

Research Article

Empowerment-Driven HR Practices and Employee Satisfaction: Evidence from HCL Technologies, Chennai

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Abstract: The Indian IT industry represents one of the fastest-growing sectors in the global economy and plays a central role in digital innovation and service delivery. However, the industry continues to face persistent challenges such as high attrition, stress, and employee burnout, particularly in metropolitan hubs like Chennai, which undermine long-term job satisfaction and retention. This study addresses these concerns by analysing how empowerment-driven Human Resource (HR) practices at HCL Technologies in Chennai, including training and development, empowerment, innovation participation, work-life balance, and peer recognition, help reduce stress and strengthen engagement. Consequently, these practices improve satisfaction by meeting employees' needs for growth, autonomy, recognition, and balance. The research employed a quantitative cross-sectional design and collected data from 234 employees through stratified random sampling. Subsequently, responses are gathered using structured questionnaires and analysed through Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) in SPSS and AMOS. The results show that empowerment strongly predicts job motivation ($\beta = 0.81$), peer recognition enhances perceived organizational support (POS) ($\beta = 0.70$), and innovation participation increases engagement ($\beta = 0.65$). The integrated framework explains approximately 87 % of the variance in employee satisfaction, with excellent model fit indices (CFI = 0.94, RMSEA = 0.06). Furthermore, supportive work-life balance policies mitigate burnout and attrition by fostering loyalty and retention. Therefore, the study contributes to HRM literature by validating empowerment-driven HR models in the Indian IT sector and provides actionable guidance for organizations to address high turnover and stress by leveraging recognition systems, decentralized management, and participatory innovation in competitive, high-pressure environments like Chennai.

Keywords: Human Resource (HR), Structural Equation Modelling (SEM), Job Satisfaction, Empowerment, Organizational support, Employee engagement

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INTRODUCTION

The Indian IT industry has experienced a growth rate that is both splendid and challenging in its nature even in terms of speed in the digitization process, globalization of service provision as well as the high level of competition in the metropolitan centres [1]. Places like Chennai, Bengaluru, and Hyderabad have turned into the hub of IT talent, with companies that are in the fight to get highly skilled professionals to continue business delivery in a digital-first world [2]. Although this industry has been making India economically developed, it has brought about problems in managing workers. These consist of high turnover rates, employee burnout and deteriorating job satisfaction rates, to name a few [3-4]. The employees of IT companies have to face working long hours, strict deadlines, and constant skills improvement demands that undermine job satisfaction and call into question both the sustainability and well-being of the employees [5]. Since the industry continues to serve an important function in India's global competitiveness, factors influencing employee satisfaction are not only scholarly, but also practically important [6].

Indeed, Chennai is among the biggest ITs in India as has been recorded in many studies [7]. There are abundant multinational technological companies, Indian conglomerates in the area and hence a cosmopolitan workforce in the region which has migrated in the area to work [8-9]. The opportunities and challenges of this dynamic labour market are that it gives organizations on the one hand a rich source of diversified talent, and on the other, increases competition among skilled professionals and increases the rate of employee turnover [10]. In such an environment, firms have to work under the continuous pressure of rethinking their HR policies to make sure that their workers are motivated, engaged and committed [11]. According to the previous studies, the traditional theory of HR control, strict hierarchies, and incentives based on remunerations has become inadequate in the knowledge-based industry like information technology [12-13]. Both scholars and practitioners highlight the need to have more flexible, participative, and recognition-based HR policies, which are more concerned with psychological empowerment, innovation involvement, and work-life balance [14]. But even though the literature on HR practices in Western and emerging markets is quite extensive, there remains a comparative lack of empirical research examining the operation of innovative HR approaches within specific regional contexts such as Chennai, where organizational culture and local workplace dynamics are closely intertwined [15].

HCL Technologies offer a highly relevant case study in that respect. HCL is seen as one of the largest Indian IT service companies, which is characterized by its unique HR philosophy, Employees First, Customer Second [16]. This practice contravenes the customary sequence of prioritizing the clients above the staffing and instead, assumes that engaged, empowered, and satisfied employees are the actual facilitators of value creation to customers [17-19]. The HR model of HCL is highly decentralized and does not focus on strict hierarchy, empowers teams and frontline employees, and combines the peer-to-peer recognition with formal innovation programs [20]. Programs like the Bravo recognition program and the Ideapreneurship initiative are a good example of practices that aim to rebrand the employees as generators of value, and not executors of managerial instructions [21]. Although this model has been well debated in the literature of management due to its innovative nature and approach to leadership, there is relatively scanty literature on empirical evidence on why these practices directly influence the satisfaction of employees in particular urban context such as Chennai [22-23]. While global research emphasizes the value of empowerment and recognition-based HR models, there remains a lack of context-specific evidence in Indian metropolitan IT clusters like Chennai. This lack is limiting to both the theory and practical human-resources policy-making within such settings.

Moreover, the views of the employees on HR practices are not uniform but are localized as they depend on the situation in the labour market and within the workplace. The phenomenon is most noticeable in Chennai, whereby a heterogeneous group of professionals gathers in a massive IT campus that creates an ecosystem of inter-firm competition and a diverse representation of demographics [24]. Therefore, companies like HCL should make sure that HR empowerment strategy is converted into real results of employee satisfaction under the pressure of local forces. In alignment with this, the present study seeks to examine the influence of the empowerment-oriented HR practices adopted by HCL likely training and development, empowerment, innovation involvement, work-life balance, and peer recognition on employee motivation, engagement, perceived organisational support, and finally job satisfaction in Chennai.

Even though the idea of empowerment-based HR practice has been extensively debated in the contemporary global literature, there is a lack of empirically based studies in the Indian IT industry and specifically in metropolitan areas such as Chennai. With the philosophy of Employees First, Customers Second, which guides the operations of HCL Technologies, this gap is filled by studying how the concept of empowerment-oriented practices that involve training and development, participation in innovations, work life balance and peer recognition affect employee satisfaction. Most prior research are concentrated on Western or non-IT settings and study practices in isolation without considering local cultural, competitive, and innovation pressures. Based on the survey data of 234 employees in three HCL campuses in Chennai and SEM the study examines the mediating nature of the three variables namely job motivation, employee engagement and POS. The study is grounded in Self-Determination Theory (SDT) and Social Exchange Theory (SET) and offers theory-specific context-based evidence to inform HR decision-making in high-stress, high-attrition metropolitan IT settings.

