

FROM CRAFTING TO COMMITMENT: UNLOCKING EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT THROUGH JOB FIT

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Abstract

Employee work engagement has become a critical concern in labour intensive industries such as apparel manufacturing. Previous research has extensively examined employee work engagement; however, limited attention has been given to its application within the apparel industry. This study addresses this gap by investigating the impact of job crafting on employee work engagement, with job fit as a moderating variable, in the apparel sector in the Gampaha district of Sri Lanka. Data were collected from 248 executive and above-executive employees working in four leading apparel companies, namely Avery Dennison, MAS, Brandix, and Ocean Lanka. A simple random sampling technique was employed, and the sample size was determined using the Morgan table. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS and Excel, applying Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) and other statistical techniques. The findings reveal a significant positive relationship between job crafting and employee work engagement, indicating that employees who actively shape their jobs tend to be more engaged in their work. Furthermore, job fit was found to significantly moderate this relationship, strengthening the impact of job crafting on work engagement. Based on these findings, the study recommends that managers in the apparel industry encourage job crafting practices and enhance job-person alignment to improve employee engagement, particularly among executive-level employees.

***Keywords:** Job crafting, Work engagement, Job fit, Apparel industry, Sri Lanka*

1. Introduction

The apparel industry plays a vital role in Sri Lanka's economy. However, employee engagement remains a challenge due to changing workforce expectations and global competition. Employee work engagement has emerged as a critical construct in organizational behaviour and human resource management, particularly due to its strong association with employee performance, well-being, and organizational success. Work engagement is commonly defined as a positive, fulfilling, work-related psychological state characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption (Wilmar B Schaufeli et al., 2002). Engaged employees demonstrate higher levels of energy, commitment, and focus, which ultimately contribute to improved productivity, reduced turnover, and enhanced organizational outcomes (James K Harter et al., 2002; Michael S Christian et al., 2011).

In today's highly competitive and dynamic business environment, organizations are increasingly seeking innovative strategies to foster employee engagement. One such emerging concept is job crafting, which refers to the proactive changes employees make to their job tasks, relationships, and perceptions to better align their work with their skills, interests, and values (Amy Wrzesniewski & Jane E Dutton, 2001). Job crafting enables employees to actively

redesign their roles rather than passively accept predefined job descriptions, thereby enhancing their sense of meaning and ownership at work (Arnold B Bakker & Evangelia Demerouti, 2007).

The theoretical foundation for understanding job crafting and work engagement is largely derived from the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) model. This model posits that employee well-being and motivation are influenced by the balance between job demands and job resources (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Job crafting allows employees to increase job resources (e.g., seeking feedback, building relationships) and reduce job demands (e.g., minimizing stressors), thereby fostering higher levels of engagement. Additionally, the Broaden-and-Build Theory suggests that positive emotions generated through engagement can further enhance employees' psychological resources and adaptive behaviours (Barbara Fredrickson, 2001).

The apparel industry is one of the most significant contributors to Sri Lanka's economy, accounting for a substantial portion of export earnings and employment opportunities. The sector is characterized by labour-intensive operations, global competition, and increasing pressure for innovation, efficiency, and sustainability. In such an environment, maintaining high levels

of employee engagement is essential for organizational success.

However, the industry faces several challenges, including demanding work conditions, high employee turnover, and varying workforce expectations. These factors often lead to reduced employee engagement, which can negatively impact productivity and organizational performance. Given these challenges, there is a growing need to explore strategies that can enhance employee engagement within the apparel sector.

Job crafting has been identified as a promising approach in this regard, as it empowers employees to take an active role in shaping their work experiences. By aligning job roles with individual strengths and preferences, job crafting can improve both employee satisfaction and engagement. Despite its potential, empirical research on job crafting within the Sri Lankan apparel industry remains limited.

Although a substantial body of literature exists on work engagement and job crafting, most studies have been conducted in Western contexts, with limited focus on developing countries such as Sri Lanka. Furthermore, there is a lack of industry-specific research examining these constructs within the apparel sector.

Another important limitation in existing research is the insufficient exploration of moderating variables that influence the relationship between job crafting and work engagement. One such variable is job fit, which refers to the alignment between an employee's abilities and job requirements, as well as the extent to which the job fulfils the individual's needs and expectations (Amy L Kristof Brown et al., 2005). A strong job fit can enhance employees' motivation and satisfaction, thereby strengthening the positive effects of job crafting on engagement.

