

**IMPROVING EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AND WELFARE AT RELIANCE
INDUSTRIES: EVALUATION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

MODULE NAME AND CODE: HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT(BMMB7007)

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Executive Summary

This report critically examines Reliance Industries' current employee engagement initiatives, and it highlights both the strengths and areas for improvement within their strategies. The company's commitment to fostering a vibrant work environment is evident in its various programs like Career Acceleration Programme (CAP), STEP-UP programme, Spectrum annual learning event and the 3E's of Wellness initiative. However, there are opportunities for enhancing inclusivity and efficacy across these efforts.

Reliance has introduced several commendable employee engagement strategies that aim at boosting productivity as well as developing an enjoyable work culture. Their focus on wellness through platforms like '3E's', offering multi-faceted learning opportunities with CAP or STEP-UP programs reflects positively their commitment towards employee's welfare.

However, analysis using Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory indicates unequal pathways for self-actualisation within organisation particularly due to lack of inclusive developmental programmes catering mostly only mid-level managers / high-potential individuals. Additionally, while Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory suggests satisfactory hygiene factors at Reliance; motivational aspects might be negatively affected by potential concerns surrounding long-term effectiveness of reward-based wellness systems or issues related insufficient home-based infrastructure facilities during COVID-19 induced remote working scenario.

Based above analyses following recommendations were made:

- 1) Expand Professional Development Opportunities: Extend training and development programmes beyond just mid-level managers/high-potential individuals so every member feels valued motivated committed organization thereby creating conducive environment self-growth actualization across board.
- 2) Enhance Communication Strategies: Foster transparency open dialogue through regular townhall meetings Q&A sessions top management directly addresses workforce concerns updates leading improved trust motivation amongst teams.
- 3) Revamp Wellness Initiative: Transition from simple rewards-based health program holistic approach focusing physically emotionally intellectually socially occupationally spiritually balanced lifestyles could bring about long-term

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1 Introduction

This report provides an in-depth look at employee engagement and welfare strategies at Reliance Industries, one of the largest private sector employers in India. With a strong commitment to boosting productivity and creating an enjoyable work environment, Reliance has implemented several initiatives to engage employees on various levels(Reliance Annual Report, 2020). From wellness programs that incentivize healthy lifestyles to learning opportunities for middle-level managers and high-potential individuals, the company strives to foster a vibrant community within its workforce(Reliance Annual Report, 2020). Despite these efforts however, there are areas identified where improvement might be needed which we will examine further in this report's subsequent sections. Through theoretical models and data analysis, this report aims to provide insights into how well these efforts align with theories of human needs satisfaction at work place alongside offering recommendations for potential enhancement.

1.1 Overview of Reliance Industries Business situation

Reliance Industries regularly implement initiatives to enhance employee well-being and create an enjoyable work environment. Through programs like the Career Acceleration Programme and STEP-UP program, Reliance provides learning and growth opportunities for middle-level managers and high-potential employees. They also organize annual learning events to strengthen the company's learning culture(Reliance Annual Report, 2020).

In addition to these initiatives, Reliance General Insurance Company Limited has implemented an online platform that promotes a healthier lifestyle among employees by rewarding them with points that can be redeemed at popular outlets(Reliance Jobs, 2023)

Reliance Industries maintains a robust HR framework aimed at attracting purpose-driven talent and encouraging entrepreneurship within the organization. They identify high potential individuals and offer them accelerated learning opportunities through various methods such as on-the-job training, digital learning, coaching, and workshops(Reliance Annual Report, 2020). During challenging times like the COVID-19 pandemic, Reliance shifted to agile working modes while ensuring regular engagement with employees through virtual initiatives(Reliance Jobs, 2023). This demonstrates their commitment not only towards productivity but also towards creating a vibrant community within the company.

2 Importance of Employee Engagement

A study conducted by (Vance, 2001) found that highly engaged teams achieve 21% greater profitability compared to their disengaged counterparts. Moreover, organizations with high employee engagement experience lower turnover rates. According to a report by (Markos *et al.*, 2010), companies with highly engaged employees have an average voluntary turnover rate of 13.9%, while those with low engagement have a significantly higher rate of 48.4%. This not only reduces recruitment costs but also enables organizations to retain valuable talent and institutional knowledge.