There are still considerable gaps in HR practices and employee satisfaction despite the extensive research on the topic. Training, motivation, or work-life balance is partially explored in the existing literature, mostly on the Western or non-IT setting, and not on a mixture of the above-mentioned empowerment, innovation participation, and peer recognition applications in high-stress technology settings. Indian IT research is largely generic and does not consider metropolitan environment such as Chennai having unique competitive forces and workforce requirements. In addition, coherent theoretical perspectives are seldom implemented in previous studies. This paper fills these gaps by analysing

HR practices in HCL Technologies, Chennai, based on SDT and SET to empirically explicate job motivation, engagement, POS and employee satisfaction to expand context-specific HRM theory and practice.

Literature Review

Sustiyatik., [25] conducted an examination of the employees of the CIMB Niaga Kediri Branch where 67 valid respondents have been chosen out of 200 employees. The information was gathered through questionnaires, observation, interviews, and documentation, as well as analysed with the help of Partial Least Squares (PLS). The findings indicated that training significantly improved the performance and motivation of the employees significantly. In addition, performance and motivation were also enhanced by the variables of HR development significantly. Notably, motivation was revealed to be a mediator among training and performance, HR development and performance, so it can be concluded that motivation is a key mediator that helps HR practices to improve employee performance.

Jamal *et al.*, [26] carried out a serious empirical study on telecommuting and proved that job autonomy, flexible time, control of work processes, work life balance and decreased stress level have significant influence on employee satisfaction. Using SEM and confirmatory factor analysis, the research determined that high job satisfaction is associated with stronger organizational commitment and at the same time reduced turnover intentions, which makes telecommuting an effective post-COVID employee retention tool.

Nguyen and Le, [27] investigated how training and development impacted the motivation and performance of employees in a SDT paradigm. Their results show that job performance is largely affected by motivational states, where motivation is a powerful explanatory factor between HR development practices and the performance of employees. The research however is in a non-IT financial setting and does not test the engagement, POS or empowerment practices in high pressure technology setting, which restricts its generalisability to metropolitan IT settings.

Rahaman *et al.*, [28] examined the determinants of employee retention in the banking sector and their implications for organizational outcomes in Bangladesh. Using a non-probability convenience sampling method, the study surveyed 98 employees of commercial banks through electronically administered questionnaires. Data were analysed with SPSS (version 26.0) to evaluate the structural relationships and examine the proposed hypotheses. The findings revealed that training and development, organizational culture, job satisfaction, and career development each had a significant positive effect on employee retention. The authors recommended that bank management implement systematic retention programs to enhance employee well-being and enhance overall organizational performance.

Soegiarto *et al.*, [29] discovered that training, job autonomy, and favourable organizational culture had a positive impact on job satisfaction, and the existence of satisfaction mediated the connection among the HR practices and the employee outputs. The paper states the significance of autonomy in achieving increased satisfaction but fails to involve innovation engagement, peer acclaim, and a more comprehensive empowerment-based structure, especially in knowledge-based IT settings.

Jiang *et al.*, [30] explored the influence of proactive career support the thriving of employees with a quantitative survey-based design and advanced statistical analysis. The paper found that proactive career support is a significant boost to employee thriving, which can be described as an integrated sense of vitality and learning, as it decreases perceptions of job content plateau. Moreover, political skill was found as having a moderating effect on the effectiveness of career support initiatives and suggested that the facility of an employee to utilize organizational backing is determined by their own capabilities. The results indicate that the positive psychological states that result because of empowerment-focused HR practices that focus on developmental support and growth opportunities lead to long-term motivation, engagement, and positive job attitude, which is paramount in the long-term organizational performance.

Even though the previous studies have contributed to the knowledge in the field of HR practices and motivation of employees, there are significant gaps identified. The available literature demonstrates that training can boost motivation and retention rates in banking and service industries [25,28] and autonomy and work-life balance can boost the satisfaction of telecommuters [26]. The use of SDT in research is predominantly extrinsic motivation as applied in financial situations [27] or satisfaction as a mediator [29], and more recent research has focused on autonomy-supportive career practices [30]. Nevertheless, the participation in innovation and peer recognition and integrated empowerment frameworks are topics that have not yet been studied, especially in Indian high-pressure IT environment environments such as metropolitan Chennai where the current literature remains disjointed and mostly Western or non-IT oriented.

Combined, the studies in Table 1 suggest that as much as training, empowerment, and work-life balance have been separately correlated with motivation and satisfaction, most of the previous research works explore the practices singularly, and use them to non-IT or Western settings, and have seldom integrated the innovation participation and peer recognition in a cohesive empowerment framework.

Table 1: Comparative Synthesis of Prior Studies and Research Gaps

Study / Context	Key HR Practices Examined	Outcome Variables	Method Used	Key Findings	Limitations Identified	Gap Addressed by Present Study
Sustiyatik [25] – Banking	Training, HR Development	Motivation, Performance	PLS-SEM	Training significantly improves motivation and performance	Non-IT sector; no empowerment or recognition	Extends to IT sector and integrates empowerment-driven HR practices
Jamal <i>et al.</i> [26] – Telecommuting	Autonomy, Work-Life Balance	Satisfaction, Commitment	SEM	Autonomy and flexibility increase satisfaction	Focuses on remote work; ignores innovation and POS	Incorporates work-life balance within a broader empowerment framework
Nguyen and Le [27] – Finance	Training, Motivation	Performance, Creativity	PLS-SEM	Extrinsic motivation dominates performance outcomes	Financial sector; no engagement or POS	Examines intrinsic motivation via empowerment in IT context
Rahaman <i>et al.</i> [28] – Banking	Training, Culture, Career Dev.	Retention	Regression	Training and culture improve retention	No mediation analysis; non-IT	Uses SEM with multiple mediators (motivation, engagement, POS)
Soegiarto <i>et al.</i> [29] – Manufacturing	Training, Autonomy, Culture	Satisfaction, Performance	PLS-SEM + Qualitative	Autonomy enhances satisfaction	Lacks innovation participation and peer recognition	Adds innovation participation and peer recognition explicitly
Jiang <i>et al.</i> [30] – multi-sector	Career Support, Autonomy	Thriving	SEM	Autonomy boosts vitality and learning	Does not test satisfaction or POS	Links autonomy to satisfaction via motivation and engagement

