Human Resource Management and Employee Engagement in Nepalese Commercial Banks

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ABSTRACT

Employee Engagement is mainstream attention for any type of organizations in the current business scenario. The aim of this study is to examine the relationship between employee engagement and HRM components among employees of various commercial banks in Nepal. The workplace, values, motivation, and attitude are among the independent variables in the study. Employee engagement is the study's dependent variable. Descriptive research design is the one employed in this study. The study's population consisted of 46508 employees, and 396 employees were randomly chosen from 11 commercial banks using a simple random sampling technique. A standardized Likert scale questionnaire was used to collect the data, with 1 denoting a strong disagreement and 5 denoting a strong agreement. The data were analyzed using regression analysis, correlation, and descriptive statistics. Cronbach's Alpha has been used to measure reliability. With an average Chronbach's Alpha rating of 0.79, reliability has been considered acceptable. The study has concluded that employees' attitude, motivation and value have a favorable and significant relationship with employee engagement, Workplace has a positive but insignificant impact on employee engagement. The main emphasis of this study is the need for proactive, comprehensive strategies to human resource management techniques in order to guarantee coherence with company goals and prioritize employee engagement.

Keywords: Attitude, motivation, value, workplace

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1. INTRODUCTION

Human resource management places a strong emphasis on how employees contribute to the operation of the organization and constantly monitors the adoption of best HR practices (Johnason, 2009). With a focus on systems and rules, HRM is largely concerned with the management of people inside organizations (Collings & Wood, 2009). Employee benefits design, employee hiring, training and development, performance evaluation, and reward management, including pay and employee benefit systems, are all under the control of HR departments (Paauwe & Boon, 2009).

The core goal of human resources (HR) is to ensure that the organization can succeed through its employees (Armstrong & Taylor, 2023). There are three ways that line managers can engage in HR: intellectually understanding why they should, practically putting their participation into practice by fully comprehending their HR obligations, and emotionally feeling the value of their HR involvement (Maxwell & Watson, 2006). Although Nepalese banks use agencies or their hiring practices, managers and policymakers are frequently not persuaded of the advantages of investing in human resources (Adhikari & Muller, 2001).

HRM-performance model outlines how the development of HRM systems that support and enhance employee skills and motivation will lead to an increase in productivity, innovation, and discretionary effort, which will lead to greater performance, profit, and growth (Becker, et al.,1997). The techniques of human resource management as a system that recruits, trains, inspires, and retains staff to enable the successful implementation and survival of the organization and its members (Schuler & Jackson, 1987). The Nepalese banking industry spends a lot of money on hiring the appropriate people, they will be able to increase employee enthusiasm, collaboration, involvement, and organizational citizenship (Pradhan, 2020).

Employee engagement, according to Truss et al. (2013), may finally hold the key to understanding how HRM strategies can improve both individual and organizational performance. However, there is a lack of clear empirical and conceptual evidence linking HRM practices to employee engagement and to performance (Guest, 2014; Sparrow, 2014; Sparrow & Balain, 2010).

Employee engagement refers to the capacity to inspire an innate desire and passion for excellence in workers by winning over their minds, hearts, and souls (Fleming & Asplund, 2007). The employee has an optimistic perspective on the business and its core values. An interested employee is one who is familiar with the company, and highly engaged workers deliberately coordinate with colleagues to improve output for the greater benefit of the organization (Robinson, et al., 2004). Employees that are actively involved in their work use their bodies, minds, and emotions to accomplish their roles in an organization is employee engagement (Kahn, 1990).

Engaged workers are ready to put in more effort at work because they care about the company's future, they are trustworthy and honest in their work, and they want to see the organization succeed in the market (Schaufeli, et al., 2002). In addition to displaying organizational citizenship, dedication, and honesty, employees who are engaged are concerned about the organization's future and are constantly eager to go above and beyond in their work to make sure the company advances the industry (Deorah, 2022). To improve organizational effectiveness, Nepalese commercial banks had to enhance employee engagement (Niraula, 2022).

