

HRM Practices: The Paradox of Consistency and Flexibility with Reference to Supreme Industries

Subathra R¹, Dr. S. Pougajendy²

¹MBA Student, Department of Management Studies, Sri Manakula Vinayagar Engineering College (Autonomous), Puducherry.

²Professor, Department of Management Studies, Sri Manakula Vinayagar Engineering College (Autonomous), Puducherry.

ABSTRACT

This study explores the interplay between consistency and flexibility in HRM practices within Supreme Industries, Puducherry. It delves into the paradox faced by organizations in maintaining standardized policies while adapting to diverse employee needs and dynamic work environments. The research focuses on identifying the impact of these practices on workforce efficiency, employee satisfaction, and organizational performance.

The methodology involves collecting primary data through a structured survey conducted among 103 employees. A quantitative approach was adopted, supported by statistical tools to analyse the relationship between HRM practices and employee outcomes. Key variables include workforce diversity, employee age, and monthly income, highlighting their influence on organizational adaptability. The findings emphasize the importance of achieving a balance between structured policies and flexible approaches, underlining the significance of tailoring HRM practices to address unique organizational challenges. This study contributes to the literature by bridging theoretical concepts with practical insights, offering actionable recommendations for organizations. The study concludes by highlighting the implications for HR managers in fostering a dynamic yet consistent work environment, paving the way for sustainable organizational growth.

Keywords: HRM Practices, Consistency, Flexibility.

1. INTRODUCTION

Human Resource Management (HRM) practices have evolved to become a strategic cornerstone for organizations seeking to achieve competitive advantage in today's dynamic business environment. The balance between consistency and flexibility in HRM practices poses a critical paradox. While consistency ensures fairness, standardization, and efficiency, flexibility promotes adaptability, innovation, and responsiveness to a changing workforce and global business environment. Organizations, especially those operating in diverse markets, must master the art of navigating this paradox to remain resilient and sustainable.

OBJECTIVE

- To identify the work environment in this organization
- To find the Safety policies provided to the employee.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

- Kaufman (2010): Stressed the importance of consistency in HR policies for ensuring fairness, compliance, and standardization across an organization. Consistent policies enhance employee trust and align organizational goals with workforce management.
- Wright & Snell (1998): Highlighted that consistency in HR practices leads to greater efficiency and uniformity, particularly in organizations that operate in highly regulated industries.
- Cappelli & Keller (2013): Argued that flexibility in HR practices is critical for adapting to changing market demands and workforce diversity. Flexibility enables companies to attract and retain top talent while fostering innovation.
- Boxall & Purcell (2000): Emphasized that flexibility in work arrangements, such as remote work and flexible hours, improves employee satisfaction and productivity.
- Harrison & Bazy (2017): Found that the manufacturing sector relies on consistent safety protocols but benefits from flexible shift scheduling to meet production demands. Das & Baruah (2013): Observed that Indian manufacturing firms, such as Supreme Industries, balance consistency in compliance with labor laws and flexibility in employee engagement strategies to maintain a competitive edge.
- Kundu (2003): Stated that HR practices in Indian organizations must navigate the dual challenges of global standardization (consistency) and local customization (flexibility). Kinnie, Hutchinson & Purcell (2000): Found that achieving a balance between consistency and flexibility is particularly challenging in multi-divisional organizations where diverse employee needs must be considered without compromising organizational standards.
- Eisenberger et al. (2001): Found that when organizations allow for flexibility within consistent frameworks, employees perceive higher organizational support, resulting in greater loyalty and commitment. Ulrich (1997): Introduced the concept of HR as a strategic partner, where HR professionals play a critical role in navigating the paradox by designing policies that are both standardized and adaptable.
- Das & Wagar (2007): Noted that the manufacturing industry faces unique challenges in managing consistency and flexibility due to its reliance on standardized processes and a diverse workforce.
- Das & Wagar (2007): Noted that the manufacturing industry faces unique challenges in managing consistency and flexibility due to its reliance on standardized processes and a diverse workforce.
- Paauwe & Boselie (2005): Found that consistent HRM systems promote fairness and reduce conflicts by standardizing performance appraisals, compensation, and disciplinary procedures.
- Monks et al. (2013): Argued that consistency in HR practices helps create a sense of equality and uniformity among employees, which is crucial for building a strong organizational culture.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study aims to explore and analyse the intricate balance between consistency and flexibility in human resource management practices and their subsequent impact on employee performance, job satisfaction, and organizational growth. A systematic and methodical approach was followed to ensure that the findings are accurate, reliable, and relevant to the stated objectives. The research adopts a descriptive design, which is particularly suited for studies aiming to provide an in-depth understanding