A study conducted by (Budriene *et al.*, 2020) found that organizations with highly engaged employees are twice as likely to be top financial performers compared to those with low engagement levels. Engaged employees feel empowered to suggest improvements and contribute innovative ideas, leading to continuous improvement within the organization.

To foster employee engagement effectively, organizations need to prioritize communication, recognition programs, training opportunities, work-life balance initiatives among others (Markos, 2010). Employee feedback is essential for identifying areas for improvement and implementing effective strategies (Du Plessis *et al.*, 2015). By creating an engaging workplace environment where employees feel valued and supported can improve morale boost motivation ultimately increasing performance levels across diverse industries (Truss *et al.*, 2013).

3 Current State of Employee Engagement in Reliance Industries Learning Culture

Reliance Industries' current approach to employee engagement appears dynamic, surrounding a broad range of initiatives designed to motivate and engage employees. The company's efforts to not only increase productivity but also foster an enjoyable work environment are commendable(Reliance Jobs, 2023). They have integrated wellness, learning and development programs into their organizational culture which is undeniably beneficial for the overall morale and job satisfaction among employees.

Through its annual event Spectrum, Reliance aims to strengthen a culture of learning among its employees across all levels, encouraging participation in multiple activities for skill enhancement(Reliance Annual Report, 2020). This approach fosters an environment conducive for continuous improvement which is commendable; however, measuring the actual impact on productivity or morale can be challenging.

Wellness Focus

The 3E's of Wellness initiative by Reliance General Insurance Company Limited sets an example in promoting a healthier lifestyle. However, the effectiveness of this system depends on how actively employees use it(Reliance Annual Report, 2020). Moreover, while rewarding healthy behaviours with points that can be redeemed at various outlets might seem like a great idea initially, there could be concerns over whether it truly leads to long-term behaviour change or if employees participate just for the sake of rewards.

Employee Development Initiatives

Programs such as CAP (Career Acceleration Programme) highlight Reliance's commitment towards career progression and talent development within the organization. Similarly, STEP-UP programme aims at preparing high potential employees for leadership roles which shows their focus on succession planning(Reliance Annual Report, 2020).

Nevertheless, these programmes seem geared more towards mid-level managers and high-potential individuals rather than being inclusive of all levels within the organization. This could potentially lead to feelings of neglect or devaluation among other staff who do not qualify for these opportunities.

Pandemic Response

One important element in Reliance's approach is its Employee Assistance Program (EAP), providing support services around-the-clock which portrays them as being supportive especially during stressful situations or crises like COVID-19 pandemic where they shifted swiftly to an agile working mode(The Hindu, 2021).

However, it would be interesting to examine how effective this assistance program has been in addressing specific individual needs since generally personal issues may affect different individuals differently thus making one-size-fits-all solutions less feasible.

3.1 Application of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs to Analyse Employee Engagement

Maslow's hierarchy of needs is a psychological theory that maps out the levels of human needs, from basic physical requirements up to self-actualization(Lester, 2013). This section aims to apply each level (Physiological, Safety, Love/Belonging, Esteem and Self-Actualization) of Maslow's hierarchy on current employee engagement strategies in Reliance Industries.

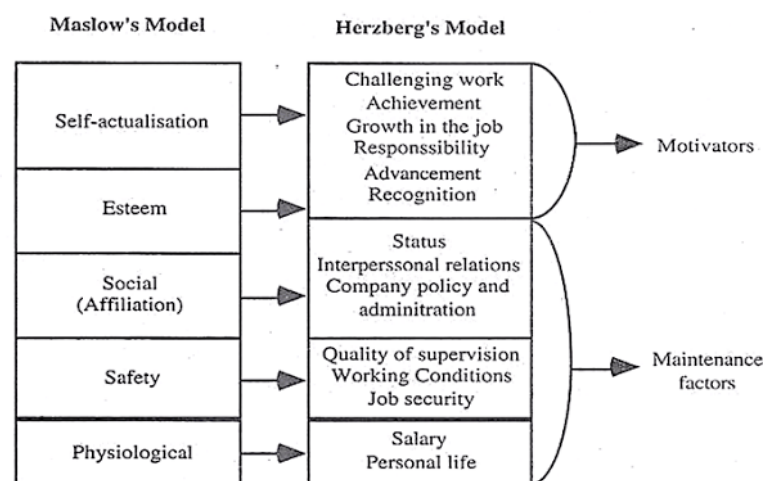


Figure 1 Maslow's and Herzberg's Models of Motivation(Lester, 2013; Chun Chiat et al., 2019)