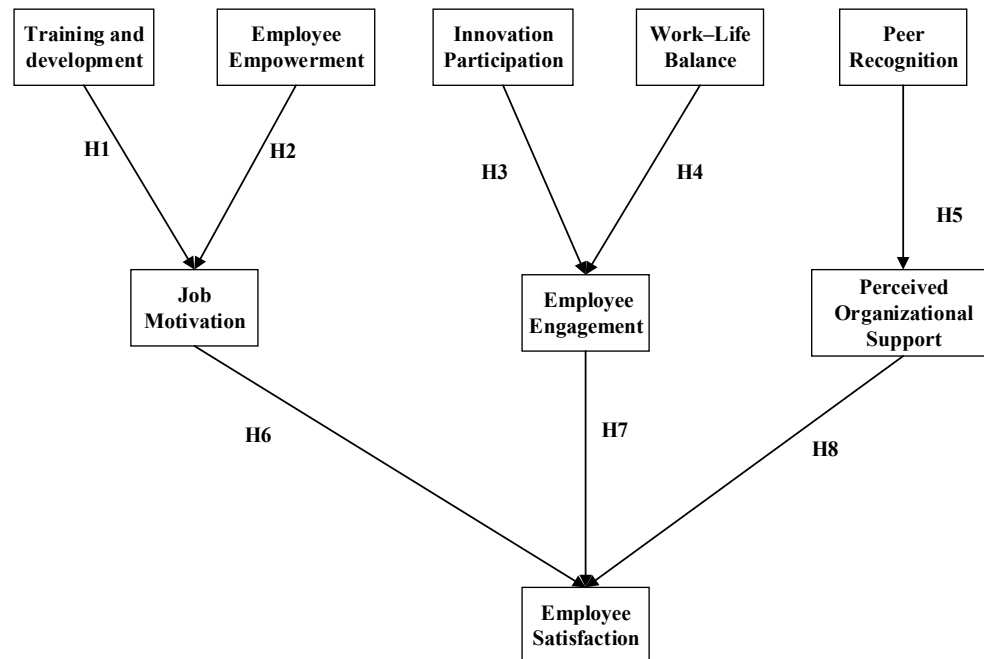


Figure 1: Proposed Conceptual Framework

Additionally, the available literature mainly uses single-mediator or direct-effect models, which provide little information regarding the interactive effects of job motivation, employee engagement, and POS. To overcome these limitations, the current study hypothesizes and empirically proves an integrated, theory-based SEM model to be applied to Chennai IT situation.

Conceptual Framework

The research framework establishes a logical basis to examine how empowerment-driven HR practices influence employee satisfaction in the IT sector. The model is developed using SDT and SET.

It depicts how key HR practices Training and Development, Empowerment, Innovation Participation, Work-Life Balance, and Peer Recognition directly and indirectly influence employee satisfaction through the mediating variables

of Job Motivation, Employee Engagement, and POS. Figure 1 above presents the proposed hypothesis regarding the direction of relationships among HR practices and the results of levels of satisfaction. The mediating variables in the process of how supportive practices are converted into satisfaction are job motivation, engagement and POS. The research used SEM to measure these relationships and which HR dimensions play the greatest role in employee satisfaction in the IT workplace. This work adds to Self Determination Theory by revealing how autonomy supportive elements like empowerment and innovation involvement increase IM and to SET because it will be shown that recognition, development and supportive work environments enhance reciprocal employee organization relationships. In contrast to the conservative HR practices, which usually focus on remuneration or control systems, the model pro forecasts the participatory and empowerment-oriented strategies, which are especially effective in the knowledge-intensive industries, including IT. The conceptual framework rests on three categories of variables: independent variables representing key HR practices, mediating variables that explain the underlying mechanisms, and the dependent variable of employee satisfaction. Each category is described below.

Independent Variables

Independent variables in this research are the major HR management practices that are likely to affect the employee performances in HCL Technologies. These variables are derived based on the available HRM literature and modified to the organizational setup of the IT industry in the city of Chennai. They are also critical in influencing the perception of the employees towards motivation, engagement, and overall satisfaction at the workplace. All practices represent a different path in which the organization may improve employee experiences, minimize attrition, and create a long-term commitment. The independent variables are discussed under the following subsections.

The selection of training and development, empowerment, innovation participation, and peer recognition as key HR practices is mainly applicable to the Indian IT context, which is characterized by fast hi-tech change, project-based work, and continuous skill obsolescence. Continuous training is critical for maintaining employability and performance in India's technology-driven organizations, where employees must regularly update competencies to remain competitive [17,31]. Empowerment is especially salient in IT environments, as autonomy and decentralized decision-making enhance problem-solving, creativity, and intrinsic motivation among knowledge workers [25,32]. Innovation participation aligns with the ideapreneurial culture of Indian IT firms, where employee involvement in idea generation and process improvement fosters engagement and organizational commitment [23,33]. Additionally, peer recognition holds particular importance in collectivist cultures such as India, where social acknowledgment strengthens POS and retention more effectively than purely monetary rewards [33,38]. Together, these practices reflect the structural, cultural, and competitive realities of Indian metropolitan IT environments and provide a contextually grounded foundation for the proposed empowerment-driven HR framework.

Training and Development

Training and development would help employees refresh up and keep up with the fast-changing IT environment. This kind of practice is an indication that has demonstrated investment in employee development and thus increased intrinsic motivation, engagement, and satisfaction. Training leads to innovation preparedness by promoting flexibility and confidence, as well as helps to retain knowledge-based professionals.

Employee Empowerment

Employee empowerment refers to the giving of employee's freedom of choice in their decision making and control of their work. Knowledge-based IT environments are creative and problem solvers who are empowered because it is an indication of confidence in their expertise. Consistent with SDT, empowerment fulfils the autonomy needs thus enhancing intrinsic motivation. Empowerment enables employees to be more empowered, creative and devoted and this increases employee job satisfaction and helps in long-term organizational success.

Innovation Participation

Innovation participation entails motivating the employees to share and participate in problem-solving processes to facilitate organization revolution. This imparts a sense of ownership and makes the employees feel like stakeholders in the company thus resulting in an increase in engagement and work meaningfulness. Initiative and collaboration are also developed in the culture of participation in creative practices. Employees will feel that their ideas are recognized and adopted, and this will lead to increased organizational identification and job satisfaction that would help in retention in the knowledge-intensive IT environment.

Work-Life Balance

Work life balance programs are designed to contribution staffs in balancing among work and other individual needs, especially in the stressful IT conditions. Such practices lead to job satisfaction and organizational commitment by reducing stress and burnout caused by favourable policies. The employees who perceive organization supports balance feel more motivated and unlikely to withdraw and leave. Therefore, a work-life balance culture will help in maintaining productivity and retaining employees in the long-run.

