

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.63332/joph.v5i1.565>

Unlocking Power Within: Unravelling the Synergy between High Performance Work Practices, Engagement, Resilience, and Optimization

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Abstract

The aim of this research is to study high performance work practices and to empirically investigate the mediating role of employee resilience with employee engagement and employee optimisation. For HR managers, configuring the impact of high performance work practices on employee engagement and optimisation is essential for the overall optimal performance. Organisations operating in this era are confronted with many challenges. The banking sector, who practice rigorous and demanding operations, is facing immense challenges today. Thus, building and retaining a resilient workforce and anticipating its impact on employees' attitude towards their work is their primary objective today. An engaged and optimised employee can better align themselves with their organisation and portray their optimal performance to achieve the organisation's goal. This study intends to understand the relation between high performance work practices with employee engagement and employee optimisation along with the mediating effect of employee resilience. Total 250 questionnaires were floated in the banking industry of Sialkot, Pakistan. Conventional and Islamic banking sectors were selected for the study and simple random sampling method was followed to obtain the responses. Partial least square structural equation modelling was adopted by using SmartPLS 3 and SPSS software. This study presented the implication for the HR managers to implement such practices to engage and optimise employees in the workplace. The banking sector needs to understand the importance of high performance work practices and their positive impact on overall wellbeing. This study provides a wide avenue for future studies.

Keywords: High Performance Work Practice, Employee Engagement, Employee Optimisation, Employee Resilience.

Introduction

Research on Human Resource Management (HRM) have documented the importance of high performance work practices (HPWPs) and highlighted its significant essentials that play a vigorous role in enhancing performance. As explained by Sung and Ashton (2005) HPWPs are not new practices, they are simply the work practices that are introduced to increase organisational performance. HPWPs thus can be professed to act for enhancement and development of employees' capabilities and efficiencies. Chughtai and Rizvi (2019) explains that an organisation can achieve its goals and objectives through optimistic behaviour and superior performance of its human resources. Thus, the job of HRM has been to analyse and comprehend human resource practices which can enhance creativity of employees and maximise productivity.

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Engaged employees have an energetic and effective sense of link with their work activities and perceive themselves as capable of dealing well with the demands of their job (L. Sun & Bunchapattanasakda, 2019). Whereas optimisation defined by Hultman (2020) is making something as perfect, functional, or effective as possible. Thus, employee engagement (EE) and employee optimisation (EO) appears to be essential for an organisation's advantageous outcome. Employees' agility and robustness along with engagement and optimisation is essential for organisations to compete in uncertain and dynamic environment. Employee resilience (ER) is the need of organisations where the employee is required to resist and adapt the challenges. According to Shin, Taylor, and Seo (2012) a resilient employee is more responsive and adaptive to changes necessary for organisational success. Configuring how high performance work practices provide micro foundations for organisations' employee engagement and optimisation and what role employee resilience embeds has exhibited a very little evidence in the studies. Analysing the extent of HPWPs on employee engagement and optimisation will highlight its importance. HPWPs influence employee engagement and optimisation in the presence of employee resilience is essential for survival and thrive in increasingly challenging context. Comprehending and analysing to completely understand the relation will increase organisational capabilities and effectiveness. This will lay the foundation for HRM to implement the work system for maximum results. Prior studies have proposed employee resilience, engagement and optimisation separately and a little is known about the extent of HPWPs enhances resilience at the level of individual employees and thus enhances the engagement and optimisation of employees. A limited knowledge is present studying the linkage of HPWPs on EE and EO. This paper fills this research gap with the quantitative analysis that examines the relation of HPWPs, ER and their influence on EE and EO in the banking sector of Pakistan. Theoretical basis are laid on the job demand resource (JD-R) model, which symbolises the organisational philosophy (Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli, 2001). This paper maps the association of HPWPs, ER, EE and EO at the individual level in Pakistan.

