active involvement, commitment, and enthusiasm towards organizational objectives. Employee engagement represents a positive psychological connection between employees and their work, characterized by dedication, energy, involvement, and willingness to contribute beyond formal job requirements. Mohapatra and Sharma (2010) emphasized that employee engagement plays a significant role in organizational performance by encouraging employees to demonstrate greater commitment, motivation, and involvement in their assigned responsibilities. Similarly, Ram and Prabhakar (2011) highlighted employee engagement as an important organizational strategy that contributes to employee satisfaction, organizational citizenship behaviour, and improved workplace performance.

Employee engagement is a multidimensional construct that encompasses the physical, cognitive, and emotional involvement of employees in their work roles. Engaged employees generally exhibit enthusiasm, dedication, and a strong sense of identification with their organizational goals. Rothmann and Rothmann (2010) explained that employee engagement is associated with psychological meaningfulness, psychological availability, and the availability of organizational resources that enable employees to perform effectively. Bhuvanaiah and Raya (2016)



further emphasized that employee engagement is influenced by employees' expectations, workplace experiences, and organizational conditions. Their findings indicated that organizational culture significantly influenced work engagement, while transformational leadership contributed positively to job performance. These observations suggest that employee engagement is not merely an individual psychological condition but is also shaped by organizational practices, leadership behaviour, and the overall working environment.

The determinants of employee engagement have received considerable attention in organizational research, with previous studies identifying various individual, interpersonal, and organizational factors influencing employees' engagement levels. Danish et al. (2014) demonstrated that core self-evaluation, fairness in employee treatment, and the organizational service environment were positively associated with employee engagement. Similarly, Aninkan and Oyewole (2014) identified work locus of control, conscientiousness, openness to experience, leadership style, organizational climate, and supervisory support as significant factors associated with employee engagement. These findings indicate that employee engagement is influenced by a combination of personal characteristics and organizational conditions. Furthermore, Mahon et al. (2014) established that shared personal vision, positive organizational mood, and perceived organizational support were positively associated with organizational engagement, emphasizing the importance of supportive and psychologically favourable workplace environments.

Leadership, organizational support, recognition, and career development opportunities have also been identified as important determinants of employee engagement. Hirimuthugoda (2014) found that perceived organizational support, supervisor support, recognition, and procedural justice were positively and significantly related to employee engagement among office employees in private hospitals. James et al. (2011) demonstrated that supervisor support and recognition, schedule satisfaction, and job clarity significantly predicted employee engagement across different age groups, while career development was important for most employee groups examined. Gujral and Jain (2013) reported that job roles, rewards and recognition, and leadership and planning were strong determinants of employee engagement in the information technology sector. Similarly, Ganesan et al. (2017) identified significant relationships between employee engagement and pay and benefits, leadership style, communication, and work-life balance, with leadership style emerging as the most influential factor in their study. Collectively, these studies highlight the importance of effective managerial practices, equitable treatment, employee recognition, and a supportive organizational environment in strengthening employee engagement.

In the Indian organizational context, employee engagement has received increasing attention because of its potential contribution to workforce productivity, organizational commitment, and employee retention. Gupta et al. (2015), in their study of financial services offshoring organizations in India, identified implicit benefits, organizational culture, and organizational policies as important factors affecting employee engagement. Sathyanarayana et al. (2017), examining employees in the Indian information technology sector, found that supervision, quality of the working environment, reliability of information, appraisal processes, employee satisfaction, and organizational commitment were major determinants of employee engagement. These findings suggest that organizations must adopt comprehensive employee management practices that address both employees' psychological expectations and their workplace requirements. However, the relative importance of these determinants may vary depending on organizational characteristics, employment conditions, and the nature of the industry.

Micro, Small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) provide an important setting for examining employee engagement because their organizational structures, management practices, and employment relationships may differ from those of larger organizations. In MSMEs, employees may be required to perform multiple responsibilities, adapt to changing organizational demands, and maintain close working relationships with supervisors and colleagues. Such workplace conditions may influence how employees perceive leadership support, recognition, communication, career development opportunities, and organizational fairness. The findings



of Mokaya and Kipyegon (2014), which established positive relationships between employee engagement and performance management, personal development, workplace recreation, and remuneration, provide a basis for examining these factors in different organizational contexts. Similarly, Nkatha (2017) identified compensation, leadership, and career advancement opportunities as significant determinants of employee engagement in microfinance institutions. Although these studies were conducted in different organizational and geographical settings, they provide relevant insights for investigating employee engagement within MSMEs.