Peer Recognition

Peer recognition involves the recognition of the efforts of employees by other employees and not necessarily by the managers. These practices make POS stronger because they relay a signal of appreciation and fairness that enhances job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Peer recognition also facilitates teamwork and good inter-personal relationships, which helps in the engagement of employees. Peer based recognition made institutional enhances a culture of inclusion and support in the workplace that strengthens motivation and commitments in knowledge-intensive IT settings.

The choice of training and development, empowerment, involvement in innovations, and peer recognition as the primary HR practices is very related to the Indian IT sector with a high level of technological change, stiff competition, and employee turnover. Ongoing upskilling encourages motivation, retention among IT professionals and empowerment and decentralization encourages autonomy, creativity, and innovation. Innovation participation is compatible with the Idea preneurship culture in India and peer recognition will be well received in collectivist cultures by amplifying the sense of organizational support. Collectively, the practices depict the multidimensional HR processes that characterize motivation, engagement, and satisfaction in the pressurized Indian IT settings.

Mediating Variables

Mediating variables in this work demonstrate the psychological and relationship processes that underlie how the HR practices that are empowerment-oriented affect the satisfaction of employees. Three mediators are considered to be based on SDT and SET, these are Job Motivation, Employee Engagement, and POS. All the mediators are unique channels through which the HR practices get converted into good employee deliverables.

Job Motivation

Job motivation is the inward factor that guides the behaviour of employees in regard to their work. In line with the SDT, motivation levels increase when employees feel autonomy and competence. Motivation is fortified through empowerment-oriented HR practices, including training and participative decision making, which enable employees to master a skill and have control over work. Job motivation as a mediating variable explicates how empowerment programs can turn into increased job satisfaction through the development of longer-term enthusiasm and psychological fulfilment in the workplace.

Employee Engagement

Employee engagement is a beneficial work-related condition that is vital, committed, and absorbed. Engagement is the emotional and cognitive assurance the employees put in their jobs unlike motivation which shows willingness to work. Engagement is encouraged through empowerment-oriented HR practices such as involvement in innovation and supportive working environments that make the work more meaningful. Employee engagement as a mediating variable articulates the relationship among the practices of employee empowerment leading to greater employee satisfaction and lower turnover intentions in pressurized IT workplaces.

Perceived Organizational Support (POS)

POS is what the employees believe that the association respects their input and is concerned about their welfare. Based on SET, POS develops whereby employees feel that they are treated fairly, their efforts are acknowledged and their HR practices are supportive. Peer recognition, developmental opportunities, and conducive policies are some of the mechanisms that the organization demonstrates to its employees that it is committed to them, thereby triggering trust and mutual loyalty. POS as an intermediary variable provides an explanation of how the relational and recognition-based HR practices enhance employee satisfaction by enhancing the sense of belonging, security and mutual obligation between the employees and the organization.

Dependent Variable

The key outcome examined in this study is the variable that the model seeks to explain and predict. The current study employee satisfaction is placed on the key position of the dependent variable since it refers to the cumulative impact of both HR practices, along with the mediating effect of motivation, assignment, and POS. The satisfaction is an overall indicator of the ways of employees to assess their experiences in the workplace, organizational climate, and career advancement prospects. The research is significant in its attention to the employee satisfaction as the main dependent variable, as it contributes to a high level of commitment, lowers employee turnover, and maintains the overall performance in an organization.

Employee Satisfaction

The last result of the HR interventions is the employee satisfaction which is the self-assessment of employees concerning their working roles, environment and organizational support. Increased level of satisfaction correlates with increased commitment, productivity and retention especially in competitive IT environments. The better the HR practices are systematically used to accommodate the needs of the employees, the higher the satisfaction levels, but the lower the levels of dissatisfaction and turnover. Being the dependent variable, employee satisfaction is a cumulative indicator of the training, empowerment, engagement, and recognition practices effectiveness, and it will be based on it that the proposed hypotheses will be tested.

Theoretical Foundations: SDT and SET

The present study is founded on SDT and SET to describe the effect of empowerment-based HR practices on employee satisfaction as a result of psychological and relational approaches. SDT describes the satisfaction of competence needs through training, participation in innovation through empowerment, and autonomy provision through participation and collaboration contribute to an improved level of motivation and engagement. This is complemented by SET that demonstrates that work-life balance and peer recognition are indicators of organizational care that enhance the POS and mutual commitment. The intensification of these mechanisms, in metropolitan Indian IT environments, is more of a stabilizing need, not a motivator. It shows that satisfaction is a foreseeable, architectural product and presents empowerment-based HR systems as a strategic guide to high pressure high attrition IT settings.

Hypotheses

Referring to the conceptual framework and defined variables, this research develops the hypotheses analysing how the HR practices affect employee satisfaction by using the mediating variables of motivation, engagement, and POS. All hypotheses are formed according to the existing theories and backed by the currently existing empirical data. The framework gives the basis of testing these proposed relationships that are tested by SEM in order to guarantee the rigor, both theoretical and practical.

- **H1: Training and Development Positively Influence Job Motivation:** Employees are provided with the latest skills through training programmes which increase their confidence and adaptability. The SDT states that intrinsic motivation is increased by meeting the ability need. Empirical research demonstrates that formal training boosts motivation, efficiency, and retention. With the ever-evolving IT world, constant learning enables the skills to remain up-to-date, and the disengagement level is minimized, which makes employees more motivated, satisfied, and loyal
- **H2: Employee Empowerment is Positively Associated with Job Motivation:** Empowerment promotes autonomy and responsibility that are major factors in intrinsic motivation according to SDT. Decentralized decision making develops trust and ownership that makes employees feel appreciated and self-directed. Motivated employees are more energetic, innovative, and loyal that increases the satisfaction and commitment to the organization
- **H3: Innovation Participation Positively Influences Employee Engagement:** Participation of the innovation enables employees to provide their ideas and influence the processes in the organization and this leads to the growth of a sense of psychological possession and involvement. It was found that organizations with a favourable attitude towards innovation achieve better results in terms of commitment and reduced turnover since the employees are not just executors but actual stakeholders and thus employees are more satisfied and loyal
- **H4: Work-Life Balance has A Positive Effect on Employee Engagement:** Flexible work hours and stress reduction programs that come under work-life balance programs lessen burnout and enhance worker involvement. When employees have an effective stability in work and personal life, they become more motivated, committed and satisfied and hence they stay longer in high stress IT settings