of the phenomena under investigation. The descriptive nature of this study facilitates the examination of HRM practices while identifying the relationship between consistency, flexibility and their influence on workplace dynamics.

3.1 Sample plan

A sample plan outlines the strategy used to select a representative subset of the population for the research. For this study, the sample plan was developed to ensure inclusivity and accurate representation of the employees at Supreme Industries.

Sample Size

A total of 103 employees were surveyed, accounting for approximately 12.9% of the total workforce. This sample size was deemed sufficient to capture the diverse perspectives and experiences of employees while ensuring the feasibility of data collection.

Sampling Technique

The study employed a stratified random sampling method. Employees were divided into strata based on job roles, departments, and hierarchical levels to ensure diversity in the responses. A random sampling approach within each stratum ensured that every employee had an equal chance of being selected.

3.2 Population

The population for this study consists of the employees working at Supreme Industries, Puducherry. The company employs a total of 800 employees across various departments and job roles, representing diverse demographics, skill levels, and responsibilities. This population includes both managerial and non-managerial staff, providing a comprehensive view of the workforce dynamics.

3.3 Survey methods

The data was collected using a structured questionnaire designed to gather insights into HRM practices and their balance between consistency and flexibility in the workplace.

For this research, a paper-based survey was conducted with 103 employees of Supreme Industries, Puducherry. The following steps were followed

- **Designing the Questionnaire:** A structured questionnaire was prepared, including questions about HRM practices, workplace flexibility, and employee satisfaction. Both close-ended (e.g., Likert scales) and open-ended questions were included.
- **Direct Distribution:** The researcher personally met employees across various departments and plants to distribute the survey forms. This direct interaction ensured that participants understood the questions clearly.
- **Collection of Responses:** Completed surveys were collected on the spot to avoid loss or delays.
- **Data Handling:** Responses were manually reviewed and later digitized for analysis using statistical tools like Chi-Square, Correlation, ANOVA, and Regression.

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

CHI SQUARE

AIM: To examine the relationship between employees' perception of whether the company's values create a positive work environment and their awareness of the safety policies implemented in the workplace.

HYPOTHESIS

- Null Hypothesis (H_0): There is no significant relationship between employees’ belief in the company’s values creating a positive work environment and their awareness of the safety policies implemented in the workplace.
- Alternative Hypothesis (H_1): There is a significant relationship between employees’ belief in the company’s values creating a positive work environment and their awareness of the safety policies implemented in the workplace.

Chi-Square Test

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.020 ^a	1	.888		
Continuity Correction	.000	1	1.000		
Likelihood Ratio	.039	1	.843		
Fisher's Exact Test				1.000	.981
Linear-by-Linear Association	.020	1	.888		
N of Valid Cases	103				

INFERENCE

From the Chi-Square test results, it is inferred that the calculated Pearson Chi-Square value (0.020) is smaller than the critical value, as indicated by the p-value of 0.888, which is greater than 0.05

Therefore, H_0 (Null Hypothesis) is accepted and H_1 (Alternative Hypothesis) is rejected.

RESULT: There is no significant relationship between employees belief in the company’s values creating a positive work environment and their awareness of the safety policies implemented in the workplace.

ANOVA

AIM: To examine whether there is a significant difference in the rating of overall safety cultures in the workplace across different groups. By analysing the means of these groups, we aim to determine if perceptions of workplace safety culture vary significantly.