Literature Review

Sung and Ashton (2005) explains the HPWPs as the set of complementary work practices that covers three broad areas: human resource practices (HRP), rewards and commitment practices and high employee involvement practices. Where in HRPs are those practices which are targeted towards skills formation within the organisation by creating great depth of human capital investment (Sung & Ashton, 2005), rewards and commitment practices stimulate the sense of belongingness and commitment to the organisation (Sung & Ashton, 2005) and high involvement practices encourages high level of trust and employee involvement in the organisation through the communication between employers and employees (Sung & Ashton, 2005) then noted that HPWP are the underline base of such organisational system that facilitates employee motivation, high employee commitment and flexible teams. Thus, these practices then result in great level of organisational performance. Shin et al. (2012) defines HPWP as the adopted procedures and methods that are helpful in achieving high level of organisational performance.

HPWP and ER

Organisations constantly operating in the dynamic and competitive environment, lay success bases on the reflection of their employee's capacity to survive and ability to adapt audacious challenges. Theoretical conceptualisation of employee resilience is defines as the adaptive behaviour and capacity of employee to gather, integrate and utilise resources of the organisation

(Kuntz, Malinen, Näswall, & Research, 2017; Kuntz, Näswall, Malinen, & Psychology, 2016; Lengnick-Hall, Beck, & Lengnick-Hall, 2011). Kuntz et al. (2016) defines resilience as the employees' capacity at work to constantly adapt and flourish by utilising organisational resources even in challenging situations. Thus, resilience of the employees is the essential element for the organisation's adaptability in an uncertain and challenging business environment. As evidenced from 2008 financial crises, a vigorous and cost-effective banking industry is vulnerable to prosperity and stability (F. L. Cooke, Cooper, Bartram, Wang, & Mei, 2019). Increased global competition and strategies for growth are putting the employees under pressure so they deliver maximum performance and it requires from them to be resilient so they can meet up to the level of the expected performance. Datta, Guthrie, and Wright (2005) explains that employees are the essential of speed, adaptability and innovation, and the organisations' success is supported by the employees' reaction to variations (Shin et al., 2012). Therefore, organisations undertake employee resilience as an essential factor. Researches are deliberately conducted to understand how human resources can be managed to enhance creativity and maximise productivity while controlling cost (Combs, Liu, Hall, & Ketchen, 2006) and to document the impact of HPWPs on the performance of the organisation (Combs et al., 2006; P. J. R. o. s. e. Cooke, 2007; Kaufman & Miller, 2011; Sirmon & Hitt, 2009). Wang, Cooke, and Huang (2014) argue in the light of developmental view, that the appropriate HR interventions can built employee resilience that are set of skills and attributes. Aligning with the existing literature, following statement can be hypothesised.

H1: HPWPs are positively associated with ER.

ER and EE

Men (2015) defines EE as optimistic attitude of an employee towards organisations and its values. EE is understood as an essential element to success for an organisation (Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes, 2002; Lockwood, 2007; Martel, 2003; Truss, Shantz, Soane, Alfes, & Delbridge, 2013). Thus, success of a financial institution is consequence of employees' engagement as they increase profitability and are more productive (Gruman & Saks, 2011; Markos, Sridevi, & management, 2010; Susi & Jawaharrani, 2011). ER at workplace as argued by Luthans, Psychology, and Behaviour (2002) is positive psychological capacity to progress and increased responsibility as consequence of rebound or bounce back from uncertainly, failure, adversity, conflict or from positive change. Resilient employees use their psychological resource efficiently and hold the capacity to act proactively in adverse scenarios and face situations by reducing stressful influence of the environment (Fredrickson et al., 2008). As JD-R model by Sweetman, Luthans, and research (2010) explains that engaged employee are better performing as they practice positive emotions, they built their own resources, better health and their engagement in work influence others than the non-engaged peer employees. Bakker and Demerouti (2008) further argues that engaged employees can effectively control work environment by their individual quality of self-efficacy, resilience, vigorous coping style and optimism. Thus, they can easily adapt and adjust to changing environment conditions. They are less voluntarily tending to leave the organisation and display a more loyal attitude (Macky & Boxall, 2007). Based on literature, following can be hypothesised.