1. Physiological

Reliance Industries offers competitive compensation packages that meet the basic needs (food, clothing and shelter) of its employees. This is evident in their strong retention rates with an average tenure of 11 years (Reliance Annual Report, 2019).

2. Safety

In terms of safety, Reliance Industries made a crucial shift to agile working during the COVID-19 pandemic (The Hindu, 2021). However, (The Hindu, 2021) pointed out that not all staff were provided sufficient home-based infrastructure facilities which questions the organization's commitment to providing a safe work environment.

3. Social

The wellness initiative '3E's' by Reliance General Insurance Company Limited fosters social interaction between colleagues thus meeting this level of need for love/belonging at workplace. It promotes teamwork and creates opportunity for peer recognition when points are earned collectively (Reliance Annual report, 2019).

4. Esteem

Esteem needs are met through various employee engagement initiatives like Career Acceleration Programme (CAP), STEP-UP programme etc which provide multi-faceted learning opportunities and mentorship programs leading towards career growth within the organization (Reliance Annual report, 2019)

5. Self-Actualization

Self - Actualization relates to personal growth and fulfilment, however Srinivasan et al., (2019) point out that while high-potential talent has access to accelerated learning opportunities others do not benefit from these programs resulting in unequal pathways for self-actualisation within organisation.

This analysis reveals a clear pattern where physiological needs are well addressed through competitive salaries but as we move upwards it seems there's room for improvement particularly ensuring equal development opportunities essential in fostering self-actualisation amongst all employees.

3.2 Application of Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory to Analyse Employee Engagement

Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory distinguishes between hygiene factors, which prevent dissatisfaction, and motivators that lead to satisfaction(Chun Chiat, 2019). Using this theoretical lens provides a comprehensive analysis of employee engagement strategies at Reliance.

3.2.1 Hygiene Factors

Hygiene factors are basic elements necessary for job satisfaction and include aspects like salary, working conditions and job security among others(Chun Chiat, 2019). It appears that Reliance Industries has these well covered through the provision of competitive salaries, decent work environment and agile working modes during unprecedented times like COVID-19 pandemic(Tønnessen *et al.*, 2021).

3.2.2 Motivators

Motivators refer to elements fostering job satisfaction by fulfilling employees' intrinsic needs for recognition, personal growth or achievement(Chun Chiat, 2019). At Reliance industries several initiatives have been put in place aimed at addressing such motivational needs including mentorship programs (CAP), leadership transition programs(STEP-UP) along with recognitions earned through adherence to healthy lifestyles via platforms like '3E's'. These efforts indicate an aligned effort towards not only sustaining but also boosting morale as well as productivity within their workforce.

3.3 Impact Of Weaknesses on Organisation

While Reliance Industries has taken significant steps towards creating an engaging work environment, there are certain weaknesses in its approach that could potentially impact the organization negatively.

One weakness is the apparent lack of inclusiveness in their developmental programs such as CAP and STEP-UP, which seem to cater mainly to mid-level managers and high-potential employees. This could lead to feelings of neglect or devaluation among other staff members who do not qualify for these opportunities(Briscode, 1995). If this issue is not addressed promptly, it could result in decreased job satisfaction, increased turnover rates and reduced productivity among those employees feeling overlooked(J., 2014).

Another potential concern lies within the wellness initiative '3E's' promoted by Reliance General Insurance Company Limited. While rewarding healthy behaviours with points might seem like a great idea initially, there could be concerns over whether it truly leads to long-term behaviour changes or if employees participate just for the sake of rewards(Jacques *et al.*, 2020). Over time this may cause disenchantment with such initiatives possibly leading to lower participation rates thus negating any positive impacts on employee well-being(Leplege *et al.*, 2007).

