



Managing Aesthetic Labour Through Hr Practices at Hypermarkets in Indian Retail Sector

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ABSTRACT

The retail industry in India is booming and witnessing huge growth. It provides 8% employment, accounts over 10% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of our country. The overall retail market is expected to grow at 12% per annum providing more employment opportunities in India in future and is believed to be one of the major contributors to the Indian economy. As the growth of this industry is driven by the staff and their approach towards customers, it is imperative that the industry hire skilled and quality manpower resources capable of maintaining good rapport with the customers. This is because the customer's revisit and recommendation to prospects to visit the store mainly depends on the staff's interaction with the customer, apart from the other factors. This necessitates the need to understand aesthetic labour practices in retail sector and the contribution of HR Practices towards bringing, developing, maintaining and governing these aesthetic labour skills among the store employees to provide delightful experience for the customers by means of their appealing look and approach ability. Based on the study, a model was developed linking Aesthetic Labour with the various HR Practices to foster business.

Keywords: Retail industry, Aesthetic Labour, HR practices, delighted Customers.

1. INTRODUCTION

In interactive service work environment like retail, employees' especially frontline staffs interact with the customers directly, as a result this necessitates the staff to look presentable to the customers in an

appealing manner and this forms the background of the study on Aesthetic labour. The term Aesthetics describes the way in which the employees carry, present and embody themselves in front of the customers. Every staff of the store individually represents the brand image of the organization, so it is necessary that they appear neat and presentable. Basically they must "look good and sound right" (Warhurst, C. and Nickson, D., 2001). Warhurst & Nickson (2007) described Aesthetic labour as the employment of workers with desired physical features and temperaments appealing to the customers in course of their interaction with them. With this labour, employers intentionally use the required attributes and develop the capabilities of employees as a source of competitive advantage to delight the customers and thereby enhance their interest in making repeated visits to avail service from staff. It is found that some of the characteristics like appealing appearance, personal hygiene, body languages, social etiquettes, grooming etc., are to some extent possessed by employees at the point of entry of employment itself. However the employers channelize some of these characteristics of the individual workers desired for service encounter with the customers in the right direction, develop and commercialize these physical features and temperaments to gain competitive advantage. Aesthetic labour practices can be instilled and institutionalized in the organization through processes and practices right from recruitment and selection stage itself. Further, training, monitoring, disciplining and rewarding impressively to remodel the employees with required "skills" intends to

produce desired “style” of service that sensitizes the customers. In other words, employee’s Aesthetic attributes are appropriated, transformed and then managed by employers for commercial benefit (or at least employers attempt to do so).

Commercial benefit arises when organizations groom their employees to exhibit aesthetic skills to enhance productivity. Aesthetic skills held by the staff contribute towards upholding the corporate image held by the stores and attaining competitive advantage, further, they attract aspirational shoppers to visit the stores and leave a mark in their minds. Williams and Connell (2010) go further, stating that: Aesthetic labour includes a worker’s manner, style, accent, voice, and attractiveness. Employees at these stores must embody particular styles of standing, speaking, and walking. “Looking good” and “sounding right” are their jobs’ primary requirements.

Aesthetic labour practices is now slowly gaining impetus in certain service oriented sectors like retail, banks, hospitality, boutique hotels etc. The study mainly focuses on understanding the customer perception towards Aesthetic labour, the employer’s expectations from the employees with respect to Aesthetic labour and employees comfort level to follow Aesthetic labour practices. The result of this study will help the hypermarkets in managing Aesthetic labour effectively.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In recent years many studies have been carried out on Aesthetic labour across the world for instance, Chris Warhurst and Dennis Nickson(2004) have attempted to study the employee’s experience of Aesthetic Labour in Retail and Hospitality. He critically examined the employment of students in retail and various skills they bring along with them which helps to create competitive advantage. These would help them to easily align themselves with the aesthetic labour requirement of the specific sector.

Lynne Pettinger in the work “Gendered work meets Gendered goods: Selling and service in clothing retail” (2005) has tried to understand how gendering of tasks will affect the employees and discussed about how gender plays a role in retail occupation, shops and activities, tasks of each component combine to form the Aesthetic labour demand. Lynne also stresses on the point that attributes of the workers

in terms of gender is important in stratifying stores and promoting the brand.

In the study conducted by Joanne Entwistle and Elizabeth Wissinger (2006), it is shown the workers in service industry need to be “always on” to perform better at work. Further the authors add that there are fluctuating aesthetic trends which workers have to address.

