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# A Study on Employee Relationship Management Practices at Hi Import and Export PVT. Ltd. Chennai

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**ABSTRACT:** This article explores the significance of Employee Relationship Management (ERM) and its impact on employee satisfaction, motivation, retention, and organizational performance, with a case study conducted at Hi Import and Export Company, Kakallur. The study analyzes communication practices, feedback mechanisms, motivational strategies, and grievance redressal systems through quantitative research involving 112 employees.

**KEYWORDS:** Employee Relationship Management, Communication, Retention, Motivation, Organizational Performance, Employee Engagement.

## I. INTRODUCTION

In the dynamic business environment, Employee Relationship Management (ERM) plays a strategic role in enhancing productivity, reducing attrition, and fostering a healthy work culture. This study investigates ERM practices at Hi Import and Export Company, Kakallur, highlighting the importance of trust, motivation, open communication, and recognition in building strong employer-employee relationships. This study focuses on evaluating the ERM practices at **Hi Import and Export Company, Kakallur**, and a growing enterprise in the trading and logistics sector. The objective is to understand how effectively the organization manages its employee relationships and what impact these practices have on job satisfaction, morale, and organizational commitment. The conduct of this study involved both quantitative and qualitative research methods. Structured questionnaires were distributed to employees across various departments including Production, Maintenance, Quality Control, Storage and Inventory, and Dispatch and Logistics. In addition to survey data, in-depth interviews were conducted with HR managers and departmental heads to gain a comprehensive perspective on the ERM strategies currently in use.

## II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To understand the impact of ERM on employee satisfaction, performance, and retention within the organization.
- To identify the key factors that contribute to building strong, effective, and sustainable employer-employee relationships.
- To evaluate the communication channels, motivation techniques, and grievance handling methods employed by the organization in fostering a healthy work environment.
- To suggest actionable strategies for improving employee engagement, workplace harmony, and overall organizational climate.
- To analyse the contribution of effective employee relationships to organizational success, operational efficiency, and long-term business growth.
- To examine the role of trust and transparency in maintaining positive employee relations.
- To assess the effectiveness of HR policies in promoting fairness, inclusivity, and career development.
- To explore the influence of leadership style on employee morale, collaboration, and team dynamics.
- To determine the level of employee involvement in organizational decision-making and change management processes.
- To compare current ERM practices with industry best practices and highlight areas for improvement.

### III. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

- This study concentrates on analyzing how Hi Import and Export Company, Kakallur develops and sustains effective employer-employee relationships. It examines the strategies adopted by the organization to build a positive work environment that fosters collaboration, mutual respect, and trust. The research focuses on key aspects such as communication, motivation, employee engagement, trust-building, job satisfaction, and conflict resolution, which are essential elements of strong employee relationship management (ERM).
- The scope includes a critical evaluation of the effectiveness of current ERM practices and explores opportunities for improvement based on employee and managerial feedback. By incorporating responses from individuals across various levels of the organization, the study aims to present a well-rounded and balanced understanding of the company's relationship management framework. Ultimately, the research intends to provide actionable insights and recommendations that can benefit HR professionals, management teams, and academic researchers seeking to understand and implement effective ERM strategies in modern organizational settings.

### IV. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A comprehensive review of existing literature establishes that Employee Relationship Management (ERM) is a pivotal factor in driving organizational effectiveness, employee engagement, and long-term business growth. Leading scholars such as Armstrong, Schein, Torrington & Hall, Herzberg, and Guest have explored various dimensions of ERM, including trust, motivation, organizational culture, and communication, recognition, and conflict resolution. In addition, global research conducted by institutions like the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), Gallup, and the Harvard Business Review (HBR) reinforces the assertion that well-executed ERM strategies lead to reduced turnover, enhanced employee morale, and improved organizational outcomes.

According to **Armstrong (2006)**, effective employee relationships are foundational to organizational success. He emphasized that fostering a work environment where employees feel valued and engaged promotes motivation, reduces conflict, and significantly improves productivity. **Heals** complemented this view by asserting that open communication, active listening, and consistent employee involvement are key elements in nurturing strong relationships.

**Torrington and Hall (2007)** argued that mutual respect, fairness, and clarity in HR policies are essential in maintaining a positive employer-employee relationship. They highlighted that employees are more likely to remain committed and perform at higher levels when they perceive equitable treatment and clear expectations from management.

**Schein (2010)** focused on the role of organizational culture, stating that companies with inclusive and growth-oriented cultures tend to develop stronger employee bonds. He emphasized that leadership behavior, team dynamics, and recognition practices serve as key influencers of organizational trust and loyalty. Schein also noted that companies with a strong cultural foundation experience fewer internal conflicts and higher retention rates.

**Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory** provides another dimension to understanding ERM by distinguishing between hygiene factors (such as company policies, supervision, and salary) and motivators (such as recognition, responsibility, and personal growth). According to Herzberg, while hygiene factors prevent dissatisfaction, true motivation and engagement arise from intrinsic factors, reinforcing the importance of ERM practices that focus on employee development and recognition.

**Guest (1997)** proposed the **Psychological Contract Theory**, which explains the unwritten expectations between employers and employees. Guest emphasized that when organizations uphold their informal commitments—such as career growth, respect, and open communication—it strengthens trust and fosters long-term engagement.

**Kundu and Malhan (2009)** conducted extensive research on employee relations in export companies. Their findings revealed that organizations which invest in communication platforms, continuous training, and grievance redressal systems report significantly lower attrition rates and improved employee morale. Their study emphasizes the need for ERM strategies that are not only systematic but also culturally relevant.

**Gallup (2017)** revealed that organizations with high employee engagement driven by transparent communication, trust, and regular feedback report 21% higher productivity and 59% lower turnover rates. The **Harvard Business Review**

(2020) also highlighted that emotionally connected employees are more likely to advocate for their organization, remain loyal, and deliver higher performance.

Overall, the literature strongly supports the notion that effective ERM is not just a supportive function but a **strategic driver of organizational performance**, sustainability, and employee well-being.

## V. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

There search challenge can be approached methodically using research methodology. It is a detailed outline of how data will be gathered and analyzed for a research endeavour. Research methodology can be thought of as the scientific study of how research is conducted. It might include a wide range of research projects, from straightforward description and examination to the design of complex experiments. A clear objective provided the basis of design of the project. Since the main objective of this study is to study the employee retention factors it was decided to use descriptive research design including, survey and fact-finding enquiries of different kinds, which found out the most suitable design in order to carry out the project.

### Meaning of Research

Research is a form of artistic scientific inquiry. Research is defined as "a careful investigation (or) inquiry especially through search for new information in any domain of study" by the advanced learner's dictionaries of contemporary English. Research is defined by Redman and Mary as "a methodical endeavour to gather knowledge." Since descriptive research aims together data and statistically analysis, it is quantitative in nature. With the use of statistical analysis, descriptive research is a potent research tool that enables a researcher to gather data and characterize the demographics of the same. It is a quantitative research method.

### Type of Research

A type of research design that is used for this research is Descriptive research. The method in which the study undergoes is Questionnaire. The descriptive research aims at obtaining complete and accurate information for the study, the method adopted must be carefully planned. It uses methods like quantitative analysis of secondary data, surveys, panels, observations, interviews, questionnaires, etc.

- Design: Descriptive research
- Sampling: Convenience sampling
- Sample Size: 112 employees from Hi Import and Export Company
- Tools: Questionnaire-based survey, Percentage analysis, Chi-square, Correlation, and ANOVA
- Period of Study: February 2025 to May 2025

## VI. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

### Data

Data refers to raw facts, figures, or observations collected from various sources. It may exist in two primary forms:

- Structured data: Organized formats such as databases and spreadsheets.
- Unstructured data: Includes texts, images, videos, and other formats that are not organized in a predefined manner.

### Data Analysis

Data analysis is a systematic approach to examining, organizing, and processing data to extract valuable insights. This process often involves:

- Cleaning and preparing data.
- Applying statistical or logical techniques.
- Using software tools to visualize and summarize information.

### Data Interpretation

Data interpretation is the process of deriving meaning from analyzed data by identifying:

- Patterns
- Trends
- Relationships

This step transforms numerical or qualitative findings into understandable insights that support decision-making. From the above chart, indicates that 51.8% of respondents are male and 48.2% respondents are female.

From the above table, it indicates that 65.2% of respondents are between 21 to 30 age group, 24.1% of respondents are between 31 to 40 age group, 8.9% of respondents are between 41 to 50 age group and 1.8% of respondents are above 51 age group.

From the above table, it indicates that 41.1% of respondents are undergraduate, 40.2% of respondents are post graduate, 13.4% of respondents are diploma and 5.4% of respondents belong to educational background of the employers.

From the above table, it indicates that 61.6% of respondents are less than 5 years of experience, 28.6% of respondents are between 5-10 years' experience, 7.1% of respondents are between 10-15 years of experience, 4.5% of respondents are between 15-20 years of experience and 0% of respondents are more than 20 years of experience.

## VII. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The study conducted at **Hi Import and Export Company, Kakallur** provides a comprehensive understanding of employee perceptions regarding Employee Relationship Management (ERM) practices. The findings reveal both strengths and gaps in the organization's current strategies.

