
Motivational Factors and Mediating Role of Leadership on Employee Engagement in Ready-Made Garments Industry in Bangladesh

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Abstract

Introduction: The current study aims to investigate the mediating effect of leadership styles between the relationship of motivational factors and employee engagement in the context of the ready-made garment (RMG) industry in Bangladesh.

Methodology: Herzberg's two-factor theory and the full range leadership model were employed in the study. The quantitative approach was utilized, and the hypotheses were explored using path analysis on 387 employees in Bangladesh's RMG industry.

Result and Discussion: The findings indicate that motivational factors and leadership styles have a positive effect on employee engagement; however, the current level of motivational factors and employee engagement is not satisfactory, and the existing characteristics of transformational and transactional leaders are not appropriate in the RMG industry. The results also showed that leadership style mediates the relationship between motivational factors and employee engagement.

Conclusion and recommendations: The paper discusses the implications of these results and gives practical advice on how to leverage motivational factors and leadership styles to boost employee engagement. The conclusions recommend that the industry focuses on leadership styles and motivational factors in order to fulfil more ambitious targets and sustain business for the long term.

Keywords: Employee Engagement, Motivational Factor, Leadership style, Readymade Garments (RMG).

1. Introduction

Over half a century ago it was recognized that motivational factors and motivational issues need to be optimized (Herzberg et al., 1959) if employee engagement is to increase. Many studies supported it such as Kahn (1990) and Marelli (2011) who both stated that motivation can increase employee engagement. The issue of employee engagement remains very important to policymakers and, more importantly, to employers (Bailey, Madden, Alfes, & Fletcher, 2017). For example, despite being the biggest earner in South Asia, the garment industry in Bangladesh recently experienced a decline in sales between 2015 and 2017 (BGMEA, 2018). The study was suggested that this decline was due to underperforming employees who were not engaged and turnover intention was also very high (Rubel, Kee, Quah & Rimi, 2017). An uncomfortable working environment will, of course, make any employee feel that they have no control over their work and exhausted. Employees' perceptions of role overload, according to prior study, will have a detrimental influence on their work attitude and behavior (Jensen et al., 2018; Jones et al., 2007). According to Wang et al. (2014), job insecurity was the major source of stress for Chinese employees.

This study adopted Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory as it supports the common-sense association of level of work gratification and job discontent, in spite of his theory not featuring leadership style as having a real effect on employee behavior and action or engagement. This paper aims to examine the effect of transformational leadership and transactional leadership, asking whether or not such factors strengthen an employee's satisfaction, motivation and engagement. Although many studies for example, Iqbal (2015); Schaefer (2015); Schmitt, Den Hartog & Belschak (2016); Bergstrom & Martinez, 2016; Othman, Hamzah, Abas & Zakuan, (2017) have been conducted on motivational factors and employee engagement or leadership and employee engagement on the basis of cross sectional study, to the best of the author's knowledge, very few studies have been conducted on the role of transformational and transactional leadership as a mediator between motivation and employee engagement. Mung, May-Chiun, Kwang Sing, & Ayob (2011) and Mansor, Jaharudin, and Nata (2018) investigated the relationship between leadership style and employee engagement, focusing on transformational leadership, and discovered that leadership has a substantial impact on employee engagement. Mansor et al., (2018) employed Social Exchange Theory (SET), although motivation theory is applied in this research.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Employee Engagement

Work engagement is described as a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind defined by energy, devotion, and absorption, according to Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzalez-Romá, and Bakker (2002). Employees will be considered engaged if they are able to carry out their responsibilities and have faith in management (Engelbrecht, Heine & Mahembe, 2017). Employees that are engaged work with passion and are more dedicated to the organization because they enjoy and trust in what they do, and they feel appreciated by their employer (Ariani, 2013). The Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES; Schaufeli, et al., 2003), which was created to evaluate the dimensions vigor, dedication, and absorption, may be used to quantify employee engagement constructs. UWES has been verified across various cultures, and previous researchers (e.g., Storm & Rothmann, 2003) have said that it may be utilized without bias due to the three-factor model's cross-national validity.

