



Work Engagement in Higher Education Institutes of Pakistan: The Role of Skill, Motivation and Opportunity Enhancing HRM Practices

Dr. Lata Lohana

Assistant Professor, Department of Business Administration, Indus University Gulshan-e-Iqbal Campus, Karachi, Pakistan

lata.lohana@indus.edu.pk*

Dr. Suresh Kumar

Assistant Professor, Department of Business Administration, Sukkur IBA, Pakistan Sukkur

Sureshkumar@iba-suk.edu.pk

Prof. Dr. Gobind M. Herani

Rector, Denning Institute of Technology and Entrepreneurship, Karachi, Pakistan

drgobindherani@gmail.com

Mr. Aroon Kumar

Senior Lecturer, Department of Business Administration, DHA Sufa University, Karachi, Pakistan

aroon.kumar@dsu.edu.pk

Abstract

In the current business environment, organizations are giving a lot of attention to employee engagement. Therefore, the present study's goal was to examine the connection between skill, motivation, and opportunity -enhancing HRM practices and employee engagement with respect to academic staff working in higher education, Sindh, Pakistan. The study employs a quantitative research design based on SPSS and Smart PLS. Data were gathered from 307 academicians working in the staff working in higher education Sindh, Pakistan. The survey approach was used to gather the data for the cross-sectional research. The findings of the study show a connection between employee engagement and HRM practices. Organizations' HRM practices gave employees more authority and engagement, which improved their performance in their jobs. The findings of the study suggest that for universities to succeed in the long run, skill, motivation, and opportunity enhancing HRM practices should be prioritized. Therefore, organizations should concentrate on and efficiently apply human resource management practices to increase employee commitment and engagement physically, cognitively, and emotionally with their work. This study extends social exchange theory, it also offers universities insight into the significance of having efficient HRM procedures to raise academicians' levels of commitment to their jobs.

Keywords: HRM practices, Work Engagement, Higher Education Institutes.



Introduction

Higher educational institutions' most valuable human resource are academicians, who primarily realize the strategic and operational objectives and applied knowledge, but it has become increasingly difficult for Pakistani universities to hold onto their best academic staff in recent years (Siddiqui & Shahid, 2010). Numerous factors, including a shortage of funding, incentives, promotions, and a supportive work atmosphere, contributed to the performance of the institutes being compromised in terms of quality (Kavyashree et al., 2023). According to the research in the field of human resources, HRM practices are linked to successful functioning (worker efficiency and organization flexibility) and high-caliber performance results (Abdullah, Ahsan, & Alam, 2009; Ahmad and Schroeder, 2003).

Human resource management (HRM) has been linked to organizational effectiveness (Kehoe & Wright, 2013), high employee motivation (Dimba, 2010), organizational citizenship behavior (Kataria et al., 2019), employee turnover (Pichler et al., 2014), psychological capital (Abubakar et al., 2019), work engagement (WE), and other factors in previous studies. The HR practices play crucial role in surge employee's skills by enhancing employee engagement (BeltránMartín & Bou-Llusar, 2018). Additionally, Lee Whittington and Galpin (2010) suggested that these behaviors are crucial motivators of employee engagement.

Similarly, Halbesleben (2010) found a negative correlation between employee engagement and intention to leave. Despite sustaining the interest of business and practitioners for many years (Church & Waclawski, 2010), work engagement has only recently become the subject of a center-stage academic investigation (Church, 2011). Retaining the top performers is therefore a major problem for management (Samuel & Chipunza, 2009).

Work engagement is the level of engagement employees have to the company on a physical, cognitive, and emotional engagement (Saks, 2006). It encourages people to work, which promotes high levels of participation, engagement, and self-presence in the workplace (Sonntag, Mojza, Binnewies, & Scholl, 2008). According to study, low employee engagement can lead to toxic management-employee relationships, which can further encourage undesirable outcomes including burnout and intention to leave the company (Al Mamun & Hasan, 2017).