HYPOTHESIS

- Null Hypothesis (H_0): There is no significant difference in the ratings of overall safety culture in the workplace across the different groups.
- Alternative Hypothesis (H_1): There is a significant difference in the ratings of overall safety culture in the workplace across the different groups.

ANOVA					
Safety cultures					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.818	1	.818	3.655	.059

Within Groups	22.618	101	.224		
Total	23.437	102			

INFERENCE

From the ANOVA table, the F-statistic is 3.655, and the p-value is 0.059, which is slightly above the common significance threshold of 0.05. This indicates that there is no statistically significant difference in the ratings of the overall safety culture between the groups at the 0.05 level.

Therefore, the Null hypothesis (H_0) is accepted and H_1 (Alternative Hypothesis) is rejected.

RESULT: There is no significant difference in the ratings of overall safety culture in the workplace across the different groups.

FINDINGS

CHI SQUARE

The findings from the Chi-Square test indicate that the calculated Pearson Chi-Square value is 0.020, which is smaller than the critical value. The associated p-value is 0.888, significantly greater than the significance threshold of 0.05, confirming the acceptance of the null hypothesis (H_0) and the rejection of the alternative hypothesis (H_1). This indicates that there is no statistically significant relationship between employees' belief in the company's values creating a positive work environment and their awareness of workplace safety policies.

ANOVA

The F-statistic is 3.655, and the p-value is 0.059, which is slightly above the common significance threshold of 0.05. This indicates that there is no statistically significant difference in the ratings of the overall safety culture between the groups at the 0.05 level. Therefore, the Null hypothesis (H_0) is accepted. While there may be some variation in the mean ratings, these differences are not strong enough to be deemed significant at the 0.05 level. The findings suggest that perceptions of safety culture are relatively consistent across the groups, reinforcing the importance of maintaining uniform safety practices and policies across all employee segments.

CONCLUSION

This study has provided valuable insights into how HRM practices impact employee satisfaction, performance, and overall organizational effectiveness. The findings indicate that while the company maintains consistency in key areas such as shift systems, cleanliness, and conflict resolution ensuring high levels of employee satisfaction there is a need for flexibility in adapting to the diverse needs of the workforce, particularly the younger employees who make up a significant portion of the organization. The analysis revealed that consistent enforcement of policies, such as safety protocols, positively contributes to employee well-being, supporting the importance of maintaining a stable and reliable work environment. However, the results also highlighted the value of flexibility, especially in areas like motivation programs and communication, where a positive relationship was found between the frequency of programs and the effectiveness of communication from management.

The paradox of consistency and flexibility lies in finding the balance between maintaining a structured environment and adapting to the dynamic needs of employees. While the study found no significant differences in productivity or safety culture ratings based on perceptions of a positive work environment,

it suggests that continuous monitoring and flexibility in HR practices are crucial for addressing evolving employee expectations. Overall, the project emphasizes that Supreme Industries Puducherry must continue refining its HRM practices by balancing consistency with flexibility, ensuring both stability and adaptability to foster a positive, engaged, and productive workforce.

REFERENCE

1. Jongwook Pak, Hossein Heidarian Ghaleh, Zhenzhong Ma, “Antecedents and Outcomes of Enabling HR Practices: The Paradox of Consistency and Flexibility,” ResearchGate, July 2023, 12 (5), 383–403.
2. Vidović, M., & Vidović, T., “Enabling HR Practices and the Paradox of Consistency and Flexibility,” Human Resource Management Journal, Wiley Online Library, August 2023, 33 (4), <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/1748-8583.12571>.
3. Farina, P., “Flex vs. Consistency: How to Beat the Management Paradox,” Paul Farina Blog, June 2023, <https://paulfarina.com.au/blog/flex-vs-consistency-how-to-beat-the-management-paradox>.
4. Pak, J., Heidarian Ghaleh, H., Ma, Z., and Akhtar, M. N., “Flexibility and Consistency in HR Practices,” University of East London Repository, <https://repository.uel.ac.uk/item/8y27w>.