Lastly, while Reliance's pandemic response including swift shift to an agile working mode and provision of support services through EAP depicted them as being responsive during crisis; however issues around sufficient home-based infrastructure facilities raised questions about their commitment towards providing safe work conditions (Shah,M.,2020). Lack of proper resources can lead not only compromise productivity but also add stress further affecting overall employee well-being.

These shortcomings if left unaddressed can undermine morale within workforce impacting overall engagement levels translating into negative impacts on organizational performance outcomes due its direct association with factors like customer satisfaction levels, innovation capabilities etc (Gallup Research report 2016)

4 Models to Improve Employee Engagement Initiatives

4.1 The Employee Engagement 2.0 Model

This model suggests that an organization should focus on four key areas: Leadership, Communication, Culture and Rewards & Recognition. By improving these areas, employee engagement increases(Kruse, 2015).

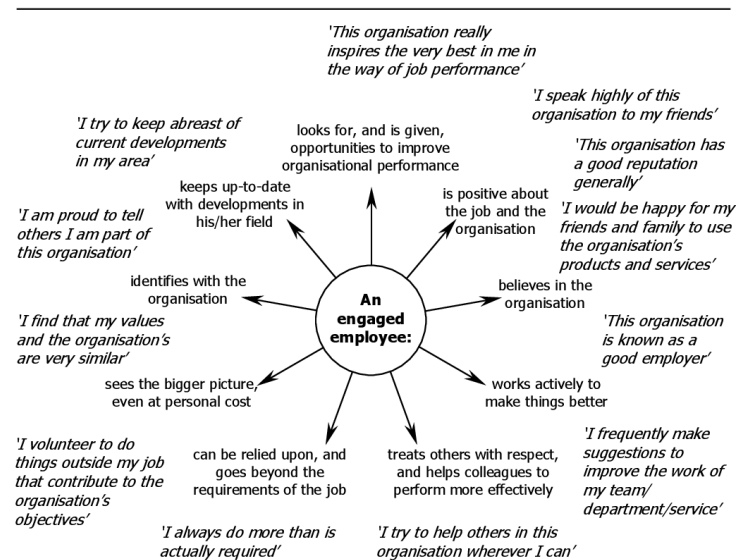


Figure 2 The Employee Engagement 2.0 Model (Kruse, 2015).

- Leadership: Ensure all leaders within the organization understand and value the concept of employee engagement.
- Communication: Regularly communicate with employees about what is happening in the company as well as listen to their feedback.
- Culture: Cultivate a valued culture
- Rewards & Recognition: Develop a system which recognizes everyone's contributions rather than just top performers or high potential ones.

4.2 Job Characteristics Model (JCM)

According to this model, there are five job characteristics – Skill Variety, Task Identity, Task Significance, Autonomy and Feedback – that affect three psychological states resulting in beneficial outcomes such as increased motivation or satisfaction at work(Singh *et al.*, 2016)

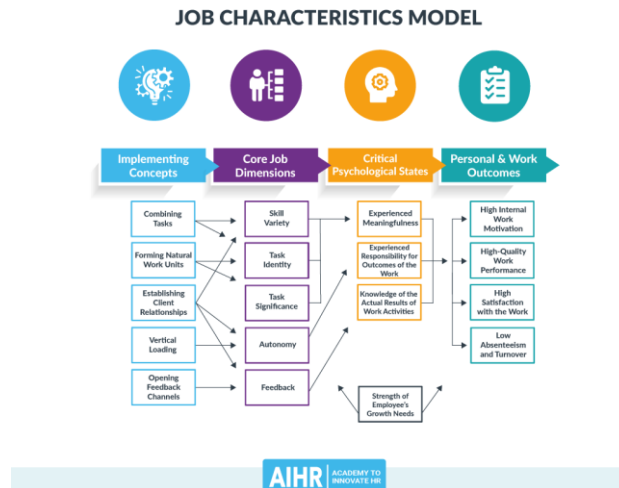
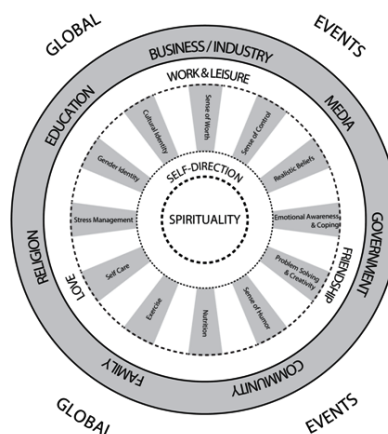