2.2 Motivational Factors and Employee Engagement

According to the literature, employee engagement is a motivating construct that may be shared in the workplace. Employee engagement, for example, is basically a motivational notion that reflects the active allocation of personal resources towards the task connected with a work role, according to Christian et al., (2011). Past research has examined various factors which might influence employee engagement based on certain theories. For example, Mansor et al. (2018) used SET to test antecedents such as reward and recognition, leadership, career development opportunities and subordinate and supervisor relationships. Kathirvel (2010) used McFarlan's model to examine the impact of a variety of antecedents, such as 'the work sanctuary', wages, employed situations, connections through bosses, connections with co-workers, prizes and acknowledgment, offers and prospects to usage thoughts, types of toil idea of self, communication and connection with organization, well-being dealings, healthiness settings, training, personal alteration, security, communal and civic life, opportunity for advancement, job clarity, cleanliness, stress relaxation and chances to learn a job. In the literature, motivation is always seen as one of the most important factors for attracting and retaining employees, as well as for leading workers to be innovative and inventive (Parashar, 2016). Lin (2007) stated that even though a large quantity of theories have been proposed to clarify the various distinct stimuli to perform work-related tasks, little is known about the underlying factors influencing motivation and employee engagement.

RMG factories in Bangladesh have common issues related to the wellbeing of workers, the labour setting, training and career progress, compensation and working policies which are all elements of motivation affecting employee engagement. Based on these situations, this study proposed examining motivational factors using the Herzberg two-factor theory, as this theory is able to describe how levels of satisfaction and dissatisfaction are important prior to employees gaining motivation. This theory also suggests that employees will not be satisfied if intrinsic factors are not available in the workplace (Davies, 2007). On the other hand, extrinsic motivational factors such as hygiene, relationship with supervisor and company policy may also determine the satisfaction of the employee and, conversely, dissatisfaction if these factors are lacking (Nelson & Quick, 2008).

2.3 Motivational Factor and Leadership Style

According to previous research, employees and supervisors have a dyadic connection (Dai et al., 2018), and both transformational and transactional elements are proven to have a substantial impact with motivation and employee engagement. According to Chaudhry, Javed, and Sabir (2012), intrinsic motivation and its components have a positive and significant relationship with transformational leadership, and transformational leaders, according to Bass & Avolio's (1991) full-range leadership theory, motivate their employees intrinsically, and these types of elements drive from Herzberg's motivator factors. On the other hand, transactional leaders, according to Bass (1990), utilize a way of rewarding and punishing employees: when a leader has high instrumental motivation, he or she is more likely to engage in transactional behavior. Transactional leaders, according to full-range leadership theory, inspire their workers extrinsically, and these aspects are drawn from Herzberg's hygiene factors.

2.4 Leadership Style and Employee Engagement

Although past studies examined a variety of factors that can affect the development of employee engagement, extended research is still required to cover leadership and behavior, (Mester, Roodt, & Kellerman, 2003). According to Shuck and Herd (2012), the influence of leadership behavior and the development of employee engagement is still limited but past research has stated that leaders are able effect real change using the interactive process between them and their followers (Rowe and Guerrero, 2011). In their full range leadership model, Bass and Avolio (1991) discussed eight behavioral magnitudes of transformational and transactional leadership style. While transformational leaders are able to transform and change current practices and structures by influencing others, especially with new ideas and opportunities,

transactional leaders are leaders who work for the sustainability and stability of an existing system, realizing the necessity of economic and social changes for specific purposes (Lussier and Achua, 2010: 347). As this study is related to leadership, the full range leadership model is adopted, since both transformational and transactional leadership styles have affected workers' performance as well their engagement; factors which ultimately determine the relationship between the managers/supervisors and the workers. Yisa, Alkali & Okoh (2013) highlighted that leadership styles which are practiced in any organisation have an impact on the overall performance of those organizations. Othman, Hamzah, Abas, & Zakuan (2017) added that leadership style contributes to ensuring high levels of engagement among employees. Based on an overview of previous studies, as presented in this literature review, this paper has developed the following hypotheses:

H1: There is a positive effect of motivational factors on employee engagement in the readymade garments industry in Bangladesh.

