

# Impact of Selected Grievance Handling Practices on Employee Engagement in Sri Lankan Apparel Industry, With Special Reference to Lower Level Employees in Katunayake Export Processing Zone

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Employee engagement (EE) has been identified as one of the important determinants of human resource effectiveness in organizations. In the scope of modern human resource management, which aims at ensuring the maximum contribution of employees in achieving organizational goals while retaining a satisfied workforce, grievance handling practices (GHP) play a vital role in reaching its aim. Sri Lankan apparel sector employs over 600,000 employees contributing to almost 3% for the GDP. Though the impact of grievance handling practices on employee engagement has been focused in few studies in the global arena, there are hardly any studies on the same in Sri Lankan context, especially referring to apparel industry. Thus, the present study aims at assessing what practices are being used by the organizations, if the employees preferred to use GHPs in their work place and finally identify any impact of selected GHPs on employee engagement in Sri Lankan apparel industry relating to lower level employees in KEPZ. The study adopts a quantitative research design and gathered data from 100 lower level employees out of 5103 lower level employees in two apparel firms which have largest number of employees in KEPZ through structured questionnaires based on the consideration of Krejcie and Morgan table (1970). The correlation analysis and regression analysis were used as the tool of data analysis. The study found that engagement level of the lower level employees of KEPZ is relatively high and from among the three types of GH practices according to the theory of dispute resolution by Goldberg (1988), interest-based methods are mostly adopted by the organizations where the second and third preferences were with right-based methods and power-based methods respectively. The engagement level is notified that the employees are highly engaged in cognitively and behaviorally than emotionally ( $\mu=4.5$ ). The employees agreed that their organizations are practicing GHPs and prefer those adopted GHPs. Accordingly, the findings imply that the first two GH methods have the potential to improve EE, though with a slight impact.

**Keywords:** Grievance handling practices, employee engagement, apparel industry, Katunayake export processing zone, lower level employees