A significant 84.9% of employees expressed overall satisfaction with the organization's ERM practices, indicating a generally positive organizational climate. This high satisfaction level suggests that the company has successfully established a foundation for positive employer-employee relationships.

Among the various elements contributing to effective ERM, **trust (44.6%)** and **communication (29.5%)** were identified as the most critical components by the employees. This highlights the organization's need to continue fostering openness and transparency to build deeper mutual trust.

The study found that 74.1% of the respondents feel valued in their roles, while 67.9% stated they are motivated to engage in decision-making processes. These figures reflect a strong sense of inclusion and empowerment within the workplace, which are essential for employee loyalty and long-term retention.

Communication emerged as a strong point, with 76.8% of employees reporting that the communication channels within the organization are effective. This suggests that the organization has systems in place that facilitate efficient information flow, reducing misunderstandings and enhancing clarity.

Regarding motivation, 66.9% of respondents reported satisfaction with the existing motivation techniques. However, the satisfaction was not uniformly distributed. A correlation analysis revealed a negative relationship between years of experience and satisfaction with motivation techniques, indicating that more experienced employees may not find the current strategies as engaging or rewarding.

One of the areas of concern identified in the study is the limited awareness of the grievance redressal system, with only 29.5% of employees being fully aware of the mechanisms in place. This points to a lack of visibility or communication about the available support systems for resolving workplace issues.

A Chi-square test was conducted to analyze the association between gender and satisfaction levels. The results showed no significant relationship, suggesting that male and female employees share similar experiences and perceptions regarding ERM practices.

Further, ANOVA testing revealed significant differences in employees' perceptions of communication effectiveness based on their educational qualifications. This suggests that employees with different educational backgrounds interpret and experience communication practices differently, which may call for more tailored communication approaches.

Another implicit finding is the potential disconnect between seniority or experience and motivational impact, indicating the need for differentiated motivational strategies for newer versus long-standing employees.

Overall, while the organization demonstrates strong performance in building trust, encouraging open communication, and fostering a sense of value and participation, there is scope for improvement in grievance awareness, customization of motivation techniques for experienced staff, and adapting communication strategies to suit diverse educational levels.

### **VIII. SUGGESTIONS**

In addition to enhancing awareness and accessibility of grievance redressal systems, the organization should also consider designating dedicated ERM officers or HR representatives trained to handle employee concerns confidentially and efficiently. Establishing a digital grievance portal could further streamline the process and ensure timely resolution.

The company may also benefit from institutionalizing regular one-on-one check-ins between managers and employees. These informal sessions can serve as platforms to identify concerns early, offer support, and build personal rapport, contributing to stronger individual relationships. Furthermore, introducing 360-degree feedback mechanisms can help employees and managers understand how their actions impact others, promoting self-awareness and behavioral improvement.

In terms of motivation, it is advisable to segment recognition programs such as peer-to-peer recognition, department-based awards, or tenure-based rewards to ensure inclusivity and relevance to all employees. Offering non-monetary rewards such as flexible work hours, professional development sponsorships, and public acknowledgment can also be highly effective.

To improve decision-making participation, the organization can form cross-functional committees or employee advisory panels that contribute to policy development, workplace improvement, and event planning. This ensures diverse input and strengthens the feeling of belonging.

Communication can be enhanced by implementing a structured internal communication policy, which includes weekly briefings, leadership updates, newsletters, and accessible HR bulletins. Managers should be trained in empathetic communication techniques to handle sensitive conversations respectfully and effectively.

Another crucial area is the promotion of a learning-oriented culture. This can be achieved by organizing regular training workshops on soft skills, emotional intelligence, conflict resolution, and team dynamics. Furthermore, implementing mentorship programs that pair senior employees with newer staff can promote knowledge sharing, improve onboarding experiences, and foster intergenerational trust.

To cultivate a sense of community, the company can host team-building activities, wellness programs, employee recognition events, and social engagement initiatives, all of which improve morale and cohesion. Additionally, conducting annual ERM audits or climate surveys can help track progress and identify emerging issues for timely resolution.

Finally, embedding ERM metrics into performance appraisals for managers will hold leaders accountable for relationship quality within their teams and reinforce the strategic importance of ERM throughout the organization.

### **IX. CONCLUSION**

However, the study also identifies areas for improvement, particularly in enhancing awareness and accessibility of grievance redressal mechanisms, broadening employee feedback channels, and increasing opportunities for employee participation in decision-making processes. Addressing these gaps can further strengthen organizational cohesion and employee morale.

With sustained efforts, targeted interventions, and a commitment to continuous improvement, the company can enhance its ERM framework to meet evolving employee needs. By doing so, Hi Import and Export Company will not only improve workplace harmony but also reinforce its ability to achieve long-term organizational goals and maintain a competitive edge in the export-import industry.

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