Past literature such as Kahn, (1990) and Marelli, (2011) state that motivation can increase employee engagement. Silvera, (2013) has suggested that there is a relationship between improvement of intrinsic motivational factors (IMF) and extrinsic motivational factors (EMF) and enhancement of employee engagement in organization. Bergstrom & Martinez, (2016); and Khan & Iqbal, (2013) also express that IMF and EMF have positive effect on employee engagement. Herzberg, (1968) suggest that motivator increase the employee engagement as well as caution that appropriate amounts of attention must be paid to extrinsic factors to avoid dissatisfaction. Grounded by the theory, the researcher proposes that leaders must first attend to the lower order of hygiene needs before using intrinsic motivation factors to develop satisfaction and job achievement. Promotion and growth, recognition, creativity, independence, moral values, responsibility and ability to utilize are intrinsic motivational factors which are crucial and could only be achieved if the basic hygiene needs are fulfilled. On the other hand, job security, salary, relationship with peers, relationship with supervisor, working environment, company policy and procedure, authority, variety are extrinsic motivational factors which encourage employees to be engaged in their work seriously. Thus, the above hypotheses are formulated based on these facts.

H2: There is a positive influence of motivational factors on leadership style in the readymade garments industry in Bangladesh.

Chaudhry, Javed & Sabir, (2012); Bass, (1990) discover that motivation and its components have positive and significant association with leadership style. Transactional leaders utilize reward and punishment strategies to inspire people, whereas transformational leaders encourage individuals naturally by trusting, appreciating, and respecting them. According to the full range leadership theory, a transformational leader motivates people intrinsically by utilizing aspects that drive Herzberg's motivation factors, and a transactional leader motivates employees extrinsically by using elements that drive Herzberg's hygiene factors. Moreover, motivations are the antecedent of leadership (Barbuto, 2005) and the above hypothesis is based on this perspective.

Managers want to decrease employee dissatisfaction by providing extrinsic motivation to prevent burnout and enhance employee engagement by offering intrinsic motivation, according to the full range of leadership theories. This is accomplished through placing faith in the workers and expressing gratitude for their commitment and respect. The next hypothesis is drawn based on this fact.

H3: There is a positive impact of leadership style on employee engagement in the readymade garments industry in Bangladesh.

H4: Leadership style mediates the relationship between motivational factors and employee engagement in the readymade garments industry in Bangladesh.