Therefore, this study addresses the following research problem: How does job crafting influence employee work engagement in the Sri Lankan apparel industry, and to what extent does job fit moderate this relationship?

This study contributes to both theoretical and practical domains. From a theoretical perspective, it extends the application of the JD-R model and job crafting theory to the Sri Lankan apparel industry, thereby addressing an important research gap. It also enriches the literature by incorporating job fit as a moderating variable.

From a practical perspective, the findings provide valuable insights for managers and HR practitioners in designing strategies to enhance employee engagement. Encouraging job crafting behaviours and improving job-

person alignment can lead to increased productivity, reduced turnover, and better organizational performance.

2. Literature Review

Job crafting enables employees to modify their tasks and relationships to better fit their strengths. Work engagement is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption. Job fit enhances employee satisfaction and performance.

Job Crafting

Job crafting refers to the proactive actions taken by employees to modify their job roles in ways that enhance personal meaning and job satisfaction. According to Amy Wrzesniewski and Jane E Dutton (2001), job crafting involves changes employees make to their tasks, relationships, and perceptions of work. Similarly, Arnold B Bakker and Evangelia Demerouti (2007) define job crafting as employees' adjustments to job demands and job resources based on their competencies and preferences. This perspective emphasizes the dynamic role employees play in shaping their work environment. Job crafting can also be understood as a mechanism through which employees align their strengths, skills, and interests with their job roles, thereby making work more meaningful and satisfying (Demerouti, 2014). This process enables employees to actively redesign their work

rather than passively accept assigned roles. Job crafting consists of three primary dimensions:

- **Task crafting** refers to modifications in the number, scope, or type of job tasks performed. Employees may add, remove, or alter tasks to better suit their capabilities (Berg, Dutton, & Wrzesniewski, 2013).
- **Relational crafting** involves changing the nature and extent of interactions with others at work, such as building new relationships or altering communication patterns (Berg et al., 2013).
- **Cognitive crafting** refers to changes in how employees perceive their work, allowing them to find greater meaning and purpose in their roles (Minh, 2019).

Additionally, Tims et al. (2012) identified three behavioural forms of job crafting:

1. Increasing job resources
2. Increasing challenging job demands
3. Decreasing hindering job demands

These dimensions highlight that job crafting is both a behavioral and cognitive process that contributes to improved work experiences.

Theoretical Foundations of Job Crafting

Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) Model

The Job Demands–Resources model, proposed by Bakker and Demerouti (2007), provides a strong theoretical basis for job crafting. The model categorizes work characteristics into:

- **Job demands:** aspects requiring sustained effort (e.g., workload, stress)
- **Job resources:** aspects that support goal achievement (e.g., support, autonomy)

Job crafting allows employees to balance these demands and resources by actively modifying their work environment, leading to improved well-being and engagement.

Self-Determination Theory (SDT)

Self-Determination Theory explains job crafting through three basic psychological needs:

- **Autonomy** – control over one’s work
- **Competence** – ability to effectively perform tasks

- **Relatedness** – sense of belonging

When these needs are fulfilled, employees are more likely to engage in job crafting behaviours and experience higher motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Tims et al., 2012).

Work Engagement

Work engagement is defined as a positive, fulfilling work-related state characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption (Wilmar B Schaufeli et al., 2002).

- **Vigor** refers to high levels of energy and resilience
- **Dedication** reflects enthusiasm and a sense of significance
- **Absorption** involves deep concentration in work

Kahn (1990) earlier conceptualized engagement as the psychological presence of employees in their roles, where individuals express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally. Later, Macey and Schneider (2008) categorized engagement into:

- Trait engagement
- State engagement
- Behavioral engagement

Work engagement is a key predictor of organizational success. Research shows that engaged employees demonstrate:

- Higher productivity
- Greater job satisfaction
- Lower turnover

Harter et al. (2002) found that engagement significantly influences business outcomes such as profitability and customer satisfaction. Similarly, Christian et al. (2011) emphasized that engagement enhances both task and contextual performance.

Theoretical Foundations of Work Engagement

Job Demands–Resources Model

The JD-R model explains that job resources enhance motivation, while excessive job demands may lead to burnout. Engaged employees effectively utilize resources to maintain high performance.