Malay Biswas has applied CHAID algorithm in his work “Aesthetic labour in India: locating and mapping the mind of the practitioners” (2009). Using this algorithm the researcher substantiated that in India, service sector gives importance to Aesthetic skills of employees. The author also felt that Aesthetic skills need to be part of curriculum of school and college as majority of future generation will be employed in this sector and there is immediate need for Aesthetic skills, therefore changes have to be bought into the syllabus of educational institutes and a dedicated program can be introduced to train the students.

Richard Hall and Diane Van Den Broek(2012) argued what should constitute “looking good and sounding right” in retail, will largely vary based on strategy, location, market and character of the store and brand. They have also highlighted employer’s preferences of the labour demand for a particular look and style. Their analysis showed the ways in which Aesthetic labour can be mobilized, transformed and commoditized in addition to adding value to the workers.

Most of the studies conducted on Aesthetic labour by the researchers were confined to private sector but in the work conducted by Dorte Boesby Dahl (2013) it is evident that traces of Aesthetic labour can be seen even in public sector(non-commercial organisation). The author shows the balance between low-status authority works with citizen-consumer’s desire to have pleasant service encounters.

Very few studies have been undertaken on Aesthetic Labour in Indian context, specifically retail sector.

2.1 Gap identified from the previous studies:

Previous studies on Aesthetic labour covered most of the Aesthetic labour aspects like dressing sense and style, make up, voice and accent but few other non-verbal forms of communication which is essential for

retail sector were not considered. The earlier studies did not focus on those aspects like slouching, kinesics, Proxemics and courteousness in addition to the other nonverbal forms covered. The body language like Slouching i.e., maintaining upright posture in store is important as it projects the confidence level of the employees. Kinesics which indicates body movements are significant as they convey few things indirectly to the Customers like interest, disinterest etc. Courteousness of the employees is also important as customers would prefer those employees who are approachable. Proxemics indicates the space that should be maintained with the customer while addressing him so that he is comfortable. All the above aspects are very important to maintain Aesthetic labour in Organization. The study therefore aims at understanding all the aspects that contribute to the Aesthetic labour and how it can be institutionalised in the Organisation by means of HR practices like recruitment, selection, training, mentoring, rewards and recognition as it was found to be one of the factors that contribute to the bottom line in the retail sector.

3. NEED/IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

Despite the various study conducted on Aesthetic labour across the world, service industry in India lacks the connect between the HR practices and Aesthetic labour. In Indian context HR practices like recruitment, selection, training, mentoring, rewards/recognition need to be related with Aesthetic skills to increase the productivity of the employees. With the increase in growth of the service industry providing employment opportunities for many, the need of the hour is not just to provide manpower but quality manpower who have knowledge of tactfully handling their customers with their interpersonal skills and pleasant appearance and helping in improving the bottom line of the company.

4. STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

With the effect of liberalization, privatization, globalization and changes made in FDI in retail industry, Indian retail industry is facing a huge threat from foreign players. It therefore becomes very important for organisations to play it safe and sound in the market to meet the ever changing needs of their customers. To be in par with its competitors it needs to provide extraordinary services to its present as well as its potential customers. By extraordinary services we not only mean quality products and store ambience

but it also includes making customers feel pleasurable at the store, the way they handle customers, this can be achieved by Aesthetic Labour. Further, more Indians are getting exposed to foreign life style due to overseas assignment or as tourists hence they expect similar kind of service in India.

5. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The primary objective of the study is to manage Aesthetic labour through HR practices at Hypermarkets in Indian Retail Sector. To realise the above objective, the perception of customers, management and employers towards aesthetic labour is studied; inputs are given to redesign the HR Processes and Practices to enhance aesthetic labour and also suggestions are given to improve the bottom lines through Aesthetic labour

6. METHODOLOGY

The research is descriptive in nature, as the study describes what exists and helped in uncovering new facts. Both Secondary as well as primary data is used in the study. Secondary data is collected from journals, articles etc. Primary data is collected through questionnaire, interview and observation method. Questionnaire was administered to customers and employees of retail stores. Structured interview method was conducted to collect data from HR Personnel to link Aesthetic labour with H R Processes. Interview was conducted with staff and customers as well, to know their views. The sample size of the study is 250 customers and 100 frontline retail staff of hypermarkets. The sampling technique used in the study is convenience sampling technique. The questionnaire was pretested on 25 customers to check for the reliability (internal consistency) and validity. The reliability coefficient (alpha) was found to be 0.05 i.e., the reliability is quite high. The questionnaire was administered to every customer who entered the hypermarket. Another Questionnaire was prepared to check the comfort level of the store staff towards exhibiting aesthetic labour in Organization. The responses were collected from frontline staff of 4 different hypermarkets and then compiled. 25 staff from each store was selected based on convenience and questionnaire was administered to collect their responses.