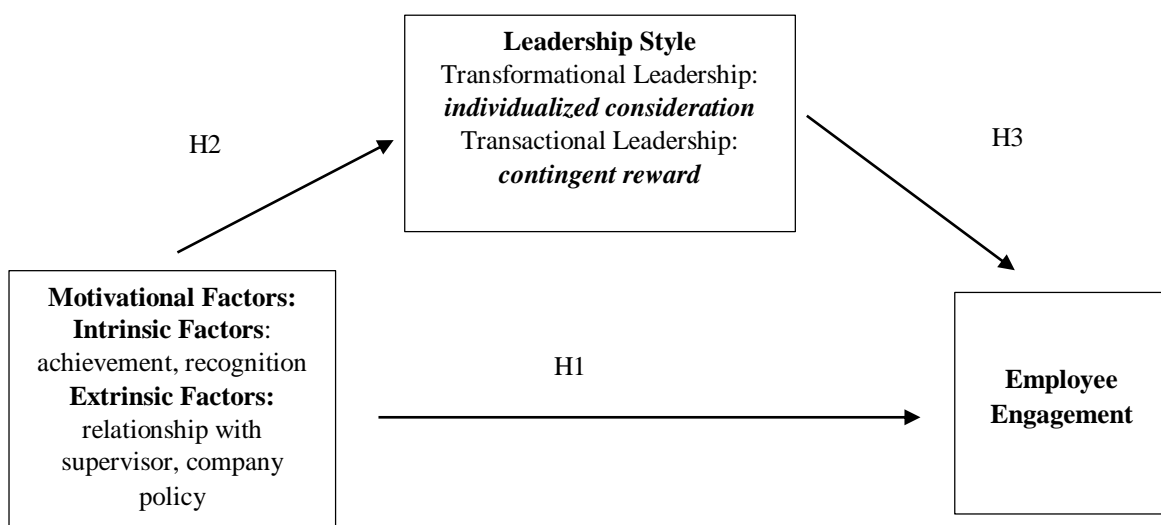


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

3. Methodology

A structured questionnaire was utilized in this study, which was based on empirical data. The study's participants were permanent employees of Bangladesh's RMG industry. The sampling was based on non-probability and convenience sampling, as it is a better approach for this study. The study collected a total of 387 responses from 25 RMG factories in Dhaka. The Utrecht Work Engagement (UWES) scale of employee engagement, developed by Schaufeli, Bakker, & Salanova (2006) and tested by Vanam (2009) consists of a 9 item questionnaire to measure 3 dimensions (vigor, dedication, absorption) of employee engagement. To measure motivational factors, the scale developed by Weiss, Dawis, England & Lofquist (1967) and used by Ghanbahadur (2014) named the 'Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire' was adopted for this study. The motivational factors consist of achievement, recognition, relationship with supervisor, company policy and procedure. These factors are also categorized into intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors. A multifactor leadership questionnaire (MLQ) (5X) with the Avolio and Bass scale was used to assess transformational and transactional leadership dimensions (1991). Individualized consideration was used to assess transformational leadership, whereas contingent reward was used to assess transactional leadership. All questions were rated on a 5-point Likert scale, with 1 for being strongly disagreed and 5 for being strongly agreed. Data were analyzed using SPSS for demographic and descriptive elements, and Smart PLS was used to measure the partial least squares structural equation modeling (SEM).

4. Results and Findings

4.1 Descriptive Findings

There were 260 males (67.2 per cent) and 127 female (32.7) respondents. 226 of the employees were married (58.4 per cent) and 161 (41.6 per cent) were single out of 387 respondents. 6 of the employees (1.6 percent) held a bachelor's degree, while 29 of them (7.3 percent) held a higher secondary certificate. 157 employees (40.6 percent) had completed their secondary certificate and 195 employees (50.4 percent) had completed their primary education. 114 of the respondents (29.5 percent) worked between 55 and 60 hours per week, 93 (24 percent) worked between 48 and 54 hours, 68 (17.6 percent) worked between 61 and 66 hours and 67 (17.3

percent) worked between 67 and 72 hours. 40 employees (10.3 percent) worked for more than 72 hours and only 5 employees (1.3 percent) worked fewer than 48 hours per week.

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation of the constructs

Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation
Intrinsic motivation	3.25	0.58
Extrinsic motivation	3.35	0.61
transformational leadership	3.6	0.66
transactional leadership	3.28	0.64
employee engagement	3.71	0.5

According to Herzberg's two-factor theory, motivators should increase employee engagement. In terms of the average mean and standard deviation (Table 1), the results of this study indicate that employees were not able to value motivational factors and as a result, they described themselves as unsatisfied in their work. The overall means for the intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors were (3.25 ± 0.58) and (3.35 ± 0.61) , that suggesting neutral responses for both types of motivational factor. Further, the results showed the respondents also gave neutral responses for the availability of transformational leadership (3.60 ± 0.66) , transactional leadership (3.28 ± 0.64) and employee engagement (3.71 ± 0.50) .

4.2 Assessment of Measurement Model

The measurement model should be evaluated prior to the structural model, in accordance with the standard procedure. Measuring reliability, convergent validity and discriminatory validity are included in the evaluation of the model. Hair et al., (2014) proposed that the internal consistency of the study be assessed by using composite reliability and that the cutoff value should be 0.7. According to Table 2, the composite reliability values of 0.898 (motivational factors), 0.799 (employee engagement), and 0.765 (leadership style) reveal that such constructs have acceptable levels of internal consistency in this research.