- **H5: Peer Recognition Positively affects POS:** Peer recognition promotes appreciation and teamwork as it also appreciates employee contributions other than that of managers. It reinforces POS, trust and belonging, satisfaction and loyalty. Such recognition in IT environments creates a conducive culture which enhances morale and long-term dedication
- **H6: Job motivation is positively related to employee satisfaction:** Employees who are motivated have higher fulfilment, performance, and loyalty. Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation is what contributes to commitment and satisfaction, thus, rendering the supportive HR practices into a positive outcome. Motivation, in the case of IT organizations, leads to increased participation, less turnover, and stabilization of the organization
- **H7: Employee Engagement Positively Influences Employee Satisfaction:** Engaged employees that have an emotional attachment to their work show increased satisfaction, performance, and loyalty. In the high-pressure IT based setting, engagement lowers turnover and fortifies commitment. Organizations can improve satisfaction and retention rate of employees by enabling interaction between employees and employers through innovation programs and work-life balance programs
- **H8: POS is positively related to employee satisfaction:** The POS is an attitude that the employees believe that the association cherishes their efforts and is interested in their welfare. High POS will boost satisfaction, loyalty, and morale because it will decrease the stress and increase the trust. In the IT environment, POS is positively affected by recognition, equality and facilitating policies, which enhance motivation, dedication, and retention

Experimental Analysis

This section shows the empirical analysis employed to examine the proposed hypotheses. The researcher utilizes a quantitative, cross-sectional survey strategy and SEM to test the hypotheses that empowerment-focused HR practices are significant to employee satisfaction and the mediating assumptions of job motivation, POS, and employee engagement. The methodological approach can guarantee a valid and dependable measurement of the latent constructs of organizational behaviour.

Measurement Instrument

Table 2 presents the measurement instruments used to operationalize the study constructs. All scales were adopted from well-established sources in the HRM and organizational behaviour literature and were selected to ensure theoretical alignment with the proposed model and suitability for empirical analysis in the Indian IT context.

Each construct was measured using established and validated scales drawn from prior literature to ensure content validity and comparability. Responses were recorded on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The designated scales have been widely used in organizational and HRM research and were adapted to the Indian IT context where necessary. Dependability and convergent cogency were inveterate through Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability (CR), and average variance extracted (AVE), all of which exceeded recommended threshold values, hence validating the sufficiency of the model of measurement.

Sampling Design and Procedure

Stratified random sampling technique is utilized to provide sufficient illustration of the employees in organization units of HCL Technologies in Chennai. During the first phase, stratification of population was done according to the campuses, which included Sholinganallur, Navalur, and Guindy campuses. The second phase involved further stratification of the employees in each campus based on the job position as junior staff, middle-level staff and managerial staff. The

Table 2: Measurement Scales Used in the Study

Construct	Scale Source	No. of Items	Sample Focus	Response Format
Training and Development	Noe and Wilk [31]	5	Skill enhancement, learning support	5-point Likert (1 = SD to 5 = SA)
Employee Empowerment	Spreitzer [32]	12	Autonomy, meaning, competence	5-point Likert
Innovation Participation	Scott and Bruce [33]	6	Idea generation, innovation involvement	5-point Likert
Work-Life Balance	Hayman [34]	5	Work-family balance	5-point Likert
Peer Recognition	Kuvaas [35]	5	Recognition, appreciation	5-point Likert
Job Motivation	Gagné <i>et al.</i> [36]	12	Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation	5-point Likert
Employee Engagement	Schaufeli <i>et al.</i> [37]	9	Vigor, dedication, absorption	5-point Likert
Perceived Org. Support	Eisenberger <i>et al.</i> [38]	8	Organizational care and support	5-point Likert
Employee Satisfaction	Brayfield and Rothe [39]	5	Overall job satisfaction	5-point Likert

Table 3: Demographic Variables

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	140	60
	Female	94	40
Age Group	18–25	45	19
	26–35	105	45
	36–45	60	26
	46 and above	24	10
Education Level	Bachelor's	132	56
	Master's	72	31
	PhD/Other	30	13
Years of Experience	1–5 years	85	36
	6–10 years	90	39
	11+ years	59	25
Job Position	Junior-level	98	42
	Mid-level	96	41
	Managerial	40	17

Table 4: Standardized Path Coefficients and Significance Values

Hypothesis	Updated β	t-value	p-value
H1	0.63	5.92	0.000
H2	0.81	7.48	0.000
H3	0.65	6.31	0.000
H4	0.60	5.88	0.000
H5	0.70	6.95	0.000
H6	0.68	6.72	0.000
H7	0.64	6.10	0.001
H8	0.72	6.85	0.000

Table 5: Model Fit Indices for the SEM

Index	Acceptable Threshold	Reported Value
CMIN/df	≤ 3.00	2.41
GFI	≥ 0.90	0.92
AGFI	≥ 0.85	0.88
NFI	≥ 0.90	0.91
CFI	≥ 0.90	0.94
TLI	≥ 0.90	0.93
RMSEA	≤ 0.08	0.06
SRMR	≤ 0.08	0.05

proportionate method was used because the respondents were chosen within each stratum according to the actual proportion of respondents within the organization so that no given campus or level of job was over- or under-represented. Simple random sampling was applied to sample the respondents within each stratum. The end result of this two-stage stratified method was a final sample of 234 employees which gave a representative and balanced dataset to be further analyzed.

Table 3 is a demographic profile of the respondents (234) and provides an insight into the composition of the sample. The gender distribution was quite equal and 60% of employees were males and 40% females. The largest proportion of respondents (45%) have the age between 26 and 35 years which suggests the presence of young to middle-aged labour force willing to train, be empowered, and be exposed to innovation-focused HR practices. The sample was well educated as 56% had bachelor's degree and 31% had master's degree. The experience levels were also well spread as 36% had 1-5 years of experience, 39% had 6-10 years of experience and 25% had more than 11 years of experience. There were more junior- and mid-level employees (42% and 41%), and managerial employees were represented with 17% and made sure that all levels were represented in the organization.

Even though demographic factors like years of experience and job position were utilized in descriptive analysis, they were not utilized as control variables in the SEM. primary objective of the research is testing the theories of empowerment-oriented HR practices based on parsimonious SEM framework based on the SDT and SET. According to the existing studies in the literature of HRM, it implies the demographic factors tend to be contextual descriptors and not the substantive predictors of the psychological construct which consists of motivation, engagement, and satisfaction. However, there is a possibility to expand the present model with the introduction of demographic variables as control variables in the future to evaluate the strength of the suggested relations even further.