The statistical tool used in the study is Friedman's two-way analysis of variance by ranks. Both descriptive statistics like percentage method and inferential statistics like Friedman's Two-Way

analysis was used to find out variance by ranks given by:

$$H = \frac{12}{Nk(k+1)} \sum_{j=1}^k R_j^2 - 3N(k+1) \sim \chi_{\alpha}^2 \text{ at } (k-1) \text{ degrees of freedom}$$

Where,

N is the number of observations in each category.

k is the number of categories.

R_j is the rank sum for the j^{th} category.

Friedman test is a non-parametric test that is used to detect the differences in treatments between multiple test attempts. This tool was used as the group is random sample from the population and the variables are measured on ordinal scale.

Friedman's two way analysis of variance was used to find out if there is significant difference in opinion of the customers towards Aesthetics of the frontline retail staff of hypermarket with respect to appearance, job knowledge and grooming standards.

7. HYPOTHESES

In the previous studies (Richard hall and Diane van den Broek, 2012) carried out, the elements which were considered in the study included personal hygiene, Grooming, jewellery, visible tattoo, age weight and height. In the research conducted by Chris Warhurst et.al (2004), issues related to training attended by employees were also considered, the types of training undertaken by employees according to the authors are product knowledge, company system and equipment's, social and interpersonal skills, self-presentation etc.

Hypothesis are formulated to understand the viewpoints of customers and staff of retail stores with respect to components which make up Aesthetic labour like appearance, grooming standards, job knowledge. These components are integral for the frontline staff as they carry the brand image of the organisation when they connect with the customers. Job knowledge is unduly important as it is an asset of immense value which the staff ought to possess.

The following hypotheses were formulated and tested:

H_{0A} : There is no significant difference in responses of the customers towards frontline retail staff's appearance.

H_{1A} : There is significant difference in responses of the customers towards frontline retail staff's appearance.

H_{0B} : There is no significant difference in the responses of customers towards aspects indicating the

appearance of male staff such that they have short hair and come cleanly shaved.

H_{1B} : There is significant difference in the responses of customers towards aspects indicating the appearance of male staff such that they have short hair and come cleanly shaved.

H_{0C} : There is no significant difference in the responses of customers towards aspects indicating appearance of women staff such as makeup and well long tied hair.

H_{1C} : There is significant difference in the responses of customers towards aspects indicating appearance of women staff such as makeup and well long tied hair.

H_{0D} : There is no significant difference in the opinion of customers towards the grooming aspects such trimming nails and wearing minimal jewellery for frontline staff of retail stores.

H_{1D} : There is significant difference in the opinion of customers towards the grooming aspects such trimming nails and wearing minimal jewellery for frontline staff of retail stores.

H_{0E} : There is no significant difference in the opinion of customers towards job knowledge of frontline staff of retail stores.

H_{1E} : There is significant difference in the opinion of customers towards job knowledge of frontline staff of retail stores.

H_{0F} : There is no significant difference in the opinion of customers towards attributes required for frontline staff in retail stores.

H_{1F} : There is significant difference in the opinion of customers towards attributes required for frontline staff in retail stores.

H_{0G} : There is no significant difference in the responses of frontline retail staff towards their attributes

H_{1G} : There is significant difference in the responses of frontline retail staff towards their attributes.

8. RESULTS& DISCUSSION**8.1 RESPONSE FROM 250 CUSTOMERS WHO VISITED HYPERMARKETS:**

VARIABLES	CATEGORY	RESPONSE	%
Gender	Male	112	44.8
	Female	138	55.2

CUSTOMER'S OPINION ON AESTHETIC LABOUR ATTRIBUTES EXPECTED IN FRONT LINE STAFF IN RETAIL SECTOR IN ORDER TO MAKE THEIR SHOPPING EXPERIENCE VERY PLEASANT

Appearance

AESTHETIC LABOUR ATTRIBUTES	OPINION	RESPONSE	%
Put on uniform while at work	To a great extent	161	64.4
	Somewhat	64	25.6
	Not at all	25	10
Display identity card	To a great extent	144	57.6
	Somewhat	86	34.4
	Not at all	20	8
Feature with clean shoes	To a great extent	123	49.2
	Somewhat	90	36
	Not at all	37	14.8
Consideration of staff's age during hiring	To a great extent	50	20
	Somewhat	127	50.8
	Not at all	73	29.2
Consideration of height of the staff while hiring	To a great extent	28	11.2
	Somewhat	85	34
	Not at all	137	54.8