H2: ER is positively associated with EE.

ER and EO

Employee commitment to its institute is the most important work attitude. Motivation of an employee is an important factor that allows the banking sector to enhance the performance of its employees and organisation. An institute's positive environment setting makes the job conductible and motivating for employees. Most managers can predict that later or sooner they may have to face situations that can put the organisation into the serious risk of failure. Building the resilience in employees of organisation is therefore strategically advisable (Lampel, Bhalla, & Jha, 2014). A highly resilient institute would have the capability to appropriately navigate crises, to flourish and capitalise on adversity through change (Näswall, Malinen, Kuntz, & Hodliffe, 2019). Employee optimisation, according to Hultman (2020) is supported by the seven values i.e. engagement, full employee utilisation, employee satisfaction, growth and career development, recognition for accomplishments, flexibility and work/life balance, and a positive work environment. Thus, based on previous researches, the following hypothesis can be anticipated.

H3: ER is positively associated with EO.

Mediating Role of ER

Researches in both Pakistani and western countries display that employee engagement is positively influenced by rewards and performance management, by training and development and by the participative decision-making activities (Hughes & Rog, 2008; Saks, 2006; Truss et al., 2013; Zhang, Zhu, Dowling, & Bartram, 2013). Researchers have proven in JD-R model, the significance of job resources and their adverse effect on burnout (Sweetman et al., 2010). Bonias, Bartram, Leggat, and Stanton (2010) argues that consistent with the HR-performance chain (Boxall & Macky, 2007), HPWP are intended to strengthen employees, providing an understanding of significance and purpose, so that they portray dedication energy at their work. It's argued that it is essential that managers use HPWPs to support the ER development and to enhance EE, specifically in highly challenging jobs such as in the banking sector (Bonias et al., 2010). The findings of Almasradi et al. (2022) suggest that ICT plays a pivotal role in enhancing the effectiveness of HRM, thereby improving overall organizational performance. As discussed earlier, there are theoretically significant based explanations and evolving indications to provide the bases for the relation between HPWPs and ER, association of ER with EO and ER with EE. Therefore, it can be proposed that EE mediates the relationship between HPWS and ER:

H4a: ER mediates the relation between HPWPs and EO.

H4b: ER mediates the relation between HPWPs and EE.

Theoretical Consideration

The paper represents the framework of relationship that is supported by JD-R model. The relationship of HPWPs, employee optimisation and engagement in presence of resilience is studied using this model (Fig. 1). Demerouti and Bakker (2011) statuses that theoretical framework of JD-R model integrates two main aspects of motivation and stress research traditions. Job demand as explained by Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti, and Schaufeli (2007) are organisational, physical or social features of the job that demands persistent physical and/or psychological exertion so they are consequently, connected with psychological and/or physiological costs. Whereas he explained job resources as organisational, physical or social features of the job that (a) are designed in attaining goals associated to work, (b) cut down job

demands and the affiliated physiological and psychological expenses, and (c) encourage development and individual growth, it is further extended that JD-R model contains personal resources to play part in job resources and in creating motivation.

Aligning with Schaufeli, Bakker, and research (2010) work engagement and optimisation is enhanced by both personal and job resources. Whereas resilience can be assumed as individual resource (Sweetman et al., 2010) and HPWPs can be supposed as job resource. Moreover, the model agrees on how demands and resources are interrelated, and it calculates important organisational outcomes. As the idea is elaborated by Kwon and Kim (2020) the concept engagement at work or EE, is defined as state of mind which is engaged by ones vigour, dedication and absorption.