Table 2: Composite Reliability and Validity

Items	Outer loadings	CA	CR	AVE
Motivational factors		0.850	0.898	0.689
Intrinsic factor (achievement)	0.835			
Intrinsic factor (recognition)	0.850			
Extrinsic factor (Relationship with supervisor)	0.802			
Extrinsic factor (policies and procedures)	0.832			
Employee engagement		0.624	0.799	0.570
vigor	0.771			
dedication	0.733			
absorption	0.761			
Leadership styles		0.765	0.863	0.678
Transactional leader (contingent reward1)	0.810			
Transactional leader (contingent reward2)	0.843			
Transformational leader (Individualized consideration)	0.816			

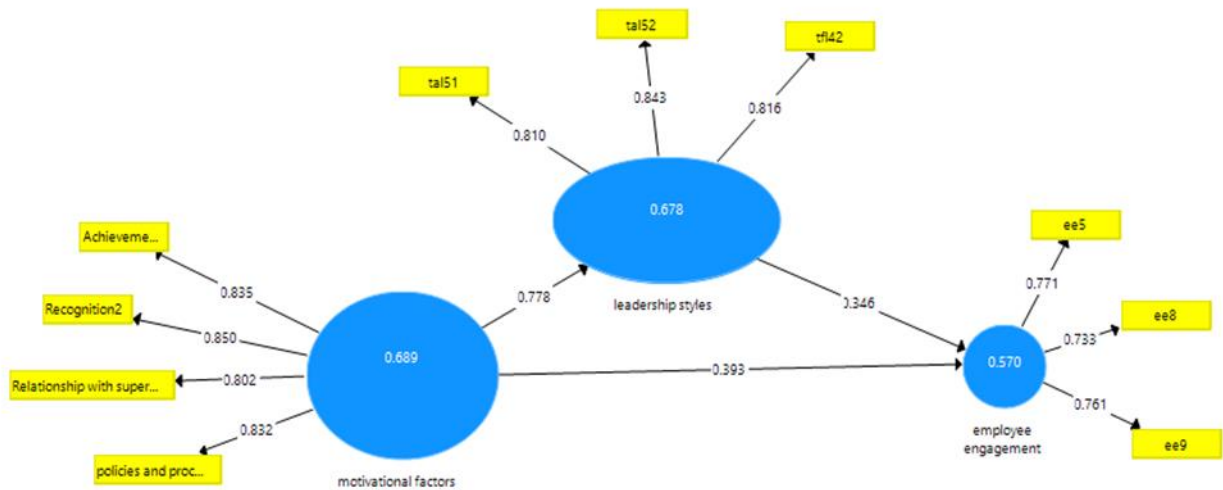


Figure 2: Measurement model

Average Variance Extracted (AVE) is used to check the level of convergence of a given individual construct in comparison to the measure of other constructs (Urbach & Ahlemann,

2010). This measure reflects how well a latent construct elucidates the variations among its indicators (Hair et al., 2017). Table 2 illustrates that all of the AVE values for this study are above 0.57 that is over the recommended thresholds and, therefore, valid according to Hossan, Aktar and Zhang (2020).

Discriminant validity, as suggested by Fornell-Larcker (1981), is commonly used to assess the degree of shared variance between the latent variables of the model. Table 3 shows that all of the reflective constructs have adequate or sufficient discriminant validity, as indicated by the square roots of AVE (diagonal) being greater than the correlations (off-diagonal).