Employees in Nepal, particularly those working for government-owned banks, frequently prioritize attendance over commitment to work, which results in a lack of seriousness in their roles

(Pandey, 2008). In current day of fierce competition, particularly in the banking sectors, Nepalese BFIs won't be able to satisfy their customers and stakeholders if the issue of performances and engagement persists (Jha & Hui, 2012). According to the social exchange theory (SET), how employees respond depends on how they view the corporate values, management style, and chances for advancement. The key insight provided by SET is that employees act (commitment, collaboration, and intention to leave the company) in accordance with how they perceive value from the behavior of others, whether it be their superiors, managers, or coworkers in the office settings (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005).

It is believed that employee satisfaction with their jobs and the workplace has an impact on how well a business performs, moreover, the value of human resources to any business and the relevance of employee engagement is phenomenal (Nepal Rastra Bank, 2020). To improve organizational effectiveness, Nepal's commercial banks had to raise employee engagement levels (Nepal Rastra Bank, 2021). The banking sector has a significant influence on Nepal's economic development, there are currently 20 commercial banks in Nepal (Nepal Rastra Bank, 2023). The commercial banks operating nationwide, accounting for more than 83.21 percent of the banking and financial sector's assets, commercial banks are more substantial and intricate than other forms of financial institutions (Nepal Rastra Bank, 2021).

As of the middle of July 2023, 46508 individuals have been employed by Nepalese commercial banks (Nepal Rastra Bank, 2023). 6961 people were employed by the three public banks as of the date, while 39547 people were employed by the private banks. It indicates that the three public sector banks continue to employ almost 15 percent of all people working in the commercial banking sector. As a result, a lot of graduates and qualified people want to work in this field. However, the business still struggles with a lack of skilled employees. Once the industry is completely developed, it is anticipated that the human resource situation would improve (Nepal Rastra Bank, 2023).

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Employee Engagement

Albrechi et al. (2014) revealed that an organization's HRM strategy must incorporate personnel selection, socialization, performance management, and training and development if it hopes to generate a sustainable competitive advantage through employee engagement. Biswakarma (2015) found that employees' behavioral decisions to leave Nepal's banking sector are negatively impacted by their level of work engagement. The likelihood of quitting a job and work engagement are influenced by both age and gender. Sivapragasam and Raya (2018) identified a substantial relationship between HRM practices and employee outcomes, such as perceived efficacy, engagement, and well-being, with the employee well-being as a mediating component. Shrestha (2019 observed that the performance of the organization was significantly impacted by employee engagement. Diversity in the workforce will help mitigate the impact of employee engagement on business performance over time or in a given situation regarding the management of its strategic resources, human resources, and employee engagement. Furthermore, the strategic resources and human resource development can be used to compare how managers and employees see the successful implementation of a human resource management system. Jose (2012) mentioned

employee engagement is influenced by how satisfied employees are with human resource policies and procedures, the employee engagement has been decreasing globally due to negligence made by employers while making policies and plan to develop human resources. The reciprocity standard and the social exchange theory (SET) serve as the foundation for this suggested connection between human resource practices and employee engagement.

Lama (2021) revealed that among Kathmandu's commercial bank employees, hiring and selecting staff members had a positive and significant impact on employee satisfaction. Training and development, compensation, and performance reviews also had a positive and significant impact. Saks (2022) found that on the subject of HRM's involvement in fostering employee engagement is crucial in organizational management, foundation of employee engagement is the idea that the level of an employee's desire to be engaged is determined by how concerned management and its leadership are with the organization and its employees. Pradhan and Shrestha (2022) found that career planning is the most important factor in employee engagement, training, and development. As a result, these two variables are seen to be highly significant and reliable indicators of employees' engagement with the organization as well as their ability to do certain tasks. Additionally, career planning, training, and development positively affect workers' engagement with service sector organizations.

Human Resource Management and Employee Engagement

According to Pfeffer (2007) mentioned focusing on employees' behavior demonstrates how to take into account and predict the results of various human resource management strategies, as well as why specific diversified behaviors have an impact on employees' productivity and their free time while working at the workplace. Bhebhe (2020) observed that the disengagement of employees on the front line is a result of their perception of management behavior. When managers, especially those in frontline service departments, become unappreciative of employee effort, do not appear to be supportive, or engage in unfair assessments, frontline employees tend to behave in ways that are obvious to clients: they become untimely in serving clients, prepare food poorly, and fail to smile throughout service encounters. Newman, et al. (2010) found attitude is the most important factor for the employee job involvement, job commitment and job satisfaction that ultimately leads for employee dedication and engagement. Shuck, et al. (2017) found positive attitude toward one's job is the key to job satisfaction, organizational commitment, involvement, dedication, and employee engagement in all aspects of the work.