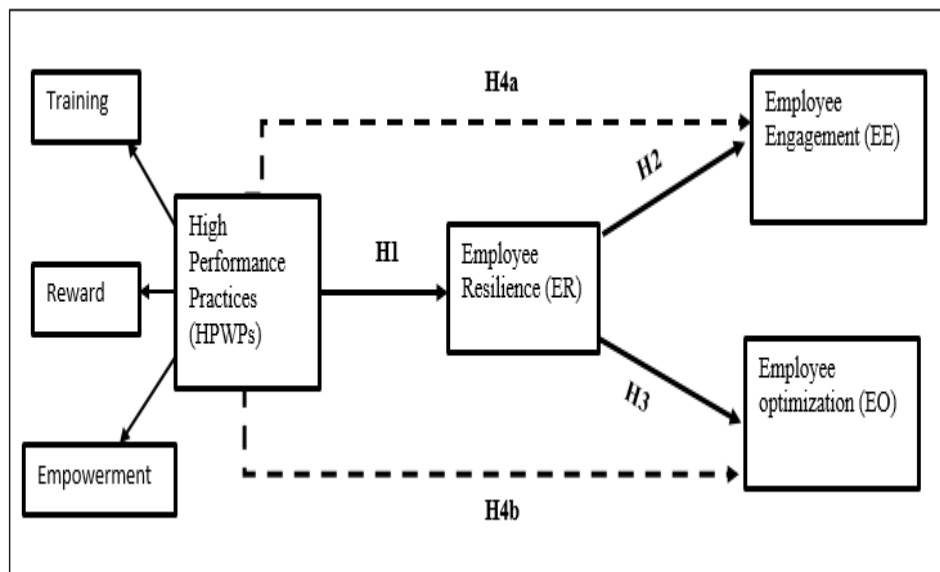


Figure 1. Hypothetical Research Framework

Methodology

Pakistan banking industry consist of foreign banks, Islamic banks, commercial banks, development financial institutions and microfinance banks in Sialkot city. Total 31 banks are located in Sialkot city, of which twenty-two banks are private, five banks are public and only four are foreign banks. Target population was HR managers of banking sector. Data was collected from commercial and Islamic banks using simple random sampling technique. Sample of 250 was chosen for data collection. Only 229 questionnaires were received back. Questionnaire was designed and its dimensions and items are adopted from previous papers. To ensure the measure, appropriate pilot study was done on 20 responses. The wording in questionnaire was developed to ensure that the language is understandable, and questions are well comprehensible by the respondent. HPWPs is measured using a scale adopted from formerly authenticated measures (Karatepe, 2013). The dimensions used are training, empowerment, reward. Training consist of six items, empowerment and reward contains five items respectively. These measures cover the key practices of HR. Employee Resilience is measured on the nine item scale (Näswall et al., 2019) which is adopted from the previous

studies, it included questions that would aid in measuring the level of employee acceptability to stay with organisation in challenging changing situations. Employee optimisation is measured using nine item scale (Hultman, 2020) adopted from previous studies. These items included questions that would measure the level of employee optimisation and involved questions like, I show interest in the image of the organisation. Employee engagement is measured on the eleven item scale (Kamalanabhan, Sai, & Mayuri, 2009). It is measured by asking questions like, I get enough mentoring support from my superiors. This scale will aid to identify the level of engagement employee practice at their work.

Analysis and Results

This study portrays an amalgamated organisational model to investigate the relation of HPWPs with employee optimisation and engagement in presence of employee resilience. Inferential and descriptive statistics were applied for analysis after the data was collected. Structural equation modelling (SEM) using SmartPLS 3 was used for testing hypothesised model. According to Hair Jr, Sarstedt, Hopkins, and Kuppelwieser (2014) covariance-based structural equation modelling (CB-SEM) and partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) are two further domains and variations in SEM. Now researchers assume PLS-SEM to be vigorous statistical tool because of its diverse methodological and statistical structures that makes it a possible alternative to CB-SEM (Hair, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2011; Hair, Sarstedt, Ringle, & Mena, 2012; Henseler et al., 2014). The study constructs are explained and predicted using the underpinning theory. The purpose of using PLS-SEM is because the objective of study is more towards the prediction rather than the theory testing.