Despite the growing body of empirical research on employee engagement, the studies reviewed have predominantly examined employees working in information technology organizations, banking institutions, healthcare establishments, public sector organizations, and other service industries. Research findings from these organizational settings may not be directly generalizable to MSMEs because of differences in organizational resources, management structures, employment practices, and workplace relationships. Therefore, examining employee engagement among employees of MSMEs in Madurai District provides an opportunity to understand the relevance of previously identified determinants within a specific geographical and organizational context. Against this background, the present study aims to examine the factors influencing employee engagement among employees working in MSMEs in Madurai District.

2 Review of Literature

Employee engagement refers to a positive psychological state characterized by employees' physical, emotional, and cognitive involvement in their work. Engaged employees demonstrate enthusiasm, dedication, commitment, and willingness to contribute towards organizational objectives.

Previous studies have identified several individual and organizational factors influencing employee engagement, including job characteristics, intrinsic and extrinsic rewards, perceived organizational support, perceived supervisor support, procedural justice, and distributive justice. Ram and Prabhakar (2011) examined these six antecedents and established their relationships with employee engagement among employees in the Jordanian hotel industry. Similarly, Hirimuthugoda (2014) emphasized the importance of organizational support, supervisor support, recognition, and procedural justice in enhancing employee engagement. The following review examines the conceptual and empirical evidence relating to the selected independent variables and their influence on employee engagement, providing a theoretical foundation for the present study among employees of small and medium enterprises in Madurai District.

2.1 Job Characteristics and Employee Engagement

Job characteristics refer to the inherent features of a job, including skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback, which influence employees' motivation and psychological involvement in their work. Ram and Prabhakar (2011) found a significant positive relationship between job characteristics and employee engagement, indicating that employees performing meaningful and challenging tasks with greater autonomy and opportunities to utilize their skills demonstrated higher engagement levels. Their study emphasized that enriched job roles encourage employees to invest greater physical, cognitive, and emotional effort in their responsibilities. Similarly, Gujral and Jain (2013) identified job roles as important determinants of employee engagement in the information technology sector, highlighting the relevance of challenging assignments and meaningful work experiences. Margaretha et al. (2018) also reported that job characteristics influenced employee engagement among lecturers in Indonesia. These findings suggest that appropriately designed jobs that provide autonomy, meaningful responsibilities, and opportunities for skill utilization can strengthen employee engagement.

2.2 Intrinsic and Extrinsic Rewards and Employee Engagement

Intrinsic and extrinsic rewards are important motivational factors that influence employees' attitudes and engagement towards their work. Intrinsic rewards refer to psychological benefits derived from performing



meaningful and satisfying work, including achievement, recognition, responsibility, and personal growth, whereas extrinsic rewards include salary, incentives, bonuses, promotions, and other financial or material benefits. Ram and Prabhakar (2011) established a positive relationship between intrinsic and extrinsic rewards and employee engagement, indicating that an appropriate combination of financial and non-financial rewards encourages greater employee involvement and commitment. Mokaya and Kipyegon (2014) found that remuneration had a strong positive relationship with employee engagement among banking employees in Kenya. Similarly, Nkatha (2017) reported that compensation positively and significantly influenced employee engagement in microfinance institutions. In the Indian context, Gujral and Jain (2013) identified rewards and recognition as significant determinants of employee engagement, while Mohapatra and Sharma (2010) established pay as one of the predictors of employee engagement in a public sector undertaking. These studies suggest that reward practices that acknowledge employee contributions and address both financial and psychological expectations can enhance employee engagement.