H1: Attitude has positive relationship with employee engagement in Nepalese commercial banks.

Saks (2011) found that employee involvement in terms of workplace spirituality, enlightenment community, and spiritual aspirations is correlated with four psychological conditions: availability, safety, meaning at work, and meaningfulness in the workplace. Huang et al. (2019) observed that when a leader engages in abusive supervision behavior, employees find it difficult to concentrate on their current tasks, compared to any given day without abusive behaviors (i.e., by exhibiting decreased work engagement). This affects the employees' willingness to participate in OCB and voice on that particular day. Wasserman and Wasserman (2020) observed motivation is the reason for the onset, persistence, or discontinuation of an action at a specific moment in humans and other animals. Motivational states are commonly understood as internal

influences that result in an agent's propensity to engage in actions that have a purpose. Sungu et al. (2019) mentioned social exchange relationships foster strong interdependence, which reduces employee stress levels since perceived organizational support raises job satisfaction and motivates employees emotionally. Engidaw (2021) revealed that intrinsic as well as extrinsic drives are positively and strongly associated with employee engagement, with extrinsic motivation being viewed as more important than intrinsic motivation. Moreover, compared to intrinsic drive, extrinsic motivation was more strongly correlated with and impactful of employee engagement.

H2: Motivation has positive impact on employee engagement in Nepalese commercial banks

Jackson (2004) found a workplace is a place where someone performs work either for their employer or for themselves, such a location could be anything from a home office to a sizable office complex or factory. Harter, et al. (2003) found a positive work environment not only enhances employees' engagement but also produce a conducive atmosphere at work. Judeh (2021) found employee engagement was significantly correlated with the work place and its environment, which was significantly correlated with ethical decision-making. As a result, employee engagement tends to be stronger when workers enjoy favorable working conditions and make moral choices. Guest (1997) found the link between high commitment and performance-based human resource management tactics, businesses in the twenty-first century ought to have a beneficial relationship between their human resources policies, practices and employee engagement. Katie (2006) found employee well-being, job happiness, experiencing stress at work, emotional, cognitive, and physical dimensions of engagement, as well as how all of these factors affect personal performance and intention, are the main drivers of employee engagement.

H3: Workplace has positive relationship with employee engagement in Nepalese commercial banks.

Heger (2007) found Employee engagement is facilitated by the Employee Value Proposition (EVP), which outlines the worth or advantages that an employee receives from being a part of the company. Ross et al. (1999) found values focus on submissive self-restriction, the preservation of ancient customs, and the defense of stability, values that place emphasis on one's own independent thought and behavior and favor change. Barnes (2019) revealed that an organization's culture has an undeniable impact on its performance and productivity. As a result, businesses need to be clear about their own values so that their team members can completely comprehend and participate in what is required of them. Ferdian et al. (2020) found that a company's reputation can significantly affect how appealing it is to job searchers, they might be content just to be a part of the team, and raising engagement levels can benefit Human Resource Planning (HRP) by raising employee happiness. Furthermore, these elements will significantly impact the causal link between HRP and engagement when associated with Perceived Organizational Support.

H4: Value has positive relationship with employee engagement in Nepalese commercial banks

The conceptual framework presented in Figure 1 has been used by the study based on the aforesaid literature review.

Figure 1.

Conceptual Framework



3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Human resource philosophy resolves around management's assumption about people their nature, needs, value and their approaches to work (Singh, 2005). This research used a descriptive research design to examine how HRM dimensions affect employees' engagement in Nepalese commercial banks. Survey method was used to gather data is cross sectional in nature. To attain the objective of the research, a structured survey questionnaire (based on a 5 point Likert scale) was used, where 1 for Strongly Disagree, 2 for Disagree, 3 for Neutral, 4 for Agree, and 5 for Strongly Agree The samples for the study were selected using the simple random sampling (Hakuduwal, 2019) technique under probability sampling. There are 20 commercial banks in Nepal which comprises 3 public sector banks, 12 private commercial banks and 5 joint venture commercial banks (Nepal Rastra Bank, 2023). To achieve the objectives, 396 (Yamane, 1973) employees from managerial and operational positions who were working with human resource department and customer service department of 11 (6 private commercial banks, 2 public sector commercial banks and 3 joint venture commercial banks (Niraula, 2022) were chosen as respondents randomly. The data collected in the field was processed using SPSS version 26. Descriptive and inferential statistics were employed for data analysis.