For Men

AESTHETIC LABOUR ATTRIBUTES	OPINION	RESPONSE	%
Should have short hair	Strongly agree	47	18.8
	Agree	86	34.4
	Neutral	70	28
	Disagree	32	12.8
	Strongly disagree	15	6
Have to be cleanly shaven	Strongly agree	53	21.2
	Agree	93	37.2
	Neutral	59	23.6
	Disagree	35	14
	Strongly disagree	10	4

For Women

AESTHETIC LABOUR ATTRIBUTES	OPINION	RESPONSE	%
Should wear light make up	Strongly agree	82	32.8
	Agree	79	31.6
	Neutral	63	23.2
	Disagree	16	6.4
	Strongly disagree	10	4
Should tie long hair	Strongly agree	46	18.4
	Agree	48	19.2
	Neutral	90	36
	Disagree	39	15.6
	Strongly disagree	27	10.8

For Men and Women

AESTHETIC LABOUR ATTRIBUTES	OPINION	RESPONSE	%
Trim nails regularly	Strongly agree	75	30
	Agree	66	26.4
	Neutral	79	31.6
	Disagree	18	7.2
	Strongly disagree	12	4.8
Wear minimal Jewellery	Strongly agree	56	22.4
	Agree	60	24
	Neutral	80	32
	Disagree	28	11.2
	Strongly disagree	26	10.4

Presenting Self

AESTHETIC LABOUR ATTRIBUTES	OPINION	RESPONSE	%
Maintain body Proximity with Customers	Yes	182	72.8
	No	68	27.2
Response of customer towards Staff approaching them with bad body Odour	Definitely yes	14	5.6
	Probably yes	42	16.8
	Neutral	48	19.2
	Probably not	47	18.8
	Definitely Not	99	39.6
Customers getting delighted with staff's accent	To a great extent	100	4
	Somewhat	110	44
	Not at all	40	16

AESTHETIC LABOUR ATTRIBUTES	OPINION	RESPONSE	%
Perception of the customers as Casual approach towards the Staff putting hand in their Pocket	Yes	107	42.8
	No	143	57.2
Response of customer towards importance of Staff's upright posture on Floor	Very important	80	32
	Moderately important	129	51.6
	Not at all important	41	16.4
Response of customers towards their shopping experience turning pleasurable if greeted by the staff with a Smile	To a great extent	136	54.4
	Somewhat	90	36
	Not at all	24	9.6
Response of the customers towards Change in Perception of Store when staff have personal talk while they are shopping	To a great extent	47	18.8
	Somewhat	135	54
	Not at all	68	27.2
Response of customers towards whether there is significance influence on their shopping experience if the store staff is Courteousness	Extremely significant	67	26.8
	Significant	131	52.4
	Neutral	44	17.6
	Slightly Significant	8	3.2
	Insignificant	-	-

Job knowledge

AESTHETIC LABOUR ATTRIBUTES	OPINION	RESPONSE	%
Staff's knowledge of items present in the store	Very important	168	67.2
	Important	55	22
	Neutral	14	5.6
	Slightly important	5	2
	not important	8	3.2
Readiness in providing information to you	Very important	137	54.8
	Important	82	32.8
	Neutral	17	6.8
	Slightly important	7	2.8
	not important	7	2.8
Openness to provide post purchase assistance	Very important	93	37.2
	Important	95	38
	Neutral	49	19.6
	Slightly important	10	4
	not important	3	1.2

AESTHETIC LABOUR ATTRIBUTES	OPINION	RESPONSE	%
Enthusiastic to give awareness about the product	Very important	106	42.4
	Important	107	42.8
	Neutral	29	11.6
	Slightly important	7	2.8
	not important	1	0.4
Spontaneous in assisting you till the parking lot	Very important	56	22.4
	Important	60	24
	Neutral	85	34
	Slightly important	24	9.6
	not important	25	10

Staff's attributes

AESTHETIC LABOUR ATTRIBUTES	OPINION	RESPONSE	%
Personal Hygiene	Very important	126	50.4
	Important	98	39.2
	Neutral	19	7.6
	Slightly important	6	2.4
	not important	1	0.4
Job knowledge	Very important	152	60.8
	Important	69	27.6
	Neutral	24	9.6
	Slightly important	4	1.6
	not important	1	0.4
Presentability	Very important	107	42.8
	Important	96	38.4
	Neutral	40	16
	Slightly important	6	2.4
	not important	1	0.4
Courteousness	Very important	108	43.2
	Important	84	33.6
	Neutral	49	19.6
	Slightly important	6	2.4
	not important	3	1.2

The study covers exhaustive aesthetic aspects like body proximity, slouching, gestures, job knowledge which along with grooming and presentation skills significantly add to the image of the store, as customers will have a very pleasant shopping experience.