Broaden-and-Build Theory

According to Barbara Fredrickson (2001), positive emotions broaden individuals' thinking and build long-term psychological resources. In the workplace, engagement generates positive emotions that encourage learning, creativity, and resilience.

Job Fit

Job fit refers to the compatibility between an individual and their job. According to Amy L Kristof Brown et al. (2005), job fit includes:

- **Demand–ability fit:** alignment between skills and job requirements
- **Need supply fit:** alignment between job offerings and employee needs

Task-related fit (Edwards, 1991) emphasizes alignment between employee competencies and job tasks, while intrinsic fit focuses on alignment between personal values and organizational culture (Cable & Edwards, 2004).

Theoretical Foundations of Job Fit

Person Environment Fit Theory

This theory explains that compatibility between individuals and their work environment leads to positive outcomes such as job satisfaction, commitment, and performance (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005).

Holland's RIASEC Model

Developed by John L Holland (1997), this model categorizes individuals and work environments into six types. A strong match between personality and work environment leads to better job satisfaction and stability.

Job Characteristics Model

Hackman and Oldham (1976) proposed that five job characteristics influence employee motivation:

- Skill variety

- Task identity
- Task significance
- Autonomy
- Feedback

These characteristics contribute to better job fit and improved work outcomes.

The literature indicates that job crafting positively influences employee work

3. Methodology

The population is employees working in the four apparel companies within the Gampaha district in this research. There are 690 employees including this population. And also, in here use random sampling methods to ensure representation of executive and above executive employees in different departments within this apparel companies. Use 248 employees within the apparel sector as the sample size. In here use quantitative data collection method in the research. Use the structured questionnaires (English) for primary data collection method. There are 4 sections in this questioner. These are demographic information (age, gender, job level, Marital states, and organization), job crafting scale (measure the level of job crafting), work engagement scale (measure the employee work engagement) and job fit scale (measure the level of job fit). After that ensure validity, reliability, outliers,

engagement, while job fit plays a crucial role in enhancing this relationship. However, limited empirical research has examined these relationships within the Sri Lankan apparel industry. Therefore, this study addresses this gap by investigating the impact of job crafting on work engagement, with job fit as a moderating variable.

descriptive statistics, normality, linearity. As well as testing hypothesis of the reviews.

The population for this study is executive and above executive employees working in the apparel sector within the Gampaha district in Sri Lanka. There are 690 employees in the population. These are the characteristics of the population. Level of the employees (middle level and senior level), different departments of the employees and permeate or contract-based employees. In here use random 248 employees in the apparel sector use as the sample size. The following characteristics include in the sample size. These are employees of White color workers from different departments within the organization and employees mixed gender, ages and educational background. In this research we use simple random sampling methods as the sampling technique. The below methods can be used by choosing stratified random sampling method. These are ensuring the different subgroups within the population represented in the sample and

improving the correctness of the estimates by reducing the variability of the stratum.

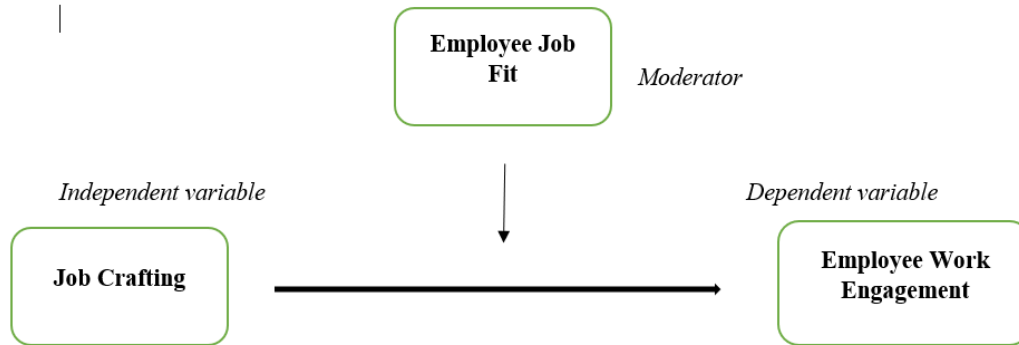


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Source: Author 2024

4. Results

A self-administrated questioner used to collect primary data for the study was circulated as a google form in English among a sample of 248 executive and above employees randomly select from four apparel companies in Gampaha district. Out of 300,260 responses were received from which

12 were discarded due to the incomplete response. So only 248 responses were entered into SPSS and considered for further analysis.