	EE	EO	ER	HPWP-Emp	HPWP-Rwd	HPWP-T
EE		2.533	2.259	2.707	2.617	2.648
EO	2.244		2.08	2.367	2.364	2.356
ER	2.423	2.57		2.824	2.916	2.932
HPWP-Emp	1.655	1.732	1.715		1.66	1.656
HPWP-Rwd	1.895	1.943	1.885	1.887		1.617
HPWP-T	2.405	2.446	2.399	2.332	2.051	

Table 1. Full Collinearity VIFs

Common Method Bias (CMB)

According to Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, and Podsakoff (2003) CMB represents the variation attributed to the measurement method rather than the constructs in the measure. Many researchers see CMB is a potential problem in the behavioural research (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). Thus, various pre and post remedies are followed by researchers to eliminate the effect (Chang, Van Witteloostuijn, & Eden, 2010; Podsakoff et al., 2003). Kock (2015) studied CMB by using PLS-SEM approach and recommends that CMB could be tested with full collinearity test. The resulting value of VIFs represents the effect of CBM on model. Values higher than 3.3 represents contamination by CMB, whereas the values lower than 3.3 can be deemed free of CMB. Table 2 represents all the values of CMB which are lower than 3.3 thus, reflecting no filtering of CMB in this study. Thus, it is recognised that there is no CMB in the study.

Data Reliability and Validity

The internal consistency and validity of the data was checked for each variable. Most of the outer loading result of questions were greater than 70% and least consistency was 66%.

	R Square Adjusted
Employee Engagement	0.545
Employee Optimisation	0.490
Employee Resilience	0.398
HPWP	1.00

Table 2. R Square

The R-square value in the table 3 represents the value, which depicts the regression model fit with the data observed. The R^2 value of EE explains that model created is explaining 54% influence on EE. Whereas the R^2 value of EO in the model is explaining 49% influence and the R^2 of ER in the model is 39% which fairly explains it in the model.

	Cronbach's Alpha	rbo_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
EE	0.921	0.924	0.933	0.562
EO	0.881	0.885	0.904	0.514
ER	0.878	0.880	0.903	0.508
Emp	0.825	0.830	0.877	0.588
HP%S	0.916	0.920	0.927	0.448
Rwd	0.881	0.882	0.913	0.678
T	0.848	0.863	0.889	0.574

Table 3. Construct reliability and validity

Table 3 represents the value of Cronbach's alpha, rho_A (spearman's rank correlation coefficient), composite reliability and average variance of the study. The values of Cronbach's alpha in the above table shows that all the items share high covariance among them and are acceptable for further analysis. Values of rho_A in the table explains that the relationship between the two variables is strong, the values of rho_A are all positive indicating perfect association between ranks. The high values of composite reliability shows that the data is highly consistent and reliable among the variables. The average variance extracted (AVE) is also portraying the acceptable values. Descriptive statistics is used to define the characteristics of the data. Table 4 presents the descriptive statistics of the study variables. It shows the mean values, standard deviations of all variables under study.

Descriptive Statistics	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
ER	4.3095	0.42840	228
EO	4.3017	0.44227	228
EE	4.2739	0.46311	228
HPWP	4.2717	0.43503	228

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics

Table 5 of discriminant validity portrays that the percentage of relationship among each variable is strong. Each variable possesses strong relations with the other and are highly positive correlated.

	EE	EO	ER	Emp	HPWS	Rwd	T
EE	0.749						
EO	0.669	0.717					
ER	0.740	0.702	0.713				
Emp	0.512	0.401	0.464	0.767			
HPWS	0.599	0.537	0.633	0.821	0.669		
Rwd	0.473	0.403	0.525	0.617	0.882	0.823	
T	0.554	0.564	0.621	0.552	0.863	0.627	0.758

Table 5. Discriminant Validity

	Original Sample	Sample Mean	STDEV	T Statistics	P Value
Employee Resilience→Employee Engagement	0.74	0.74	0.03	24.662	0
Employee Resilience→Employee Optimisation	0.702	0.703	0.041	16.963	0
HPWP→ Employee Resilience	0.636	0.636	0.047	13.559	0
HPWP-Empowerment→HPWP	0.322	0.322	0.017	19.309	0
HPWP-Reward→HPWP	0.409	0.408	0.02	20.629	0
HPWP-Training→HPWP	0.434	0.434	0.02	21.266	0