Assumption Testing

Prior to conducting SEM, the main statistical assumptions of data suitability were evaluated. The values of skewness and kurtosis were utilized to check ordinarity and were within the range between -1.21 and +1.04 which is an acceptable distribution. Multicollinearity was assessed using correlation analysis with all inter-construct correlations going below the cutoff point of 0.80. Mahalanobis distance was used to test multivariate outliers and no influential outliers were found. The conventions of linearity and constant variance were checked utilizing the scatterplot analysis. Besides, internal consistency reliability was verified, with all constructs having Cronbach alpha exceeding 0.70, indicating that the dataset is sufficient in the analysis of SEM.

Measurement Model Assessment

Figure 2 shows the CR values of all constructs of the study. All of them are above the recommended value of 0.70, which means that internal consistency is satisfactory. Training (0.83), Empowerment (0.81) and Job Satisfaction (0.82) are found to have high reliability and Innovation (0.80) and Peer Recognition (0.79) are found to be acceptable.

There is also sufficient reliability of Work-Life Balance (CR = 0.78), which proves the strength of the measurement model. Altogether, these findings can prove the validity of the constructs and justify why the measurement model can be applied further to structural analysis.

Structural Model Analysis

The relationship among the constructs in the structural model is illustrated in Figure 3, and the relationship between the constructs was significant and positive.

Job Satisfaction is muscularly linked with Empowerment ($r = 0.70$) and Training ($r = 0.60$), whereas the Peer Recognition is positively correlated with Job Satisfaction ($r = 0.65$) and Work-Life Balance ($r = 0.60$). In general, the existence of the correlations of between 0.40 and 0.75 validate the integration of empowerment-based HR framework.

The standardized regression coefficients (β) of a predicted relationship in the SEM to prove the proposed empowerment-driven HR framework is given in Figure 4. The amount of all relationships is substantial at $p = 0.05$ and therefore validates the strength of the replicas. Empowerment to Job Motivation ($\beta = 0.81$) was the strongest predictor, which means that employees are highly motivated by empowerment. Peer Recognition to POS ($\beta = 0.70$) and POS to Job Satisfaction ($\beta = 0.72$) followed this implying that recognition and POS are very imperative in the creation of satisfaction. On the same note, other variables that positively impacted engagement are Innovation Participation ($\beta = 0.65$) and Work-Life Balance ($\beta = 0.60$), whereas Job Motivation ($\beta = 0.68$) and Engagement ($\beta = 0.64$) had a direct impact on overall satisfaction.

The fact that the coefficients of all the paths remain high indicates that empowerment-based HR practices are significant in enhancing motivation, engagement, and satisfaction among IT professionals in HCL Technologies.

Path coefficients were estimated with SEM to test the proposed hypothesized relationships. Table 4 shows the standardized regression weights (β), t-values, and p-values of each of a hypothesized paths in a structural model. It was established that all the relationships were significant at $p < 0.05$, thus indicating the strength of the proposed empowerment-based HR framework.

All path coefficients are significant ($p < 0.05$) and all mean that an empowerment-related HR practice has a significant contribution to employee satisfaction, either directly or indirectly through mediator variables. Empowerment ($\beta = 0.81$) through job motivation, peer recognition ($\beta = 0.70$) through POS and innovation participation ($\beta = 0.65$) through engagement, were the sturdiest forecasters of fulfilment. The finding is quite consistent with a theoretical assumption of the SDT and SET, demonstrating that the essential psychological and relational mechanisms that increase the level of employee satisfaction are autonomy, recognition, and participatory innovation.

Model Fit Indices

Figure 5 shows the model fit measures of the structural equation mock-up, indicating that put forward classical fits an available data satisfactorily.

Chi-square/df, Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Tucker Lewis Index (TLI), Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) and Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) were used to evaluate model adequacy and met the expected SEM benchmark criteria. In particular, a CFI and TLI over 0.90 value signify good comparative suitable whereas a RMSEA and SRMR under 0.08 value represents low approximation error and good parsimonious model. All these findings corroborate the strength, validity, and explanatory power of the empowerment-based HR framework.

The SEM was tested based on several goodness of fit measures to provide strong validation of the proposed empowerment-based HR framework. Table 5 indicates that all indices were below or even equal to the recommended threshold values which verify the replicas offers a perfect acceptable to an observed information.