Table 3: Discriminant Validity, Inner VIF, f square, R square AND Q square

	Fornell-Larcker			Inner VIF		R Square	f Square		Q ² (=1-SSE/SSO)
	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y1	Y2		Y1	Y2	
employee engagement (Y1)	0.755					0.485			0.261
leadership styles (Y2)	0.651	0.823		2.536		0.606	0.092		0.377
motivational factors (Y3)	0.662	0.778	0.830	2.536	1.000		0.118	1.536	

The VIF value must be observed to assess collinearity, and Henseler, Ringle, and Sarstedt (2015) advised that a VIF value of 0.5 and higher indicate collinearity concerns. Table 3 shows that the inner VIF values for each construct are all within the defined range of 0 to 5. This implies that the PLS-SEM can proceed with the proceeding tests. The coefficient of determination score is used to improve the predictability of a given model. In other words, the R square assesses a model's ability to predict. Hair et al. (2017) recommended 0.75, 0.5, and 0.25 as typical substantial, moderate, and weak predictive accuracy thresholds, respectively. According to Table 3, the connections between the constructs under consideration are moderate to substantial (Hair et al., 2017). It was discovered to be 0.49 and 0.61, suggesting that motivational factors and leadership styles may explain for 49 percent of the variance in employee engagement and motivational factors explain 61 percent of the variance in leadership styles, respectively.

Large, medium, and small effect sizes of exogenous construct are represented by the f square values of 0.35, 0.15, and 0.02. Table 3 shows that leadership styles (0.092) and motivational factors (0.118) both have a small impact size (f square) on employee engagement, while motivational factors (1.536) have a large effect on leadership styles (Hair, Hult, Ringle &

Sarstedt, 2016). This suggests that employees in the RMG need more motivational support to give effect to employee engagement, while leadership style, whether transformational or transactional, was shown to only have a small effect on improving their engagement. Where the usage of PLS-SEM is necessary to estimate both the structural model and the measurement model for data prediction, Hair et al. (2011) advised utilizing cross-validated redundancy. The PLS-SEM approach is well-suited to cross-validated redundancy. According to Fornell and Cha (1994), if the Q square value is larger than zero, the model is predictive. Table 3 shows that the values of Q square for leadership styles and employee engagement are larger than 0, indicating that predictive relevance has been achieved.

4.3 Hypothesis Testing

4.3.1 Path coefficient

Table 4 shows that leadership styles and employee engagement ($b=0.346$, $t=5.112$, $p<0.05$); motivating factors and employee engagement ($b=0.393$, $t=5.723$, $p<0.05$); and motivational factors and leadership style ($b=0.778$, $t=37.581$, $p<0.05$) have a significant relationship. These findings show that all of the exogenous constructs have a positive and direct effect on endogenous constructs.

Table 4: Path Coefficients

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values
leadership styles -> employee engagement	0.346	0.346	0.068	5.112	0.000
motivational factors -> employee engagement	0.393	0.392	0.069	5.723	0.000
motivational factors -> leadership styles	0.778	0.779	0.021	37.581	0.000

4.3.2 Mediation Analysis

The mediating variable triggers the influence of an independent variable on a dependent variable. This is called an indirect effect (Shrout & Bolger, 2002). Table 5 shows that leadership styles have a strong indirect relationship between motivating variables and employee engagement ($b=0.269$, $t=4.985$, $p<0.001$). This implies that leaders and supervisors have an

important role to play in influencing employee engagement for employees, at least specifically in the RMG factories of Dhaka.

Table 5: Specific indirect effect

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values
motivational factors -> leadership styles -> employee engagement	0.269	0.270	0.054	4.985	0.000

5. Discussion

The purpose of this study was to investigate the link between motivating variables, leadership styles, and employee engagement in the RMG industry in Bangladesh. This paper has clearly demonstrated that there is a significant relationship between motivational factors, leadership styles and employee engagement in this sector, meaning that these constructs should be the focus of attention in efforts to enhance and promote engagement among the employees in the RMG factories in Bangladesh.

The first objective of this paper was to test the relationship between motivational factors and employee engagement. The results confirm that motivational factors have a significant effect on employee engagement, with the R squared result also showing that motivational factors have a 49% effect on employee engagement, which is moderately significant. This result is similar to the findings of Bergstrom & Martinez (2016) and Putra, Cho & Liu (2015).