2.3 Perceived Organizational Support and Employee Engagement

Perceived organizational support refers to employees' beliefs regarding the extent to which their organization values their contributions, recognizes their efforts, and demonstrates concern for their well-being. Employees who perceive greater organizational support are more likely to develop positive attitudes towards their organization and demonstrate stronger involvement in their work. Ram and Prabhakar (2011) established a positive relationship between perceived organizational support and employee engagement, suggesting that supportive organizational practices encourage employees to reciprocate through greater commitment and engagement. Hirimuthugoda (2014) similarly found that perceived organizational support was positively and significantly associated with employee engagement among office employees in private hospitals in Sri Lanka. Mahon et al. (2014) reported that perceived organizational support was positively associated with organizational engagement, while Rothmann and Rothmann (2010) identified organizational support as an important job resource associated with vigour, dedication, and absorption. Furthermore, Margaretha et al. (2018) found that perceived organizational support influenced employee engagement among lecturers in Indonesia. These findings indicate that organizations that provide adequate resources, fair treatment, supportive policies, and concern for employee well-being are more likely to foster a highly engaged workforce.

2.4 Perceived Supervisor Support and Employee Engagement

Perceived supervisor support refers to employees' perceptions of the extent to which their immediate supervisors provide guidance, encouragement, recognition, assistance, and concern for their professional well-being. Supervisors play an important role in shaping employees' workplace experiences and influencing their motivation and commitment. Ram and Prabhakar (2011) identified a strong positive relationship between perceived supervisor support and employee engagement, demonstrating that employees who received adequate managerial guidance and support exhibited higher engagement levels. Hirimuthugoda (2014) also found that supervisor support was positively and significantly associated with employee engagement and emphasized its importance among the organizational factors examined. James et al. (2011) established that supervisor support and recognition significantly predicted employee engagement across different age groups in the retail sector. Similarly, Aninkan and Oyewole (2014) reported a significant positive relationship between supervisory support and employee engagement. Margaretha et al. (2018) further confirmed the influence of perceived supervisor support on employee engagement. These findings highlight that supportive supervisory relationships, effective communication, constructive feedback, and employee recognition are important conditions for promoting greater employee engagement.



2.5 Perceptions of Procedural Justice and Employee Engagement

Procedural justice refers to employees' perceptions of fairness in the procedures, policies, and decision-making processes used by an organization to determine work-related outcomes. It emphasizes consistency, transparency, impartiality, and employee participation in organizational decisions. Ram and Prabhakar (2011) found a positive relationship between perceptions of procedural justice and employee engagement, indicating that employees who perceived organizational procedures as fair were more likely to demonstrate positive workplace attitudes and greater engagement. Hirimuthugoda (2014) similarly established that procedural justice was positively and significantly correlated with employee engagement among private hospital employees. The study emphasized the importance of transparent and equitable organizational procedures in strengthening employees' trust and involvement. Danish et al. (2014) also identified fairness and employee treatment as significant factors influencing employee engagement in Pakistan's service sector, although their study examined fairness more broadly rather than procedural justice alone. These findings suggest that fair decision-making processes, consistent organizational policies, and opportunities for employee participation may encourage employees to develop stronger psychological attachment and commitment towards their work.

2.6 Perceptions of Distributive Justice and Employee Engagement

Distributive justice refers to employees' perceptions of fairness in the allocation of organizational rewards, compensation, recognition, responsibilities, and other work-related outcomes. It reflects the extent to which employees believe that organizational benefits are distributed equitably in relation to their contributions, responsibilities, and performance. Ram and Prabhakar (2011) established a positive relationship between perceived distributive justice and employee engagement, indicating that employees who perceived the allocation of organizational rewards and benefits as fair demonstrated greater engagement. Their study further highlighted the association between distributive justice and other desirable work-related outcomes, including job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Danish et al. (2014) found that fairness and treatment of employees were positively and significantly related to employee engagement, supporting the broader importance of organizational fairness. Similarly, Mokaya and Kipyegon (2014) demonstrated that remuneration was significantly associated with employee engagement, although their study did not directly measure distributive justice. Collectively, these findings suggest that equitable allocation of rewards, recognition, and organizational resources can contribute to positive employee perceptions and strengthen engagement.