Table 6. Patch coefficients

Bootstrapping procedure was used on Smart PLS to estimate the structural model. Subsample of 5000 was selected. This procedure is important to confirm the normality of the data. The result of structural model is represented in table 6. The table exhibits the results of structure equation modelling. Findings reveal that HPWP- empowerment is displaying significant relation ($\beta=0.322$, t-value 19.309, significance $p<0.00$) with HPWP. HPWP-reward shows significant relation ($\beta=0.409$, t-value 20.629, significance $p<0.00$) with HPWP, and HPWP-training shows strong positive association ($\beta=0.343$, t-value 21.266, significance $p<0.00$) with HPWP. Whereas, HPWP has significant association with ER ($\beta=0.636$, t-value 13.559, significance $p>0.00$). Thus, results are accepting H1, that the HPWPs are positively associated with employee resilience. ER has significant positive relation with EE ($\beta=0.74$, t-value 24.662, significance $p<0.00$). Thus, accepting H2 that employee resilience is positively associated with employee engagement. Results of ER and EO are ($\beta=0.70$, t-value 16.963, significance $p<0.00$). Thus, accepting our H3, that employee resilience is positively associated with employee optimisation.

Mediation Model

The mediation model represents the mediation of ER between HPWP and EE, and the mediation between HPWP and EO. Results presented in above table 6 strongly and significantly supports

the mediation of employee resilience i.e. the relation has 74% impact and the p value of 0.000 allow us to accept our hypothesis H4a ($\beta=0.74$, t-value 24.662, significance $p<0.00$) and the mediating relation with employee optimisation has 70% impact with the p value of 0.000 and thus allowing us to accept the hypothesis H4b ($\beta=0.702$, t-value 16.963, significance $p<0.00$). Therefore, accepting our H4a and H4b.