The second objective was to measure the relationship between leadership and employee engagement. According to past studies, Leadership can increase group performance and job satisfaction through motivation (Nader, 2019). This study anticipated that there would be a significant effect of leadership styles, specifically transformational and transactional styles, on employee engagement. The findings confirm that employees engaged in the RMG industry in Bangladesh do need support from their supervisor and managers, either by using a transformational or a transactional approach. This hypothesis was, therefore, supported ($b=0.346$, $t=5.112$, $p<0.05$) even though there was no high level relationship. This result is similar to Shuck & Herd (2012) and Devi & Narayanamma (2016), who concluded that transactional leadership and transformational leadership are strong predictors of employee

engagement. Chaudhry et al., (2012) also found that there was a positive and significant association between transformational and transactional leadership and the motivation of employees.

As a third goal, this study examined the mediating impact of leadership on the connection between motivating variables and employee engagement in Bangladesh's RMG industry. This is based on the common understanding that employees need not only motivation but also support and commitment from supervisors and managers if there is to be an increase in their engagement in the workplace (Akter, 2016; Khatun, 2017; Akterujjaman, 2016). Based on the results of this study, it is clear that motivational factors (value of f square is 0.118) have a more significant effect on accumulative engagement than leadership (value of f square is 0.092) (see Table 3). This finding suggests that, in addition to good leadership, more need to be done by the management to increase the satisfaction and motivation levels of employees before concentrating on different ways to enhance employee engagement in the RMG industry of Bangladesh. In other words, the basic needs of employees need to be attended to as a priority.

The hypothesis testing of this study confirmed that all of the constructs were supported and significant. As stated, there is a significant relationship between leadership styles and employee engagement ($b=0.346$, $t=5.112$, $p<0.05$); motivational factors and employee engagement ($b=0.393$, $t=5.723$, $p<0.05$) and motivational factors and leadership style ($b=0.778$, $t=37.581$, $p<0.05$). The results also suggest that motivational factors, rather than leadership styles, have more of an influence on determining employee engagement, which suggests that if they are not satisfied in their work then it will be difficult for employees in the RMG to be motivated to 'go the extra mile' as suggested in the concept of employee engagement. This also suggests that in this case, motivational factors should have more of a priority than leadership styles. In other words, whether or not leaders show a good example, they still will not be able to boost employee engagement if the working environment, specifically the achievement, relationship with supervisor, company policy and procedure, recognition of the employees are not taken care of (see Table 1, the present level of intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors are not at the satisfactory stage) in the readymade garments industry in Bangladesh.

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

This research has significant theoretical and practical implications. It should be noted that the majority of prior related work on employee engagement was conducted in a Western industrial

setting. This paper is one of the few studies which focuses on the Ready Made Garment (RMG) industry of Bangladesh, which is one of the most important industries in that country. This study is also significant because, the respondents were from an operational level; mainly low-income employees who have a high reliance on employers who can overcome areas of dissatisfaction, meet their needs and motivate them.

Herzberg's two factors and full range leadership theories were used for validation in the context of motivational factors and leadership styles on employee engagement in this study. The findings show that motivational factors (0.118) have a greater effect on employee engagement than leadership styles (0.092), according to the f square result (Table 3). It follows that management should make every effort to increase the satisfaction and motivation of employees before focusing on how to improve employee engagement.

In sum, this study has identified that in the case of the RMG sector of Bangladesh, managers are advised to focus on building motivational factors, particularly extrinsic values, before they can focus on how leadership might influence employee engagement. By doing so, managers will strengthen their relationship with their employees, leading to a good congruence. This is because, even though the leadership style of managers might ensure congruence between manager and employee, managers must be able to clearly express their expectations and concerns to their employees. This can be accomplished, for example, by putting an emphasis on training needs and career development opportunities which would demonstrate their commitment and support for their employees.

7. Future Research

This research was limited in numerous respects, necessitating more inquiry. The sample was limited to production workers, and any variations in demographic and psychological characteristics were not taken into account. Furthermore, this study focused solely on the impact of motivating variables and leadership styles. In order to have a better understanding of employee engagement, it's also important to look at the types of motivational factors (intrinsic or extrinsic) that employees expect. Researchers should also consider multilevel and longitudinal studies for better and more accurate outcomes for this study.

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