Composite reliability was assessed using the Cronbach alpha coefficient of internal consistency. Reliability statistics are given in table 2.

Table 1 Reliability Statistic

Variable	Dimension	No of items	Cronbach alpha
Job crafting	Job crafting	11	0.858
Work engagement	Work engagement	10	0.830
Job fit	Job fit	4	0.807

Source: Author 2024

As depicted in table 2, Cronbach alpha of internal consistency coefficient of independent variable, dependent variable and moderator variable are greater than 0.7 indicating that multi - item measurement scale is reliable enough and no bias.

Sampling adequacy was ensured using the KMO measure and the sig.value of KMO

coefficient. Further, the construct validity was assessed performing an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) with SPSS, Factor Loading (FL) and the cumulative percentage of extraction sum of squared loading (ESSL) were used to draw conclusion. Tale 3 and 4.4 illustrate the statistics related to sampling adequacy and construct validity.

Table 2: Sampling Adequacy

Variable	KMO Coefficient	Bartlett's test (Chi- Square)	Sig.
Job Crafting	0.898	845.251	0.000
Work Engagement	0.871	655.210	0.000
Job Fit	0.791	336.356	0.000

Source: Author 2024

Table 3 : Validity Statistic

Variable	Dimension	No. Items	Highest FL	Lowest FL	ESSL Cum%
Job Crafting	Job crafting	11	0.765	0.432	42.010%
Work Engagement	Work engagement	10	0.786	0.538	51.401%
Job Fit	Job fit	4	0.840	0.724	64.612%

Source: Author 2024

According to the KMO coefficient and the respective significant values for 3 composite variables given in table 3, the study sample seems statistically adequate to perform an EFA to assess the construct validity.

Moreover, as table 4. depicts, ESSL cum % for 3 composites variables and dimensions of independent variable are greater than 50%

and the FL values of individual items in the scale used were adequate. Hence, it could be concluded that the multi-item scales are valid. And the data set seems statistically free from bias. According to the reliability and validity analysis no items were deleted, thus all the items included in the standard scale were retained.

Descriptive Statistic.

Descriptive Statistics is supported to understand the behavior of the variables. This study analyses both dependent and independent variables. Major central

tendency measure and the descriptive statistics required to explain the individual behavior of variable, descriptive analysis was performed. Results of the analysis were given in table 5

Table 4: Descriptive Statistic

Descriptive Statistic	Job crafting	Work Engagement	Job Fit
Mean	4.1408	3.9903	4.2873
Standard Deviation (SD)	0.42904	0.41440	0.58349
Max	5.00	5.00	5.00
Min	2.45	2.40	2.50
Range	2.55	2.60	2.50
Variance	0.184	0.172	0.340
Skewness	-0.628	-0.521	-0.521
Kurtosis	0.634	0.758	-0.309

Source: Author, 2024

These are the means for the three variables. These are job crafting is 4.1408, work engagement is 3.9903 and job fit is 4.2873. As shown in table 4.5, the mean value of job crafting is 4.1408, indicating a very high level of job crafting among the respondents in the sample. As well as 5.00 is max level of job crafting among responded in the sample. -0.628 is skewness rate in job crafting. And kurtosis value is 0.634. And, as shown in table 5, the mean value of work engagement is 3.9903, indicating a very high level of job crafting among the respondent in the sample. As well as 5.00 is max level of job crafting among responded in the sample. These are the standard deviation value of the job crafting, work engagement and job fit

variables. These are 0.42904, 0.41440 and 0.58349. Also, as the SD lies between +2 and -2 the mean value could be statistically accepted.

Hypothesis Testing

To test the advance hypothesis, parametric tests including correction and simple linear regression were used. According to this study, correlation analysis will examine the relationships between job crafting and work engagement of apparel industry in Gampaha district. Additionally, it will explore the moderating effect of job fit, providing further insight into how participation in these activities might influence or strengthen the

relationship between job crafting and employee work engagement.

Building on the linear relationship found among the positive experience in employee work engagement, person correlation coefficient was used to assess the strengths of

association among the said one constructs. Further, (1- tailed) test was applied to test the significance of the correlation coefficient as the advanced hypothesis was directional. Results of the correlation analysis are given in table 7.