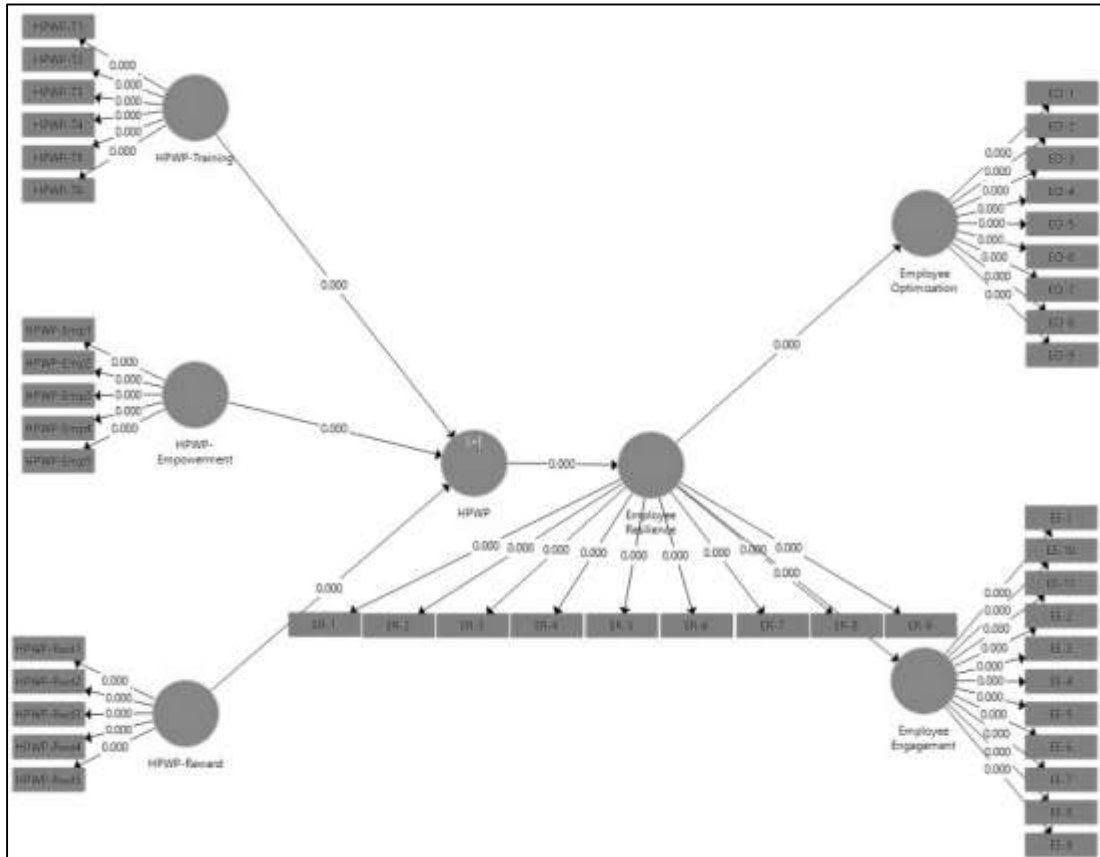


Figure 2. Measurement model assessment

Discussion

In the banking industry employee work performance practices, their engagement to work and optimisation plays a significant role in carrying out daily essential roles. HR managers are continuously involved in implementing work practices that keep the employee engaged and optimised at the workplace. Implementing the change and adapting to it is a challenging task for the HR managers. Recruiting and selecting the resilient employee is the foremost priority during hiring phase. While training the existing employee to be resilient to change is a demanding task for them. Implementing the HPWPs in a way to keep employee engaged and optimised at workplace is an ideal workplace scenario when combined with the ability of employee to be resilient at the same time. Our study strongly supports the proposed model and accept the hypothesis produced. HPWPs is enhanced with employee training, their empowerment and reward and allow them to be engaged at their work and be more optimised even when they are to face challenges, they stay resilient with their organisation. Using underpinning theory of JD-R model, HPWP as job resource and resilience as the

resource of individual is found to be a strong support. Thus, the finding has allowed to understand the process of HPWP may impact employee resilience, engagement and optimisation.

Conclusion

In the competitive era practicing HPWPs to engage and optimise employees and aligning them to be resilient is a challenging task for HR managers. This study portrays that there is a strong positive relation of HPWPs and employee engagement and employee optimisation. The study aids to understand the mediating effect of employee resilience. High level of HPWPs in presence of employee resilience supports the HR manager to maintain the employee attitude towards the engagement and their optimised behaviour for work. Many researchers have studied HPWPs with engagement, yet it's necessary to explore, analyse and get deeper insight of the relation in presence of resilience and the effect on employee optimisation. Thus, the study underlays the phenomena while providing the evidence to JD-R model theory. Many practical implications of the study is made for HR managers in the banking sector of Pakistan. First, HR managers should seek to understand the underlying practices for high performance. They should strategically plan trainings, understand right empowerment intentions and reward objectives to implement high performance work practices so a proficient, engaged and optimised employee can practice job and stay resilient with the organisation. Strong HPWPs engage employee towards their work and they practice optimum work attitude. Secondly, implementing positive practices and investing in employee allow the employee to be more aligned with their organisation and they are motivated to support and work for the organisation and stand affirm with it during change. Various limitations were faced during the study. These confinements provide avenue for the future study. The major and foremost limitation was the accurate responses from the respondents assuming that the respondents are familiar with their bank practices. Employee bias responses question the truthiness of evidence. Another limitation is that every bank practices their own HR practices and they vary in their rewards, training and empowerment practices. Therefore, generalisation issue can arise. This research is conducted only in the banking industry of Sialkot. Validity of the relationship needs to be assured by conducting this study in different industry, city and/or country. The cross-sectional design of study limits and give rise to common method bias. To better understand the relation, longitudinal study should be carried out. Moderating effect of business strategy (L.-Y. Sun, Aryee, & Law, 2007), and mediating effect of perceived organisational support (Zhong, Wayne, & Liden, 2016) can be studied to understand the relation in detail.

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