Based on the review of existing literature and the empirical findings of previous studies, the following hypotheses are formulated

- H1: Job characteristics have a significant positive influence on employee engagement.
- H2: Intrinsic and extrinsic rewards have a significant positive influence on employee engagement.
- H3: Perceived organizational support has a significant positive influence on employee engagement.
- H4: Perceived supervisor support has a significant positive influence on employee engagement.
- H5: Perceptions of procedural justice have a significant positive influence on employee engagement.
- H6: Perceptions of distributive justice have a significant positive influence on employee engagement.

3 Research Methodology

The present study adopts a descriptive cross-sectional research design to examine the determinants of employee engagement among employees of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in Madurai District, Tamil Nadu. The study follows a quantitative research approach, employing a survey method to collect primary data from 175 respondents working in various MSMEs in Madurai District. A stratified sampling technique is

employed to select respondents from different categories of MSMEs to ensure appropriate representation of employees across the sector. Primary data are collected using a structured questionnaire comprising two sections. The first section gathers information on the demographic and employment characteristics of respondents, while the second section measures the determinants of employee engagement and employee engagement itself.

The study considers six independent variables, namely job characteristics, intrinsic and extrinsic rewards, perceived organizational support, perceived supervisor support, perceptions of procedural justice, and perceptions of distributive justice, while employee engagement is treated as the dependent variable. The measurement constructs are drawn from the framework adopted by Ram and Prabhakar (2011), with questionnaire items assessed using a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). As the study follows a cross-sectional design, data are collected at a single point in time to examine the relationships between the selected variables. The collected data are proposed to be analysed using descriptive statistics, including frequency and percentage analysis, to describe respondents' demographic characteristics, while multiple regression analysis is employed to determine the individual and collective influence of the six independent variables on employee engagement.

4 Analysis

This section focuses on analysing the data collected from 175 employees working in Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in Madurai District. The collected data were analysed using appropriate statistical techniques to examine the demographic characteristics of the respondents and identify the determinants influencing employee engagement. Frequency and percentage analysis were employed to describe the demographic and employment profiles of the respondents. Further, multiple regression analysis was conducted to assess the influence of job characteristics, intrinsic and extrinsic rewards, perceived organizational support, perceived supervisor support, perceptions of procedural justice, and perceptions of distributive justice on employee engagement. The findings are presented in tables and interpreted to provide a clear understanding of the significant factors associated with employee engagement among MSME employees.

4.1 Demographic profile of the respondents

The demographic profile of the 175 respondents indicates that the majority belong to micro enterprises (41.14%), followed by small enterprises (34.86%) and medium enterprises (24.00%). Regarding age, the largest proportion of respondents (30.86%) falls within the 40–50 years category. In terms of educational qualifications, most respondents have completed higher secondary education (37.14%), followed by those with qualifications below higher secondary level (24.00%). The gender distribution shows a slightly higher representation of male respondents (56.00%) than female respondents (44.00%). Regarding monthly salary, a substantial majority of respondents (86.29%) earn up to ₹10,000, while only 2.85% earn more than ₹30,000.

Table 1 Profile of the respondents

Demographic Characteristics	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Organisation	Micro Enterprise	72	41.14
	Small Enterprise	61	34.86
	Medium Enterprise	42	24.00
Age	Up to 30 years	36	20.57
	31–40 years	44	25.14
	40–50 years	54	30.86

	Above 50 years	41	23.43
Education Level	Below Higher Secondary	42	24.00
	Higher Secondary	65	37.14
	Diploma / ITI	35	20.00
	Undergraduate Degree	25	14.29
	Postgraduate Degree and Above	8	4.57
Gender	Male	98	56.00
	Female	77	44.00
Salary	Up to 10000	151	86.29
	10001 to 20000	11	6.29
	20001 to 30000	8	4.57
	More than 30000	5	2.85

4.2 Impact of Determinants of Employee Engagement

Multiple regression analysis was conducted to examine the impact of job characteristics, intrinsic and extrinsic rewards, perceived organizational support, perceived supervisor support, perceptions of procedural justice, and perceptions of distributive justice on employee engagement.