Out of the 420 respondents, only 396 completed the questionnaires that were gathered and used in this study. There are five items for each of the variables, including, attitude (Shuck et al., 2017) all five items, motivation (Wasserman & Wasserman, 2020) all five items, workplace (Gruman & Saks, 2011) all five items, value (Heger, 2007; Ross, et al. 1999) three and two items respectively, and employee engagement (Niraula & Kharel, 2023) all five items. The relationship of human resource management on employee engagement has been analyzed using correlation analysis. The effects of independent variables on the dependent variable has been demonstrated using the regression analysis, t test and f-test.

Cronbach's Alpha values associated with workplace, values, motivation, and attitude have been examined for a reliability test. Without removing any items, the average Chronbach's Alpha

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for all the variable items was.792. In order to accept the questionnaire questions for a reliability test, the total variable's Chronbach's Alpha value must be more than .65 or .70 (Buchanan & Bryman, 2009; George & Mallery, 2009).

The Model

This study has realized the influence of human resource management on employee engagement in Nepalese commercial banks. As a result, the following regression model serves as its basis for analysis.

Employee Engagement = f (Attitude, Motivation, Workplace and Value) Specifically, $EE = \beta_0 + \beta_1 Attitude + \beta_2 Motivation + \beta_3 Workplace + \beta_4 Value + e_t$ Where, EE= Employee Engagement $e_t = Error term$ β_0 = Intercept of dependent variable $\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3, \beta_4$ are beta coefficients of the independent variables to be estimated.

4.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Demographic Profile of the Respondents

The demographics of the responders include gender, position, age, and experience inside the organizations. Table 1 shows the demographics of respondents.

Percent

75.76

24.24

22.47

32.83

27.78

16.92

12.63

87.37

29.04

28.03

20.20

12.63

10.10

Table 1

Demographic Profile of Respondents Variables Number Gender Male 300 Female 96 Age Group 20-25 89 26-30 130 31-40 110 Above 41 67 Positions/post in Banks Managerial Level employees 50 **Operational Level employees** 346 Experience of Respondents Less than 5 years 115 6-10 years 111 11-15 years 80 16-20 years 50 40 21 years and above

Source: Field Survey, 2023

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Table 1 reveals that of the 396 respondents, 300 were male employees (75.76%) and 96 were female employees (24.24%). The age group between 26 and 30 had the highest response rate, while the age group over 40 had the lowest. Organizational positions fall into two categories: managerial and operational. Every position was categorized as operational level, with the exception of managerial ranks. Table 1 reveals that of the 396 respondents, 346 (87.37%) were operational level employees and 50 (12.63%) were at the managerial level. Less than five years of experience was the most common background among respondents (29.04%), while experience beyond twenty years of experience had the fewest responders (10.10%).

Table 2

Descriptive Status of the Study Items

HRM dimensions	Mean	SD	Number
Attitude Dimension (Shuck et al., 2017)			
Every time when I ask for training, I get it.	3.90	.605	396
I always get constructive feedback.	3.85	.601	396
I think my work is appreciated.	3.86	.618	396
I think my bank cares about me.	3.95	.651	396
I always know when changes.	3.80	.615	396
Motivation Dimension (Wasserman & Wasserman, 2020)			
My company radiates positivity.	4.21	.729	396
The Co. creates a mentorship program.	4.12	.873	396
The Co. Create a comfortable workspace.	3.99	.921	396
The Co. shares profits to improve performance.	4.18	.829	396
The Co. offers an incentive program.	4.18	.765	396
Workplace Dimension (Gruman & Saks, 2011)			
The org ⁿ has Comfort workplace.	4.24	.635	396
The Co. provides resting areas.	4.05	.671	396
Quality of food is assured.	4.12	.673	396
The equipment is available.	4.13	.655	396
Company provides facility of maintenance.	4.25	.638	396
Value Dimension (Heger, 2007; Ross, et al. 1999)			
My organization prefers honesty.	4.14	.709	396
My organization believes in integrity.	4.14	.688	396
My organization encourages the employees.	4.16	.666	396
Kindness is shown by management time to time.	4.22	.680	396
Management is flexible.	4.26	.605	396
Employee Engagement Dimension (Niraula & Kharel, 2023)			
The employees have devotion to organization.	3.97	.900	396
The employees have commitment and OCB.	3.90	.851	396
The employees put effort for growth and development.	3.83	.992	396
There is culture of collaboration among employees.	4.14	.919	396
EE ensures success of the organization in long run.	4.10	.688	396