Table 6: Correlation Statistic

	JC	WE
Pearson Correlation	1	.715**
Sig. (1-tailed)		.000
N	248	248
Pearson Correlation	.715**	1
Sig. (1-tailed)	.000	
N	248	248

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

Source: Analyzed Data, 2024

As shown in table 6, a strong positive correlation is found between job crafting and work engagement (R=0.715) which is statistically significant as Sig.1-tailed (0.000) is less than the level of significance (0.01). Hence, H1 accept testifying that the job crafting is significantly correlated with employee work engagement. Accordingly

specific objective 1 and general objective are achieved.

Regression Analysis

Simple linear regression analysis was done to test the hypothesis (H1) and the results of the test are presented in table 7.

Table 7: Regression Statistic

R	0.715
R Square	0.512
Adjusted R Square	0.510
Standard Error	0.29020
Observation	248
F	257.678
Sig.	0.000

Source: Author, 2024

According to the results depicted in table 7, 51.2% (R Square = 0.512) of the variation of job crafting could be significantly (sig. = 0.000 which is less than 0.5) explained by the independent construct in the research model, the employee work engagement. (While

other factors remain unchanged). Further, as given table 8, the marginal contribution of employee work engagement (0.691) in determining the effect of job crafting is to be considered statistically significant (Sig.0.000) in the regression equation.

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	1.130		6.305	.000
	JC	.691	.715	16.052	.000

a. Dependent Variable: WE

Source: Analyzed data, 2024

Thus, according to the regression results, H1 is accepted statistically calming that there is a significant impact of job crafting on employee work engagement. Accordingly, regression equation 4.1 could be reported in which both the intercept and the marginal contribution (m) are statistically significant to be included in the equation.

Equation 1: Regression - job crafting and work engagement

$$Y = Mx + C$$

$$\text{Job crafting} = 0.691(\text{work engagement}) + 1.130$$

Y – Job Crafting

X – Work Engagement

Moderating Analysis

H2: The impact of job crafting on work engagement significantly moderates by job fit.

The hypothesis is that the employee job fit moderately the relationship between job crafting and employee work engagement. When job fit is higher level of, the relationship between job crafting and employee work engagement is strengthened.

Table 9: coefficients

Variable	Unstandardized Coefficients (B)	Standardized Coefficients (β)	SE	t	p
Constant	4.0022		0.0123	325.4103	0.0000
JC	0.2633	0.198	0.0326	8.0671	0.0000
JF	0.5944	0.556	0.0275	21.6387	0.0000
JC × JF	-0.0933	0.065	0.0458	-2.0353	0.0429

a. Dependent Variable: WE

Source: Analyzed data, 2024

Table:10

R	R Square	MSE	F	P
0.9126	0.8329	0.0290	405.4278	0.0000

a. Predictors: (Constant), JF, JC, interaction

Source: Analyzed data, 2024

Table: 11

Model	Beta In	t	Sig.	Partial Correlation	Collinearity Statistics Tolerance
1	interaction -0.0933	-2.0353	0.0429	-0.1836	-0.0030

a. Dependent Variable: WE
b. Predictors in the Model: (Constant), JF, JC

According to table 11 shows that the job crafting has a significant positive impact on employee work engagement. (Beta = 0.2633, $p < 0.001$), indicating that developing job crafting led to better employee engagement. However, job fit has a significant positive impact on work engagement (Beta = 0.0429, $p < 0.001$), showing that participation in job

fit contributes positively to work engagement.

Thus, according to the regression results, the significant positive coefficient for employee job fit (0.0429) in Model 2 suggests that higher levels of job fit strengthen the employee work engagement. And, finally the moderator (job fit) significant positively

affects the relationship between job crafting and employee work engagement.

5. Discussion

The findings suggest that job crafting improves engagement, especially when employees experience a strong job fit. According to the relationship between job crafting and employee work engagement, in this research confirmed positive relationship (strengthen) between job crafting and employee work engagement. The Pearson correlation coefficient ($R = 0.715$) indicates a strong relationship with a statistically significant p-value ($p < 0.01$). This validates H1, that job crafting leads to enhanced employee work engagement. So that, General objective and first specific objectives are achieved.