Figure 3 Job Characteristics Model (JCM) (Singh, 2016)

Applying JCM would mean providing more opportunities where all employees have freedom over tasks they do; receive immediate feedback on performance; feel like their jobs matter etc., thereby eliminating feelings of neglect or devaluation among staff who don't qualify for development programs presently available only to mid-level managers/high-potential individuals (Saha *et al.*, 2018).

4.3 Wellness Wheel Model

The wellness wheel provides six dimensions of wellness- physical, emotional, intellectual, social, occupational and spiritual. It emphasizes adopting healthy lifestyle habits not through rewards but by promoting self-care attitudes around these dimensions thus encouraging long term behaviour changes amongst employees (Jane E. Myers, 2000)



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Figure 4 Wellness Wheel Model (Jane E. Myers, 2000)

Reliance could create different programs/initiatives focusing each dimension separately instead using one-size-fits-all approach via '3E's' initiative.

4.4 Employer-Employee Relationship Model

This model stresses importance of building strong relationships between employer-employee attributing it towards better communication, trust-building leading ultimately higher levels job satisfaction(Aron, 2015). Employing this strategy would require Reliance management regularly interact directly with workforce; address any concerns may arise timely manner ensuring transparency(Taylor *et al.*, 2008b).

These suggested models if implemented effectively alongside current strategies might help overcome weaknesses identified currently enhance overall employee engagement within organisation.

5 Proposed Recommendations

- 1) Expand Professional Development Opportunities: Based on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory, providing all employees with opportunities for professional growth and self-actualization can have significant positive impacts on their engagement levels(Taylor *et al.*, 2008a). Reliance should consider extending programs like CAP and STEP-UP to a wider range of employees beyond just the mid-level managers and high-potential individuals. This will help in building a workforce that feels valued, motivated, and committed to the organization(Pandita *et al.*, 2018).
- 2) Enhance Communication Strategies: According to Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, open communication is crucial for maintaining employee satisfaction(Chun Chiat, 2019). Therefore, Reliance should aim at fostering transparency through regular town-hall meetings or Q&A sessions where top management communicates company updates directly to employees along with addressing their concerns and feedbacks(Vance, 2001).
- 3) Revamp Wellness Initiative: The current '3E's' program while innovative may not necessarily promote long-term behaviour changes as per the Wellness Wheel Model approach which emphasizes on holistic well-being rather than rewards-based system

currently used by Reliance General Insurance Company Limited. Hence it would be beneficial for them to incorporate elements from this model focusing more holistically across physical, emotional, intellectual, social, occupational & spiritual dimensions(Sels *et al.*, 2006a).

- 4) Redefine Remote Work Infrastructure: Considering how remote work has become a necessity due to COVID-19 pandemic impact; based on Employer-Employee Relationship Model ensuring provision adequate home-based infrastructure facilities would be critical towards establishing trust among workforce leading ultimately higher job satisfaction levels thereby boosting overall productivity within organisation(Dachner *et al.*, 2019).

6 Conclusion

Reliance Industries has made commendable efforts to increase employee engagement and welfare through various initiatives. These range from wellness programs, learning and development opportunities, agile working modes during the pandemic, to support services for employees. However, there are areas of improvement including inclusivity in developmental programs and long-term effectiveness of health initiatives. By considering models like Employee Engagement 2.0 Model, Job Characteristics Model (JCM), Wellness Wheel Model and Employer-Employee Relationship Model alongside existing strategies would help address these issues effectively.

Further emphasis on open communication between management and workforce can foster transparency within the organization which is crucial for maintaining employee satisfaction according to Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory. Overall, by adopting a more inclusive approach towards professional growth opportunities along with refining remote work infrastructure can significantly impact engagement levels positively thereby leading to sustained organizational success in the long run(Sels *et al.*, 2006b).

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