All of the results shown in Table 2 show the perceptions of the employees of the sampled banks. The outcomes for the attitude dimension show that all five of the mean values are higher than 3. The standard deviation values are competitive for all of the items, each of which is less than

1. The results of the five measures that make up the motivation dimension show that all commercial bank employees are satisfied with the motivation techniques, since all mean values are more than 3 and the standard deviation values are competitive. All commercial banks have shown a strong status in the workplace dimension, with mean values exceeding 4 and all standard deviation values competitive that indicates the workplaces of commercial banks are safety and comfortable. Similar results are seen for the value dimension with mean value exceeding 4 and standard deviation values are competitive. Employee engagement dimension, which shows mean values above 3 and constant standard deviation values. The findings in Table 2 show that all workers of Nepalese commercial banks are satisfied with the different dimensions by their individual banks.

Table 3 shows the correlation between the independent and dependent variables. The smallest proportion of relationship any variable is the (0.210), relationship between employee engagement and attitude. Similarly, there was a (0.233) correlation between employee engagement and motivation. The workplace and employee engagement showed a relationship of (0.216), while the value and employee engagement showed a correlation of (0.222). Thus, according to the analysis, the majority of the employee engagement variables had weaker relationships with each other.

Correlation between Dependent and Independent Variables						
Variables	EE	Attitude	Motivation	Workplace	Value	
EE	1					
Attitude	0.210**	1				
Motivation	0.233**	025	1			
Workplace	0.216**	093	0.108*	1		
Value	0.222**	078	0.058*	.694**	1	

Table 3

**Correlation is significant at 0.01 level

*Correlation is significant at 0.05 level

Table 4 depicts the mean square of regression and residuals as (0.344) and (5.944), respectively, as well as the sum of squares of regression and residuals as (23.775) and (126.70). The model's F value, which is (18.344), along with a p value of (0.000 < 0.05), suggests that the model fits at the (5%) significance level.

Attitude's beta coefficient, t value, and p value, which are 0.323, 5.096, and 0.000 < 0.05, respectively, indicate that it is significant at the five percent significance level. Thus, the alternative theory—that attitude has a major influence on employee engagement—is accepted. Similarly, motivation is significant at the five percent significance level, according to the beta coefficient, t value, and p value of motivation, which are 0.226, 4.674, and 0.000 < 0.05, respectively. As a result, the alternative hypothesis—that is, the idea that motivation significantly influences employee engagement—is accepted. According to the workplace's beta coefficient, t value, and p value (0.151, 1.699, and $.09 \ge 0.05$), respectively, the workplace is not significant at the five percent significance level. So, the null hypothesis is accepted since it has insignificant impact on employee engagement. Similar to this, the value dimension of HRM is significant at the (5%) level of

significance according to the beta coefficient, t value, and p value of the value dimension (0.186), (2.343), and ($.020 \le .05$), respectively. As a result, the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

Table 4

Regression Analysis

	Unstandardized coefficients	Std. error	T-statistic	P-value	Tolerance	VIF
~	(β)					
Constant	.395	.427	.924	.356		
AT	.323	.063	5.096	.000	.991	1.009
MOT	.226	.048	4.674	.000	.988	1.013
WP	.151	.089	1.699	.090	.513	1.949
VAL	.186	.079	2.343	.020	.519	1.929
R ² = .158,	Adjusted $R^2 = .149$					
F- statistic	s= 18.344, P-value	of F-statistic	= 0.000			