However, according to Gallup Management Journal research done in 2006, just 29% of Americans who are employed are engaged (loyal and productive), 55% are not involved (simply



putting in time), and 15% are actively disengaged (unhappy and vocal about their displeasure) (Gallup, 2006)

In this study, the authors have tried to examine the relationship of skill, motivation and opportunity enhancing practice with all dimensions of work engagement which are physical cognitive and emotional. According to González-Roma, Schaufeli, Bakker, and Lloret (2006) Employees that are engaged in their work are more likely to work with vigor, dedication, and absorption. Therefore, WE may be viewed as a measure of employee outcomes that results from a set of HR practices that are present in an organization's working environment and that furthers employee commitment and job satisfaction. Researchers should make more efforts to learn how HR supports organizations in involving their employees and encourages them to improve the working environment. Since these HR had previously been examined collectively in respect to several dependent factors, the study was felt to be necessary. It's important to determine whether each part of this bundle is performing properly given the changes in how the organization and its people are behaving and working. The findings will give upcoming academics a fresh perspective on how to analyses the effects of distinct HR practices as well as their combined effects because they will shed light on how the bundle functions. Therefore, the objective of this study is to examine the effect of skill-enhancing, motivation-enhancing and opportunity-enhancing HRM practices on physical, cognitive, and emotional engagement among academicians in the public universities of Sindh Pakistan.

Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

Skill, Motivation and Opportunity Enhancing HRM practices and Work Engagement

According to Tay, Tan, and Yahya (2017) HRM refers to the practices, include planning, job analysis, recruitment, selection, compensation, orientation, performance appraisal, training, and development. HRM's responsibility is to make sure that the organization can succeed through its workforce. These procedures seek to promote initiatives by creating regulations in areas like talent management and knowledge management for organizational effectiveness, practice good management and foster a positive work environment (Armstrong, 2006). Implementation of HRM practices in the organizations attracts and retains the skilled employees.

Recruiting, selection, and training programs are examples of practices that fall under the category of skill-enhancing practices, which is one of the dimensions of HRMPs. Employers'



skills and talents can be improved by carrying out the necessary training programs (Lata et al., 2023). Skilled employees use their abilities to create innovative and new ideas (Teir & Zhang, 2016). Kundu and Gahlawat (2018) argue that skill-enhancing practices impact on the commitment of individual employee in the job which consequently affects group's level commitment.

Practices that are used with the aim of motivating discretionary employees to exert more effort in their job roles and to be more inclined towards the behavior needed for more effective productivity are referred to as motivation-enhancing practices. Individual and group incentives, merit-based pay, and routine performance feedback are a few examples of such procedures. The practices that increase motivation, such as performance-based incentives and awards, meet the demands of workers in terms of capacity and relatedness (Tay, et al., 2017). These procedures give employees a good evaluation of their efforts and the organization's commitment to them. Individual HR practices and their bundled impact on various employee outcomes, such as decreased turnover, have been reported to have a positive relationship with motivation-enhancing practices that will give insights into how the bundle functions. (Zhenjing, Chupradit, Nassani, & Haffar, 2022). Information sharing, decision-making chances, and grievance procedures are some examples of practices that increase opportunities for employees to contribute to the objectives of the organization. (Jiang, Lepak, Hu, & Baer, 2012). One way to improve the relationship between an employee and an employer is to give employees access to information, decision-making power, and respect (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001). Additionally, HRM practices that provide opportunities also improve social cohesion among coworkers (Zhenjing et al., 2022). Employees are inspired and encouraged to apply their skills and knowledge to achieve organizational goals by HRM practices that improve opportunities.

Work engagement refers to a person's amount of drive, enthusiasm, and commitment to their job. Workers that are more engaged tend to be more creative, productive, and content with their jobs. Through engagement, a worker consistently maintains vigilance and responsibility, collaborates with others to improve performance for the benefit of the company (Robinson, Perryman, & Hayday, 2004). According to Kahn (1992) when employees are actively involved in their work and express themselves physically, mentally, and emotionally, they are said to be engaged. According to González-Romá et al. (2006) employees that are engaged in their work are more likely to work with vigour, dedication, and absorption.



Vigour is the amount of energy and effort a worker puts into their work. It has to do with a person's inclination to work harder than necessary. (González-Romá et al., 2006; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Employees with high levels of vigour display better performance, higher production, and increased job satisfaction (Bakker, Shimazu, Demerouti, Shimada, & Kawakami, 2011). Dedicated employees feel proud when playing their roles and think their work is important and valuable (González-Romá et al., 2006). They are invested psychologically in their profession. While working, they experience inspiration, vigour, and competition; these emotions translate into a sense of pride in their work. Dedicated workers exhibit extra-role behaviour, like being willing to devote personal time for work, making suggestions for streamlining workflow, conserving organisational resources, and improving customer service (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Absorption is a state of engrossment in work in which the employee is totally attached with the work and with the passage of time, it becomes difficult for him to detach from the work (González-Romá et al., 2006). It shows that the employee is fully concentrated in the work without noticing the time. The first grounded theory of personal engagement and disengagement was developed by Kahn (1990) who also highlighted nature of employee engagement i.e. physical, emotional, and cognitive engagement. The theory also argued that employees exert three different ways of effort in during their role performances: physical effort, emotional effort, and cognitive effort. Soane, Truss, Alfes, Shantz, Rees, and Gatenby (2012) suggested three dimensions of engagement: intellectual, emotional, and social engagement are three potential dimensions of involvement. Affective engagement is defined as "the extent to which one experiences a state of positive affect relating to one's work role," while social engagement is defined as "the extent to which one is socially connected with the working environment and shares common values with colleagues." Intellectual engagement is defined as "the extent to which one is intellectually absorbed in work".