The customers considered for the study included 45% male and 55% female. From the variables considered for the study related to appearance, it is understood that customers would want the frontline retail staff to be in uniform and identity card as they can differentiate them from other customers. Staff

wearing clean shoes makes them feel good. But age of the staff doesn't matter much as long as they are sensible in their interaction with the customers. Height of the staff doesn't matter much to them at all. Customers would be fine with women with light makeup and hair tied up. They would look like to see both men and women in the store with neatly trimmed nails and male staff, with short hair, but it is not very important for them.

With respect to the parameters considered for an appealing presentation by the staff, the customers felt maintaining body proximity and upright is very important which itself will keep at bay their body odour, accent does not matter much to them and they

don't bother about their casual approach like putting hands in the pocket.

However they felt having Job Knowledge is very important which involves knowledge of items, readiness to provide information, enthusiastic to help the customer from the time they come into the retail store till the parking lot and offer them post purchase assistance.

The main aesthetic attributes that one should look for in a prospective frontline staff include Personal hygiene, Job knowledge, Present ability and Courteousness in addition to basic qualification required.

I. HYPOTHESES TESTING USING FRIEDMAN'S TWO WAY ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE TO UNDERSTAND THE DIFFERENCE IN RESPONSE OF CUSTOMERS TOWARDS AESTHETIC LABOUR PRACTICES FOLLOWED IN INDIAN RETAIL SECTOR:

H_0A : There is no significant difference in responses of the customers towards frontline retail staff's appearance.

H_1A : There is significant difference in responses of the customers towards frontline retail staff's appearance.

Appearance	Level of response			Significance of Chi-square value	Critical value of Chi square
	To a great extent	Somewhat	Not at all		
Put on uniform while at work	161	64	25	1.2000 ^{NS}	5.9910
Display identity card	144	86	20		
Feature with clean shoes	123	90	37		
Consideration of staff's age during hiring	50	127	73		
Consideration of height of the staff while hiring	28	85	137		

NS Not significant

Inference: There is no significant difference in responses of customers towards the extent of overall appearance of the staff in Frontline Retail stores. Therefore null hypothesis H_0A is accepted.

H_0B : There is no significant difference in the responses of customers towards aspects indicating the appearance of male staff such that they have short hair and come cleanly shaved.

H_1B : There is significant difference in the responses of customers towards aspects indicating the appearance of male staff such that they have short hair and come cleanly shaved.

Appearance	Level of response					Significance of Chi-square value	Critical value of Chi-square
	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree		
Should have short hair	47	86	70	32	15	4.0000 ^{NS}	9.4880
Have to be cleanly shaven	53	93	59	35	10		

NS Not significant

Inference: There is no significant difference in the responses of customers towards aspects indicating the appearance of male staff in Frontline Retail stores. Therefore null hypothesis H_{0Bis} accepted.

H_{0C} : There is no significant difference in the responses of customers towards aspects indicating appearance of women staff such as makeup and well tied hair.

H_{1C} : There is significant difference in the responses of customers towards aspects indicating appearance of women staff such as makeup and well tied hair.

Appearance	Level of response					Significance of Chi-square value	Critical Value of Chi-square
	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree		
Should wear light make up	82	79	63	16	10	6.0000 ^{NS}	9.4880
Should tie long hair	46	48	90	39	27		

NS Not significant

Inference: There is no significant difference in the responses of customers towards aspects indicating appearance of women staff such as makeup and well long tied hair. Therefore null hypothesis H_{0Cis} accepted.

H_{0D} : There is no significant difference in the opinion of customers towards the grooming aspects such as trimming nails and wearing minimal jewellery for frontline staff of retail stores.

H_{1D} : There is significant difference in the opinion of customers towards the grooming aspects such as trimming nails and wearing minimal jewellery for frontline staff of retail stores.

Appearance	Level of response					Significance of Chi-square value
	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	
Trim nails regularly	75	66	79	18	12	7.6000 ^{NS}
Wear minimal Jewelry	56	60	80	28	26	

NS Not significant

Inference: There is no significant difference in the responses of customers towards the grooming aspects such as trimming nails and wearing minimal jewellery for frontline staff of Retail store, so therefore null hypothesis H_{0Dis} accepted.

H_{0E} : There is no significant difference in the opinion of customers towards job knowledge of frontline staff of retail stores.

H_{1E} : There is significant difference in the opinion of customers towards job knowledge of frontline staff of retail stores.