Dependent Variable: Employee Engagement

Predictors: (Constant), Attitude, Motivation, Workplace, Value

Based on the coefficient values, it is noticeable that attitude has the most useful impact on employee engagement, with motivation and value following closely thereafter. The workplace in Nepalese commercial banks has a small but favorable effect on employee engagement. Every variable has a tolerance value of (≥ 0.1). According to Hakuduwal (2019), a tolerance value of (\geq 0.1) is deemed acceptable. The dependent variable, or employee engagement, is explained by variation in the independent variables, or attitude, motivation, workplace, and values, by (15.80%), according to the value of R² (0.158). This indicates that the variance in other parameters accounts for 84.20 percent of the employee engagement. Employee engagement increases when banks concentrate on the development of the variables, as demonstrated by the lower beta values of all the HRM dimensions with employee engagement. Every variable has a VIF value of ($2 \leq$). There will not be no Multicollinearity and the results can be accepted if the VIF values of every variable that has been described are ($2 \leq$) (Kock & Lynn, 2012).Thus, the regression equation of the study is:

EE = .395 + 0.323Attitude + 0.226Motivation + .151Workplace + 0.186Value + e_t

5. DISCUSSION

This study's primary goal is to ascertain how engaged Nepalese commercial banks' workforce is. Effective human resource management and employee engagement are critical to the success and expansion of any business, but Nepalese commercial banks in particular. These criteria become even more important when considering Nepalese commercial banks because they have a direct impact on the expansion of the financial industry in that nation as a whole. Regression analysis, however, appears to yield a different outcome, which may have resulted from respondents' inadequate education and expertise throughout the data collection process. The regression equation explains that there is a statistically significant positive relationship of Attitude with employee engagement. There are various research findings that supported the finding of this this research. The results found by Shuck, et al. (2017), Newman et al. (2010), however, the results contradicted with the findings of Bhebhe (2020).It means that the attitude of the employees of Nepalese

commercial banks is positive toward employee engagement. While employees of other sectors may not have positive attitude towards employee engagement as mentioned by (Bhebhe (2020). Similarly, Motivation has positive and significant relationship with Employee engagement. This result is supported by the findings of Wasserman and Wasserman (2020), however it was inconsistent with the finding by Huang, et al. (2019). It means that the Nepalese commercial banks' employees are satisfied with the motivational techniques used by the commercial banks, while employees of non-banking sectors were not satisfied with the technique used by their employers as found by Huang, et al. (2019). Workplace has positive and insignificant relationship with employee engagement in Nepalese commercial banks as found by Jackson (2004), Saks (2022) and contradicts with the finding of Harter, et al.(2003). This means that the employees of Nepalese commercial banks are not fully satisfied with the workplace environment, however the situation was different as suggested by Harter et al. (2003). Value has positive and significant relationship with Employee Engagement, this result is consistent with the finding of Heger (2007) however, it is not in line with the findings by Ross et al. (1999). It means that the value perception of the employees of commercial banks is positive toward employee engagement, however, the employees of non-banking sectors had negative value perception towards their employees as suggested by Ross, et al. (1999. Albrechi, et al. (2014) supported the social exchange theory with employee engagement wherein he emphasized throughout the employee lifecycle and in all areas of the employer-employee relationship, engagement must be included as a priority. As suggested by Homans (1961) Strong ties between employees and employees are important because, via their exchange activities, reciprocity raises employee engagement levels.

6. CONCLUSION

Business managers can learn from the results how crucial it is to have efficient human resource management practices procedures in place in order to raise employee engagement with their jobs. In order to retain potential employees and keep them involved in their work duties, business organizations are using a variety of employee engagement initiatives. This helps the firm succeed overall by retaining talent. The current study's findings aim to compile the most pertinent and significant human resource management strategies that support employee engagement and encourage them to contribute to the organization as well as themselves. The findings provides business managers insight into the importance of having effective HRM practices in order to raise employees' levels of engagement to their jobs. The primary objective of implementing various employee engagement programs is to retain potential employees and keep them engaged with their jobs so that they can contribute to the overall success of the organization. So, it is suggested that line managers, higher management and operational managers to increase the level of employee engagement in Nepalese commercial banks. It is advisable for banks to conduct periodic assessments and enhancements of their human resource policies and procedures to improve employee engagement and human resource development. Regular feedback mechanisms, employee surveys, and open communication channels should be put in place to ensure that the needs, problems, and goals of employees are appropriately addressed.

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