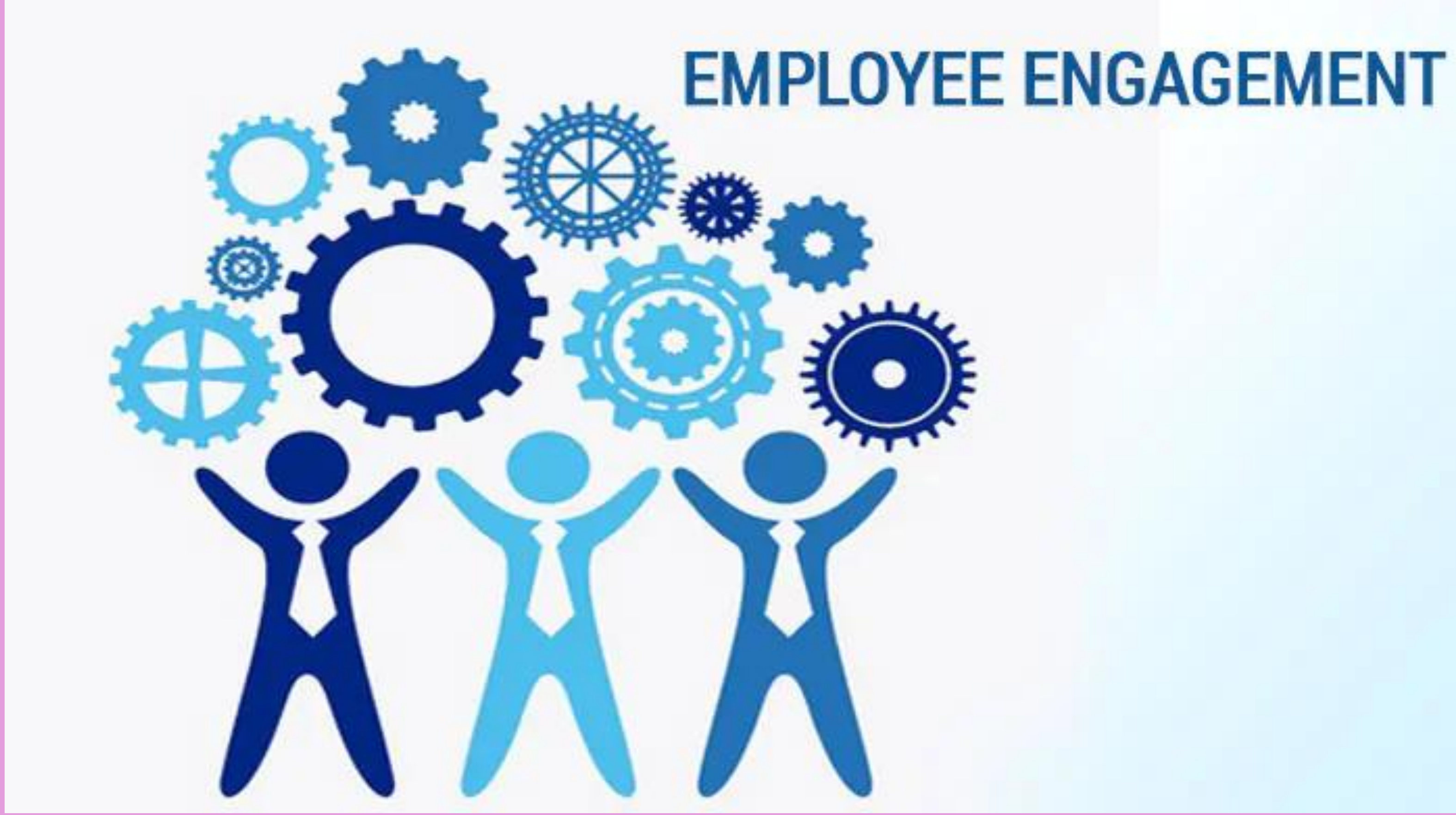


Employee Engagement Strategies in the UK Retail Industry

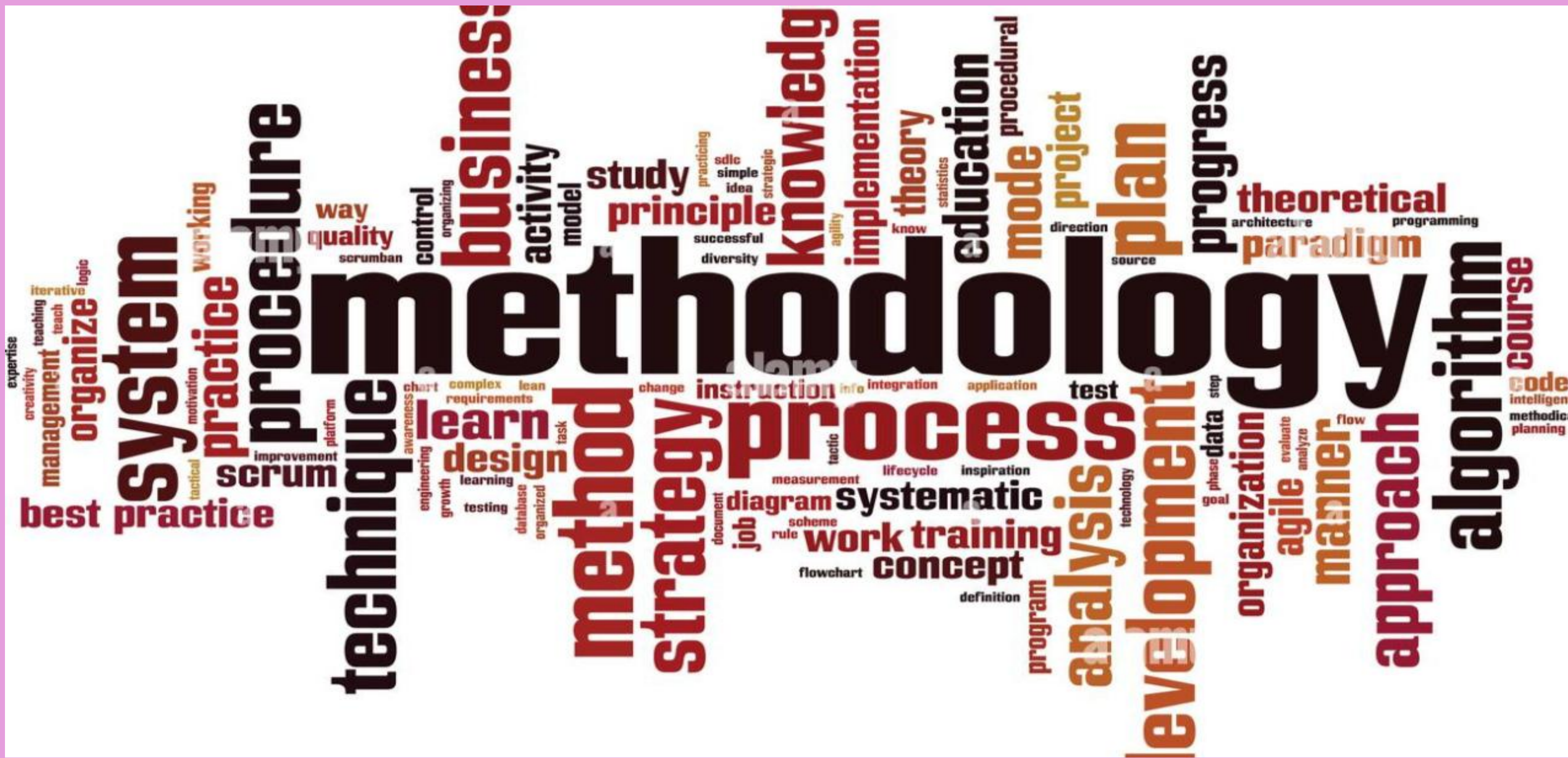
A comparative study of Tesco, John Lewis and Morrisons



Research Aim: To evaluate employee engagement strategies within the UK retail industry and assess their impact on staff retention, using the cases of Tesco, John Lewis and Morrisons

Research Objectives:

- How do employee engagement strategies influence staff retention in the UK retail sector?
- Which HRM practices are most effective in reducing turnover and absenteeism?
- What challenges do UK retailers face in engaging employees?



Research Methodology Overview

The research philosophy approached interpretivism, whereas employee engagement and retention are considered constructed from the HRM framework. The research approach was inductive, whereas theory emerged from the thematic patterns developed and approached (Bryman and Bell, 2015). Adopting a multiple case study, considering Tesco, John Lewis and Morrisons represented an opportunity to ensure a more complex analysis, which helped in conducting a cross-comparison regarding to different practices in the context of employee engagement within the UK retail industry. In terms of data collection, the research relied on secondary data sources only, considering annual reports of the selected companies, industry reports and publications (ONS, GOV.UK, Statista, Retail Bulletin), as well as numerous of peer-reviewed articles. Therefore, in terms of data analysis, the study adopted thematic analysis, matching with the process described by Braun and Clarke (2006) in terms of: familiarisation, coding, theme development, reviewing themes, defining the themes, and reporting. The analysis also considered Herzberg (1959) two-factor theory and Maslow's (1943) Hierarchy of Needs as being the foundation of the study.

Key Findings

- Employee engagement continues to remain one of the main HRM practices in the context of retail industry.
- The retail organisations continue to adopt different practices in engaging their workforce at a larger scale, whereas the most common practices involve training and development, career development opportunities, as well as effective reward strategy.
- The relationship between employee engagement and retention is direct and positive in the context of the organisation analysed. Tesco scores a higher employee engagement score due to their interest in investing into the employee wellbeing. Conversely, Morrisons continues to face a lack engagement score mainly influenced by their inconsistent management and staff shortages faced.
- Key factors impacting a poor employee engagement imply stressful working conditions within the frontline workers in the UK, lack of career advancement opportunities within the organisations and poor work-life balance incentives provided by the organisations to their staff members.



Conclusion

Employee engagement plays a critical role in stimulating employee engagement, relevant in supporting organisational performance and growth. To achieve a greater productivity rate, retail organisations need to demonstrate a more innovative approach within their employee engagement practices, exceeding the industry's standards.

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