Job knowledge	Level of response					Significance of Chi-square value	Critical value of Chi square
	Very important	Important	Neutral	Slightly important	Not important		
Staff's knowledge of items present in the store	168	55	14	5	8	16.1200**	13.2770
Readiness in providing information to you	137	82	17	7	7		
Openness to provide post purchase assistance	93	95	49	10	3		
Enthusiastic to give awareness about the product	106	107	29	7	1		
Spontaneous in assisting you till the parking lot	56	60	85	24	25		

** Significant at 1% level

Inference: There is significant difference in the responses of customers towards the extent of job knowledge among staff in Frontline Retail stores. Therefore null hypothesis H_0E is rejected.

H_0F : There is no significant difference in the opinion of customers towards attributes required for frontline staff in retail stores.

H_1F : There is significant difference in the opinion of customers towards attributes required for frontline staff in retail stores.

Staff's attributes	Level of response					Significance of Chi-square value	Critical value of Chi square
	Very important	Important	Neutral	Slightly important	Not important		
Personal Hygiene	126	98	19	6	1	16.0000**	13.2770
Job knowledge	152	69	24	4	1		
Self-presentation	107	96	40	6	1		
Courteousness	108	84	49	6	3		

** Significant at 1% level

Inference: There is significant difference in the responses of customers towards the extent of Staff's attributes in Frontline Retail stores, therefore null hypothesis H_0F is rejected

Customer's felt that Aesthetic aspects like appearance, hygiene, self-presentation, job knowledge, body language play a major role in making their shopping experience pleasurable.

8.2 RESPONSES OF 100 FRONTLINE RETAIL STAFF OF HYPERMARKETS:

VARIABLES	CATEGORY	REPOSSES	%
Gender	Male	41	41
	Female	59	59
Association with retail industry	More than 1Month	21	21
	More than 3 Months	10	10
	More than 6 Months	13	13
	More than 1 year	56	56
Recognition of company by their uniform	To a great extent	74	74
	Some what	17	17
	Not at all	9	9
Comfortability with wearing uniform	Comfortable to a great extent	78	78
	Somewhat comfortable	20	20
	Not at all comfortable	2	2
Work without uniform for a day	Yes	82	82
	No	18	18
Interruption in work by wearing ID card	To a great extent	35	35
	Some what	21	21
	Not at all	44	44
Conveying information while maintaining body proximity	Easy to a great extent	52	52
	Somewhat easy	38	38
	Not at all easy	10	10
Store following best grooming standards	Yes	99	99
	No	1	1
Adaption to grooming practices	Easy to great extent	73	73
	Somewhat easy	24	24
	Not at all easy	3	3
Happiness in Maintaining upright posture	Yes	79	79
	No	21	21
Maintaining personal hygiene	Easy to maintain	72	72
	Somewhat easy to maintain	23	23
	Not easy to maintain	5	5
Maintaining Self-presentation	Easy to maintain	68	68
	Somewhat easy to maintain	31	31
	Not easy to maintain	1	1
Maintaining politeness	Easy to maintain	62	62
	Somewhat easy to maintain	29	29
	Not easy to maintain	9	9

In the study conducted by Chris Warhurst and team, we found that grooming, body language; soft skills are important features which a candidate should possess if he has to be successful in the retail sector. In this study, apart from the aesthetic features identified that is important in the Indian retail sector, an attempt was also made to find out if the frontline staffs are comfortable in adopting these practices and following the grooming standards of the company.

II. HYPOTHESIS TESTING USING FRIEDMAN'S TWO WAY ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE TO FIND OUT THE DIFFERENCE IN OPINION AMONG FRONTLINE RETAIL STAFF TOWARDS AESTHETIC LABOUR PRACTICES FOLLOWED:

H₀G: There is no significant difference in the responses of frontline retail staff towards the given attributes

H₁G: There is significant difference in the responses of frontline retail staff towards the given attributes