When considering regression analysis, in this research regression analysis further supports this positive relationship. The regression model explains 51.2% of the variation in employee work engagement ($R^2 = 0.512$) due to job crafting. The regression equation is $Y = 0.691x + 1.130$. As indicates that every unite increase in job crafting predicts a 0.691 increase in work engagement.

When analysis reliability and validity, these multi-items measurement scale was assessed using Cronbach's alpha. In here variables values are job crafting ($\alpha = 0.858$), work

engagement ($\alpha = 0.830$), and job fit ($\alpha = 0.807$) exceeded the acceptable threshold of 0.7, indicating strong internal consistency. So, construct validity was ensured through exploratory factor analysis (EFA), with all factor loadings (FL) and the cumulative explained variance meeting the required standards. As well as the data showed statistical adequacy, confirming the robustness of the measurement instruments.

Considering moderating role of job fit, the job fit significantly moderates the relationship between job crafting and employee work engagement. Results show that high job fit strengthens the positive association, consistent with Hypothesis 2 (Beta = 0.0429, $p < 0.001$). Moderator (job fit) significantly affects the relationship between job crafting and employee engagement. This validates H2, the impact of job crafting on work engagement significantly moderate by job fit.

When considering normality and linearity, the study confirmed that the data conformed to normal distribution assumptions for all variables. Histograms with normal curves validate normality for dependent, independent, and moderate variables. Accordingly, can see a clear linear relationship between job crafting and work

engagement in Scatterplots, enabling the use of parametric tests like regression analysis.

When considering descriptive statistic insights, the mean value of job crafting (4.14), work engagement (3.99), and job fit (4.28) suggest a normally high level of these variables in this sample. This reflects employees' proactive approach to their tasks, a moderate to high level of employee work engagement, and a strong alignment between their abilities and job demands. Accordingly, both hypotheses were supported,

H1: There is the significant strengthen relationship between job crafting and employee work engagement.

H2: The impact of job crafting on work engagement significantly moderates by job fit.

According to that finding a significant positive relationship between job crafting and employee work engagement in the Sri Lankan apparel sector in Gampaha district. And also Job fit significantly moderates the relationship between job crafting and employee work engagement. so both hypotheses were supported. These are Job crafting is significantly and positively related to employee work engagement and the relationship between job crafting and work engagement is significantly moderated by job fit. So when job crafting behavior encourages enhancement of employee work engagement.

Encouraging a better job fit can further develop these benefits, making job fit a critical focus for organizational interventions.

6. Conclusion

Job crafting significantly enhances employee work engagement, and job fit strengthens this relationship. Organizations should promote job crafting practices. At the end of this research and data analysis all the developed objectives were achieved. So that researchers can conclude that there is a statistically positive relationship between job crafting on employee work engagement. And found the job fit is positive impact for the relationship between job crafting on employee work engagement and significantly moderate by job fit. Accordingly, it was found that work engagement of executive and above executive employees at apparel industry in Gampaha district impacted by job crafting.

The results of this current study show that there is a positive impact of job crafting on work engagement of executives and above executive employees of apparel industry in Gampaha district. Therefore, managers of these apparel companies can make decisions related to their executive and above executive employees and can implement relevant solutions to enhance their level of job crafting and to implement possible work engagement. Moreover, Managers can Implement training

programs to teach employees job crafting that enable them to align tasks with their strengths and values. And can provide facilities for employees to discuss with their managers and supervisors. As well as managers can establish a supportive culture that encourages and rewards proactive behaviors such as job crafting. Can boost employee work engagement by using these methods. Not only apparel industry but also can use other industries for successes their businesses.

When conducting the research, researchers faced some limitations in collecting accurate data from the samples and data analysis process. And, it was difficult to contact the managers to get information from their companies of four apparel companies in Gampaha district because of their busyness. Here executive and above executive employees are considered. There, during data

collection, not all the respondents filled in questionnaires because of their busy schedule. Due to these reasons several limitations were encountered in obtaining accurate information.

In this research founded the role of job crafting on employee work engagement of the apparel industry in Gampaha district, Sri Lanka. In here focused executive and above executive employees in four apparel companies in Gampaha district. And founded job fit how to effect relationship between job crafting on work engagement as a moderator. In this study not focused dimensions under IV and DV variables. Hence, it is recommended for future researchers to conduct the study in different dimensions under variable. As well it is recommended to consider possible mediator variables to broaden the scope of the study.

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