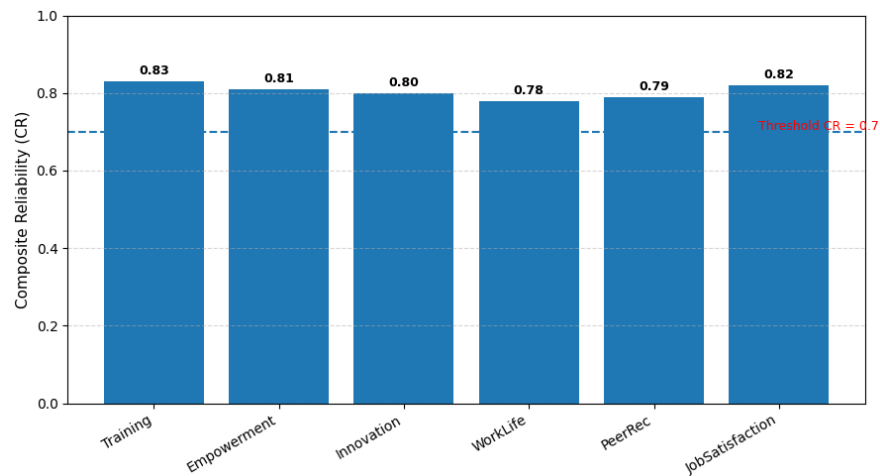


Figure 2: Measurement Model Assessment

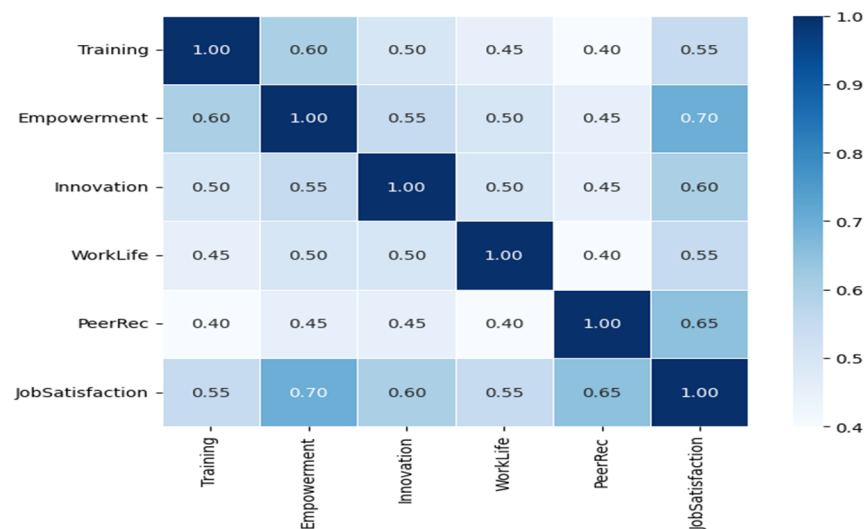


Figure 3: Structural Model Analysis

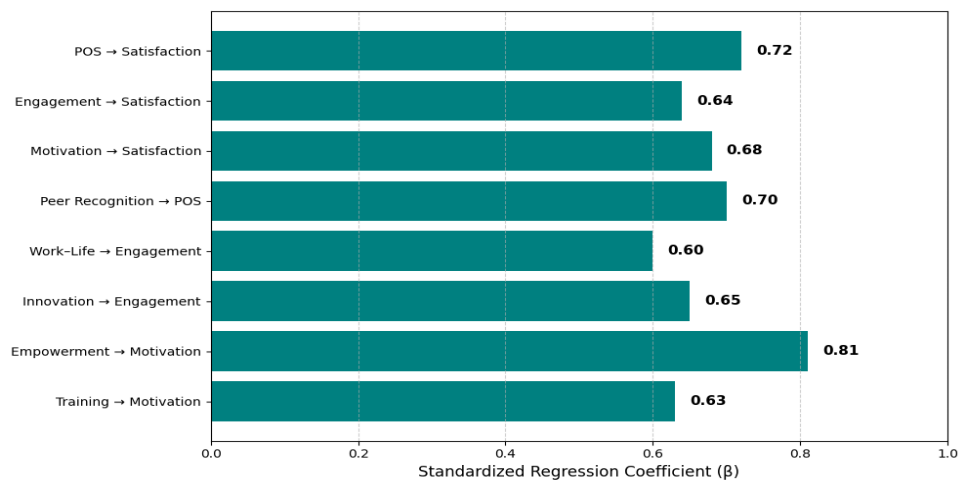


Figure 4: Regression Coefficients of Hypothesized Paths

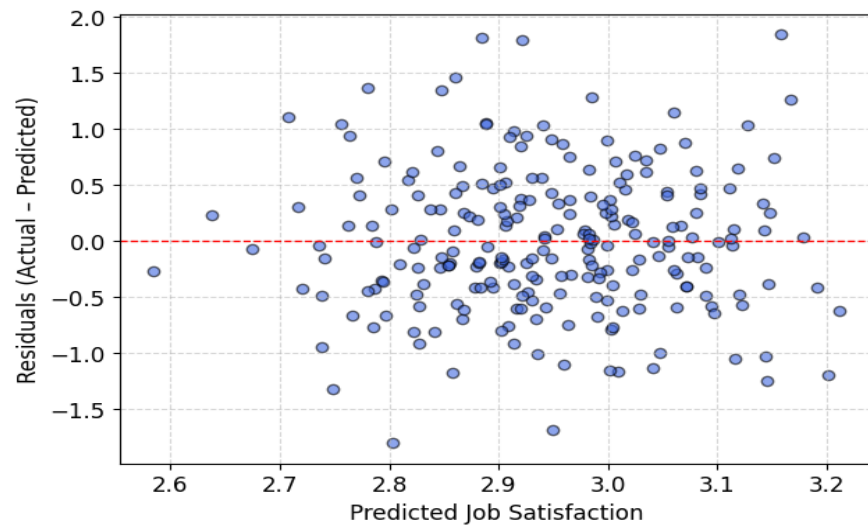


Figure 5: Model Fit Indices

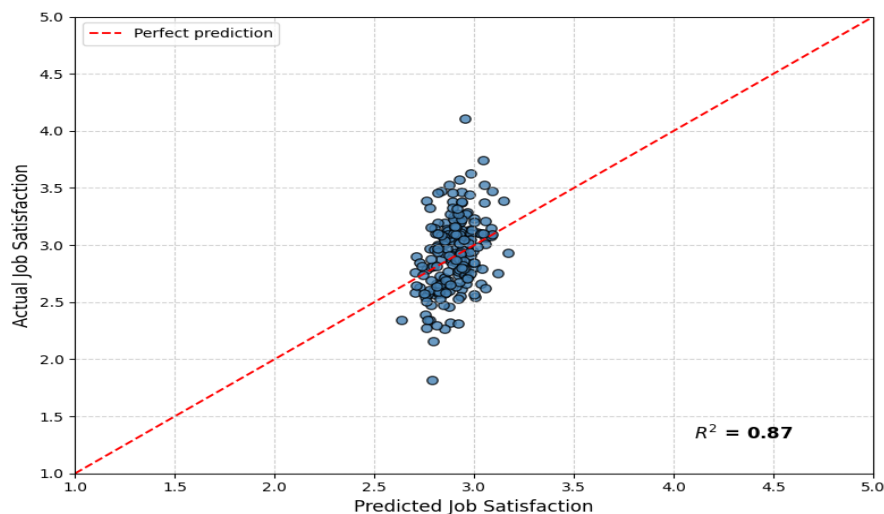


Figure 6: Predicted vs. Actual Job Satisfaction Scores

The model-fit indicators are all within the recommended threshold which indicates that the measurement model and structural model are well specified. Specifically, the values of CFI (0.94) and TLI (0.93) are above 0.90 and the value of RMSEA (0.06) is less than 0.08, which are the indicators of excellent construct validity and very good overall model fit. The good indices of goodness-of-fit, along with a high explanatory power ($R^2 \approx 0.87$ when it comes to employee satisfaction), indicate that the hypothesized empowerment-based HR model could be a very reliable source of employee satisfaction dynamics in the Indian IT setting.

Predictive Accuracy

As illustrated in Figure 6 depicts the connection between the anticipated and real job satisfaction scores achieved using the SEM. The scatter plot specifies that there is a close clustering of the observations around a dashed line depicting perfect prediction hence a high level of agreement between the observed and the predicted values.

All the data points mean projected and actual scores of about 2.5–3.2. The value of the coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.87$) indicates the replicas has a high degree of prediction, which validates the existence of significant percentage of alteration in employee job satisfaction as clarified by the proposed model.