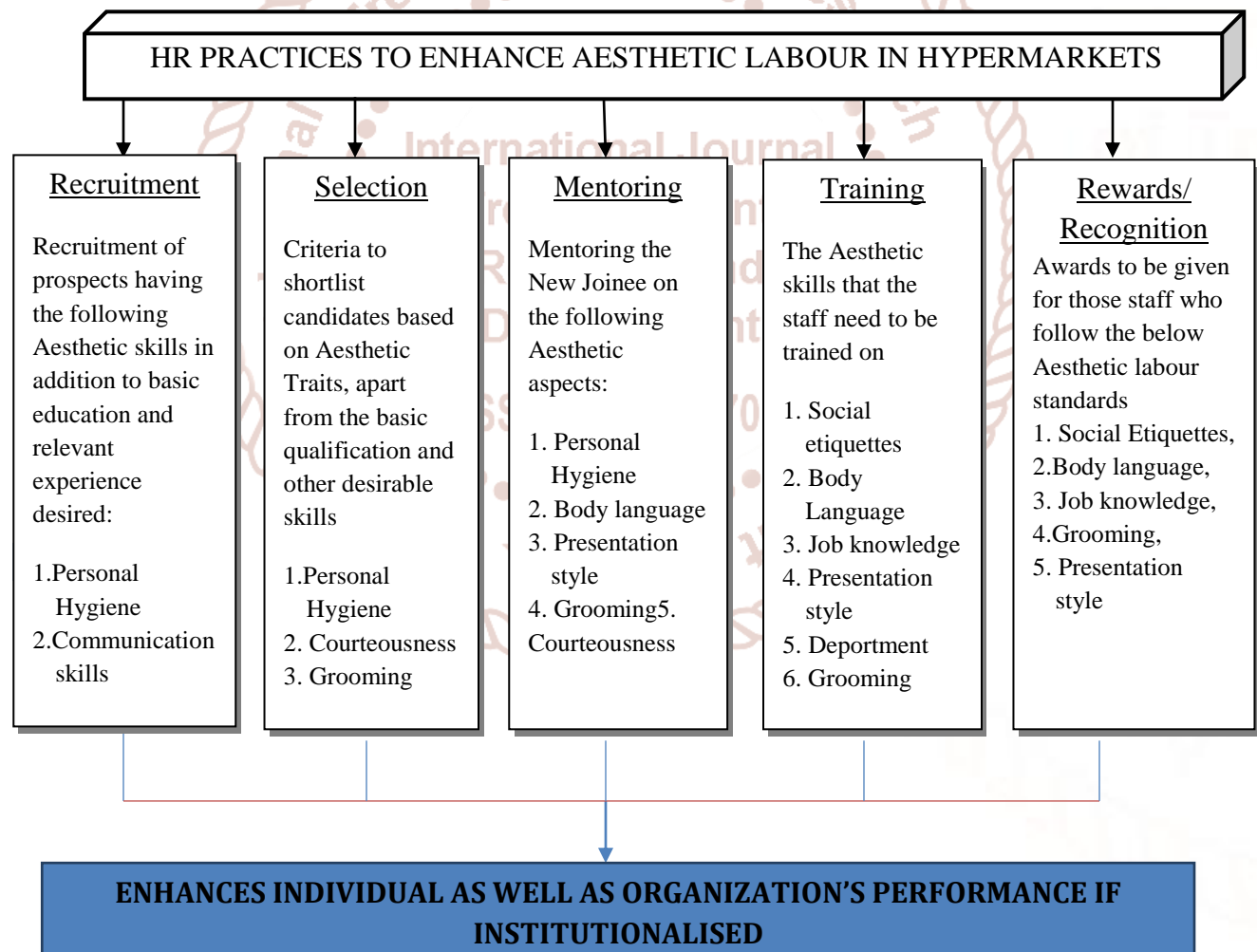
Staff's attributes	Level of response			Significance of Chi-square value	Critical value of Chi square
	Easy to maintain	Somewhat easy to maintain	Not easy to maintain		
Personal Hygiene	72	23	5	6.0000*	5.9910
Self-presentation	68	31	1		
Politeness	62	29	9		

* Significant at 5% level

Inference: There is significant difference in the responses of Frontline retail Staff towards their attributes, therefore null hypothesis H_0G is rejected.

From the above hypotheses testing results, we can infer that with reference to the response towards aesthetic labour attributes followed by customers, there no significance difference in the opinions as stated in H_0A , H_0B , H_0C , H_0D i.e., the null hypothesis is accepted. However with respect to statements H_0E , H_0F , H_0G , to check the difference in opinion among retail front line staff towards following aesthetic labour, the result showed that the null hypothesis has to be rejected, in other words the alternate hypothesis has to be accepted.

MODEL LINKING AESTHETIC LABOUR WITH HR PRACTICES TO ENHANCE PERFORMANCE



The above model indicates how Aesthetic labour practices can be institutionalised in the Organisation by embedding it in the HR practices like Recruitment, selection, mentoring, training, reward sand recognition to contribute the bottom line. The figure depicts the desirable Aesthetic attributes along with education, work experience etc., that needs to be predominantly looked upon and considered to an extent with respect to staff on the floor while

performing their work. This gives them competitive edge over the others.

Recruitment

The Aesthetic parameters that need to be considered while recruiting a candidate for retail store (Hypermarket) as frontline staffs are Personal Hygiene and Communication skills in addition to the basic qualification to meet the job requirements. The employment advertisement should also specify the desirable Aesthetic traits for the position along with the basic qualifications so that they can choose from the pool of eligible applicants. Personal Hygiene can be considered as one of the main Aesthetic trait for store staff in retail sector. Personal Hygiene for men include wearing clean and neat dress without any stain, being cleanly shaven with short hair, nails clean and trimmed, with pleasant body odour. Personal Hygiene for women include wearing neat and clean dress, neatly tied hair, keeping nails clean and trimmed, taking measures to prevent bad body odour. The candidate also has to be in a position to communicate effectively and clearly with right kind of attitude.