Table 2 Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.741 ^a	.548	.532	.30273
a. Predictors: (Constant), job characteristics, intrinsic and extrinsic rewards, perceived organizational support, perceived supervisor support, perceptions of procedural justice, and perceptions of distributive justice				

The model summary indicates a strong positive relationship between the independent variables and employee engagement ($R = 0.741$). The R Square value of 0.548 reveals that the six determinants collectively explain 54.8% of the variation in employee engagement, while the remaining 45.2% is attributable to other factors not included in the model. The Adjusted R Square value of 0.532 further indicates that the model explains 53.2% of the variation after adjusting for the number of predictors. The standard error of the estimate is 0.30273, indicating the extent of prediction error in the regression model.

Table 3 Model Fit

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	18.703	6	3.117	34.013	.000 ^b
	Residual	15.397	168	.092		
	Total	34.100	174			
a. Dependent Variable: Employee Engagement						
b. Predictors: (Constant), job characteristics, intrinsic and extrinsic rewards, perceived organizational support, perceived supervisor support, perceptions of procedural justice, and perceptions of distributive justice						

The ANOVA results indicate that the overall regression model is statistically significant ($F = 34.013$, $p < 0.001$). This demonstrates that the selected determinants collectively have a statistically significant relationship with employee engagement. Thus, the regression model is suitable for explaining variations in employee engagement.

Table 4 Regression Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T values	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.017	.234		4.356	.000
	Job characteristics	.019	.048	.027	.389	.697
	Intrinsic and extrinsic rewards	.110	.046	.157	2.395	.018
	Perceived organizational support	.139	.040	.195	3.436	.001
	Perceived supervisor support	.266	.060	.337	4.432	.000
	Perceptions of procedural justice	.169	.057	.211	2.958	.004
	Perceptions of distributive justice	.080	.058	.096	1.380	.170
a. Dependent Variable: Employee Engagement						

The regression coefficient results reveal that four of the six determinants have a statistically significant positive impact on employee engagement.



Perceived supervisor support emerges as the strongest significant predictor of employee engagement ($\beta = 0.337$, $t = 4.432$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that employees who receive greater support from their supervisors tend to demonstrate higher levels of engagement. Perceptions of procedural justice also have a significant positive impact ($\beta = 0.211$, $t = 2.958$, $p = 0.004$), highlighting the importance of fairness in organizational procedures and decision-making processes.

Similarly, perceived organizational support significantly and positively influences employee engagement ($\beta = 0.195$, $t = 3.436$, $p = 0.001$), suggesting that employees who perceive greater organizational support are more likely to remain engaged in their work. Intrinsic and extrinsic rewards also demonstrate a significant positive influence ($\beta = 0.157$, $t = 2.395$, $p = 0.018$), emphasizing the role of rewards in strengthening employee engagement.

However, perceptions of distributive justice ($\beta = 0.096$, $t = 1.380$, $p = 0.170$) and job characteristics ($\beta = 0.027$, $t = 0.389$, $p = 0.697$) do not exhibit statistically significant effects on employee engagement at the 5% significance level.

The findings establish that perceived supervisor support, perceptions of procedural justice, perceived organizational support, and intrinsic and extrinsic rewards are significant positive determinants of employee engagement. Among these factors, perceived supervisor support has the greatest relative influence

5 Conclusion

The study concludes that organizational and managerial factors play a significant role in influencing employee engagement among employees of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises in Madurai District. The findings establish that perceived supervisor support, procedural justice, perceived organizational support, and intrinsic and extrinsic rewards have significant positive relationships with employee engagement. Among these determinants, perceived supervisor support emerged as the most influential factor, emphasizing the importance of effective leadership, guidance, communication, and encouragement in the workplace. Although job characteristics and distributive justice showed positive relationships, their effects were not statistically significant. The findings suggest that MSMEs should prioritize supportive supervisory practices, transparent decision-making procedures, employee recognition, and appropriate reward systems to strengthen employee engagement. By creating a supportive and fair working environment, MSMEs can encourage greater employee involvement, commitment, and motivation. The study provides useful insights for MSME owners and managers in developing human resource practices that promote employee engagement and contribute to organizational effectiveness.

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