Table 6: Comparative Analysis

Method Used	Strongest Reported β	R^2 (Outcome)
SEM + CFA	$\beta = 0.68$	$\approx 0.50-0.52$
PLS-SEM (SmartPLS)	$\beta = 0.32$	$\approx 0.53-0.58$
PLS-SEM (Mixed Methods)	$\beta = 0.45$	$\approx 0.56-0.59$
Proposed Study	$\beta = 0.81$	$\approx 0.87-0.89$

Theoretical Implications

Despite the fact that such demographic variables as years of experience and job role were used in the descriptive analysis, they did not form part of the control variables in the SEM to maintain theoretical parsimony based on SDT and SET. The previous studies in HRM hold that demographic variables are not predictors of the psychological concept, but they are usually used as a contextual marker. In favour of this choice, initial correlation analyses showed that there were no strong and systematic relationships between demographics and core latent variables. The model can be further developed in future studies by including demographic controls in the model in order to evaluate further on robustness. Notably, the research provides context-based information by showing that empowerment-driven HR practices in the socio-cultural and competitive environment of a metropolitan Indian IT cluster work, which brings theory to a new level of generic validation.

Practical Implications

The theory, results can offer practical advice to HR practitioners working in HCL Technologies and the IT sector as a whole. Decentralization of decisions made by project teams can be adopted to empower the employees and increase the levels of autonomy and intrinsic motivation. The training and development must be modelled as lifelong learning opportunities that incorporate technical upskilling, mentoring and career advances. Internal idea platforms, innovation challenges and hackathons can be used to promote employee-led innovation. Peer recognition programs, including HCL Bravo program, need to be formalized by means of transparent electronic systems, whereas long-term retention and work-life balance under the pressure of demanding IT requirements can be maintained through flexible work arrangements and wellness initiatives.

DISCUSSION

The present research upholds and builds on the previous literature that has established a linkage between HR practices that are enabled and employee satisfaction. The former research studies have validated that training and development increases motivation and the current research indicates that they also apply to the technology-driven IT industry where flexibility is essential. Likewise, engagement and satisfaction were observed to improve with empowerment and work-life balance and the broader significance the autonomy and flexibility. The study finds that intrinsic motivation factors like empowerment and peer recognition yield more enduring effects as opposed to the previous literature that focused on extrinsic motivation as the driving force. The model incorporates SDT and SET by use of the employee engagement and POS as mediators, which provide new empirical data to the relationship among empowerment-oriented HR practices and satisfaction in an innovation-based working environment.

Comparative Analysis

Table 6 has provided a comparative overview of the analytical procedures and statistical results in a variety of studies that have been analysing the employee results. All these methods show different explanatory power with respect to the model, approach of analysis and sample situation. The comparison indicates the differences between the β -coefficients and R^2 values and demonstrates that the modelling techniques are various and affect predictive quality and the performance interpretation.

According to regression-based and PLS-SEM, the predictive and explanatory power are reported to be different depending on the analytical method employed and the research scenario. In this respect, the proposed study proves to have high explanatory power with strong standardized effect β (0.81) and large percentage of variance explained in employee satisfaction R^2 ($\approx 0.87-0.89$) which shows a high efficiency of the empowerment-based HR practices modelled using latent constructs and mediation processes.

Limitations

This work has a number of limitations despite its contributions. The one-time survey design and use of participant-reported and single-source survey data predisposes the findings to the common method bias which is predisposed to social desirability, common rater, and consistency of responses. Despite the use of procedural remedies (respondent

anonymity and validated measurement scales), common method bias may not be completely eliminated. Based on this, the relationships between empowerment-based HR practices and job motivation, employee engagement, POS, and employee satisfaction observed need to be viewed with caution. Longitudinal designs, multi-source data, and objective measure of performance should be utilized in upcoming analysis to improve the strength of a causal inference and research strength.

CONCLUSION

This study investigated the role of empowerment-driven HR practices training and development, innovation participation, work-life balance, and peer recognition in influencing employee satisfaction at HCL Technologies in Chennai. The research consequently employed SEM analysis of survey data from 234 employees across three campuses, the results confirmed that these practices significantly influence motivation, engagement, and POS, which collectively drive satisfaction. Specifically, empowerment demonstrated the strongest effect on motivation ($\beta = 0.81$), peer recognition enhanced POS ($\beta = 0.70$), and innovation participation increased engagement ($\beta = 0.65$), while the overall model explained approximately 87% of the discrepancy in satisfaction outcomes. This analysis extends SDT and SET by showing that in high-pressure metropolitan Indian IT contexts, empowerment, innovation participation, and peer recognition function as stabilizing and resilience-building mechanisms rather than mere motivators. Employee satisfaction thus emerges as a strategically designable and sustainable organizational capability. Empowerment-oriented HR systems outperform transactional approaches by reducing attrition and burnout while strengthening commitment and competitiveness. However, the cross-sectional design, reliance on self-reported information, and Chennai-specific scope limit generalizability, indicating the need for longitudinal and cross-industry research to further advance HRM theory and practice in India's digital economy.

Practical Implications for HR Managers

To strengthen empowerment, organizations should adopt decentralized decision-making structures and participative goal-setting practices that grant employees greater autonomy in project execution. To support training and development, continuous learning initiatives such as role-specific upskilling programs, mentoring, and structured career development pathways should be institutionalized to maintain skill relevance. To enhance innovation participation, HR managers can implement internal idea platforms, hackathons, and innovation-linked reward systems that encourage creative involvement. To reinforce POS, peer recognition mechanisms such as nomination-based appreciation tools and team-level recognition programs should be introduced. To promote work-life balance, flexible work arrangements, workload management strategies, and employee wellness initiatives should be actively supported. Collectively, these empowerment-driven HR practices can foster a motivated, engaged, and resilient workforce in India's rapidly evolving digital economy.

Declaration of Interests

Funding: On Behalf of all authors the corresponding author states that they did not receive any funds for this project.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that we have no conflict of interest.

Competing Interests

The authors declare that we have no competing interest.

Data Availability Statement

The data used in this study were collected through a structured questionnaire survey administered to 234 employees of HCL Technologies across three campuses in Chennai. The dataset supporting the findings of this study is available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request, subject to organizational and ethical considerations.

Ethics Approval

No ethics approval is required.

Consent to Participate

Not Applicable

Consent for Publication

Not Applicable

Human and Animal Ethics

Not Applicable.

Code Availability

Not Applicable.

Author's Contributions

- **Author 1:** Performed the Analysis the overall concept, writing and editing
- **Author 2:** Participated in the methodology, Conceptualization, Data collection and writing the study

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