Selection

Selecting a candidate from the pool of applicants is not an easy job especially for the position of store staff in the retail sector as this job necessitates interaction with the customers. Aesthetic attributes used to measure a candidate for frontline staff position in a retail store (Hypermarket) include Personal Hygiene, Courteousness, and Grooming. The employers of a retail store (hypermarket) need to review the prevailing grooming and personal hygiene of the candidate i.e., how well or to what extent the candidate is taking care of his personal hygiene that includes neatly combed hair, body, oral hygiene, dress code at the time of interview. Amidst selection process basic aspects of courteousness like good manners, showing respect towards others and being humble during the interaction should be given due consideration. Along with these traits, subsequently if the staffs are trained in social etiquettes after they are hired; it could enhance the Organisation's Performance.

Mentoring:

The Aesthetic aspects that need to be looked upon and covered while mentoring the frontline staff are Personal Hygiene, Body language, Presentation style, grooming and Courteousness. Body language in terms

of maintaining upright postures on floor, their hand movements and gestures while interacting with customers, especially of opposite sex and also maintaining appropriate body proximity with the customers is very important. Personal hygiene like hair neatly trimmed and tied, maintaining pleasant body odour and keeping nails clean and trimmed cannot be ignored. The mentors should also guide the staff to be courteousness and nurture them to behave politely, exchange greetings, exhibit good manners and maintain the decorum at their workplace. The staff's adaptation of existing grooming standards of the organisation and their presentation contributes to the Organisation's performance.

Training:

Prior to providing training the management along with the trainer should make an attempt to find out the educational, family and professional (if any) background of the trainees, this is imperative because, if the staff have prior retail work experience or if the staff is not well educated to understand the importance of Aesthetics, training methodology can be reshaped accordingly. The training program should be designed in such a way that it covers areas like Social Etiquettes, Body Language, Job knowledge, Presentation style, Deportment, Grooming. Social etiquettes such as acknowledging the customers, avoiding personal talks with personal required to give the customers a pleasant shopping experience. The staffs need to have thorough job knowledge to convince and persuade the customers to buy the products. In order to achieve that, they should be enthusiastic and spontaneous to assist and give information about the items to the customers. Along with this, the staffs need to be trained on deportment which means the way they need to walk and stand in the store.

Rewards/ Recognition:

The Rewards/recognition is solely the motivating factor for staff. The quality of performance and productivity is directly linked to it. The rewards or recognition should be provided considering overall Aesthetic features of individual like Social Etiquettes, Body language, Job knowledge, Grooming, Presentation style etc.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS/SUGGESTIONS

In retail sector, it is very important for the management to understand that aesthetic labour practices followed by their staff has implications on

improving their bottom lines as the customers revisit and recommend the prospective customers to the store if they have had a pleasurable shopping experience. Therefore the custom of greeting and wishing the customers to delight them must be strictly incorporated. Innovative rewards like giving away badges and posting pictures of well-groomed staff can motivate the staff to adhere to the grooming standards. The training given to the staff on aesthetics must be customised according to the job profile based on education, family background and prior work experience. Organisations should regularly survey ever changing needs of the customers from the staff so that organisation can meet the needs and live up to the expectations of the customers. Finally Aesthetic Labour needs to be institutionalized in the organisation at every level.

10. CONCLUSION

The study showed that customers are very particular about the Aesthetic skills of the staff interacting with them. They foresee the staff to be an assortment of various aesthetic labour skills, be it job knowledge or social decorum. Employers need to embed these aesthetic practices in their HR functions to institutionalise aesthetic skills in the organisation which would indeed have an impact on the organisational performance.

On the other hand, staffs employed in hypermarkets are flexible and resilient. They find it easy to adapt to the organisation's grooming practices, which proves that they are aware of the importance of their appearance in front of the customer.

11. SCOPE OF FURTHER RESEARCH:

The study attempts to find out the Aesthetic labour Practices in the retail sector that can enhance the bottom lines. Aesthetic labour is studied from the perspective of the customer, management and employees and appropriate practices are designed that gives a delightful experience for the customers

upholding the benefits to Management and interest of employees alike in the retail sector. Aesthetic Labour Management Studies can be extended to other service sectors like hospitality, banking etc. Further studies could be carried out to find out the relationship between Aesthetic labour practices and performance of the Organisation. Comparative study between and urban and rural areas can also be conducted.

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