Skill-enhancing practices are summarized as a dimension of HRMPs that include practices such as recruitment, selection, and training. The employees' knowledge, skills and abilities are affected by conducting proper training programs (Kundu, & Gahlawat, 2018). While motivation-enhancing practices, motivate the employee to put more effort in job role and to be more inclined towards the behavior that is required for more efficient productivity (Kundu, & Gahlawat, 2018). According to the AMO (ability, motivation, and opportunity) model, the use of HRM's motivation-enhancing practices is supposed to bring the attainment of specific goals, assign task,



and to provide adequate reward for increased performance (Subramony, 2009). Opportunity-enhancing practices include information sharing, facilitate employees to take part in decision making, and grievance procedures allow the employees to contribute to organizational goal and objective (Tay, et al., 2017). According to Kahn (1992) work engagement means the employees express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during work performances. According to Aybas and Acar (2017) HRM practices have positive effect on work engagement. These practices keep employees engage and attached with their work rather than pressure on them.

Furthermore, Lee Whittington and Galpin's (2010) conceptual model put forth the idea that these practices are crucial for boosting employee engagement. To retain people physically, mentally, and emotionally invested in their work, HRM practices are crucial. According to SET, the fair and consistently designed HRM practices, will enhance positive attitudinal outcomes at the workplace, and exert positive effect on employee's work engagement. According to this theory, employees often behave in a manner that mirrors the behavior of their organization or managers. (Agyemang & Ofei, 2013). When an organization provides economical resources to its employees, they will feel obligated and in return will give beneficial outcomes to their organization (Rasool, Wang, Tang, Saeed, & Iqbal, 2021). According to Alfes et al. (2013) employees who perceive positive HRM practices are more likely to be engaged at workplace. Therefore, organizations must pay attention to facilitate employees with proper HRM practices in achieving a fulfilling, positive work-related state of mind (work engagement) (Agarwal et al., 2012). Conversely, poor implementation of HR practices may cause disengagement (Ang, Bartram, McNeil, Leggat, & Stanton, 2013). This prompts the hypotheses that:

- H1: There is a significant positive relationship between skill-enhancing and physical engagement.
- H2: There is a significant positive relationship between skill-enhancing and cognitive engagement.
- H3: There is a significant positive relationship between skill-enhancing and emotional engagement.
- H4: There is a significant positive relationship between motivation-enhancing and physical engagement.



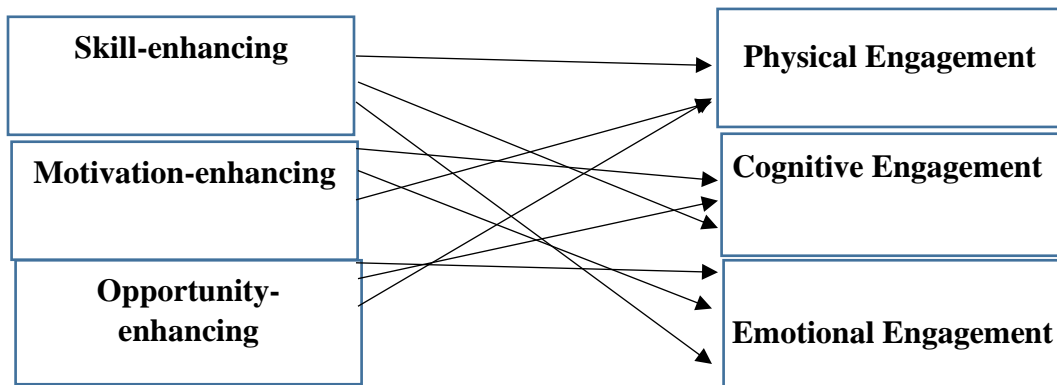
- H5: There is a significant positive relationship between motivation-enhancing and cognitive engagement.
- H6: There is a significant positive relationship between motivation-enhancing and emotional engagement.
- H7: There is a significant positive relationship between opportunity-enhancing and physical engagement.
- H8: There is a significant positive relationship between opportunity-enhancing and cognitive engagement.
- H9: There is a significant positive relationship between opportunity-enhancing and emotional engagement.

Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 displays the study's conceptual structure. The study investigates how academic staff members' work engagement in Pakistani higher education institutions is affected by HRM approaches that enhance skill, motivation, and opportunities.

Figure 1

Theoretical Framework



Research Methods

Sample and Data Collection

Data were gathered from academic staff members employed by public universities in Pakistan. In this study, judgmental sampling was used to choose the academic staff to establish the standards that should represent the population. According to Sekaran and Bougie (2010), judgmental sampling is a kind of non-probability purposive sampling design that allows researchers to specify requirements for the respondents. Consequently, the study's respondents were



academicians who worked full-time employed at Sindh, Pakistan's public universities after completing a probationary year of at least one year of experience. The primary driver behind choosing academicians was the importance of the education sector in developing knowledgeable and capable leaders for a variety of organizations that contribute to a nation's economy (Saleem & Qamar, 2017).

To gather the data from different universities the researchers reached out to the administration. 16 universities out of 23 decided to take part. The registrars of those 16 public universities were then personally met by the researchers, who briefed them about the goals and advantages of the study. It was decided during the discussion that the comments of specific academic staff members would remain private and would only be used for this research. The questionnaire was presented to the academic staff in several departments by the registrars' representatives. 700 questionnaires were given, and 329 of them were reverted. Of those 329, 307 (43.85%) were usable and served as the foundation for additional analysis.

Measures

Based on their applicability for the study's setting, all the study's measurements were modified from scales that had already undergone validation. Respondents were asked to answer questions on a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 meant "strongly disagree," 2 meant "disagree," 3 meant "neutral," 4 meant "agree," and 5 meant "strongly agree."

Twenty-one items were used to assess skill, motivation, and opportunity enhancing HRM practices. There were 7 items for skill-enhancing practices adopted from (Bailey, 1993), 6 for motivation-enhancing practices (MacDuffie, 1995), and 8 for opportunity-enhancing (Huselid, 1995). The coefficient alpha was 0.90, 0.90 and 0.92, respectively.

Moreover, five items, modified from the scale created by Rich, Lepine, and Crawford (2010), were used to measure physical engagement. A suitable alpha value for Cronbach's was 0.899.

Data Analysis and Results

Common Method Variance

Data for both exogenous and endogenous variables were acquired for the study from a single source, which can lead to a problem with common method variance. To check for common technique bias, we performed Harman's single factor test for this reason (Podsakoff et al., 2003). We entered all constructs into the principal component factor analysis using SPSS software and



conducted the analysis. This test result showed that a single factor could only account for 43.14 percent of the variation, indicating that there is no common method variance issue with the data.

Profile of Respondents

In terms of gender, there were 100 (32.6%) females and 207 (67.4%) males. Age-wise, 63 (20.5%) The responders ranged in age from of 21 and 30; 146 (47.1%) were between the ages of 31 and 40; 65 (21.3%) were between the ages of 41 and 50; and 33 (10.7%) were between the ages of 51 and 60. 248 (80.8%) of the 307 respondents were married, 58 (18.9%) were single, and 1 (0.3%) was a widow. Regarding credentials, 89 (29.0%) earned PhDs, whereas 218 (71.0%) held master's degrees. In terms of title, 63.2% were lecturers, followed by assistant professors (23.5%), associate professors (7.5%), and professors (5.8%).

Assessment of the Measurement Model

The measurement model was initially tested in Smart PLS to make sure the constructs were correlated with the suggested variance. Therefore, the measuring model in this study was evaluated using convergent and discriminant validity tests.

Prior to the assessment of construct validity, the outer loadings of each indicator must be tested (Ramayah, Lee, & In, 2011). There is strong correlation of the items to its construct if the high outer loading of a construct showed. Table 1 shows the loading for each indicator measuring each construct used in this study. The items loadings ranged from 0.605 to 0.952 which indicated high indicator's reliability. Two items of skill-enhancing practices (SEP1 and SEP2) were deleted, and five items were used for further statistical analysis. There were two items deleted from motivation-enhancing practices (MEP4 and MEP5) and 4 items were used for further statistical analysis. One item was also deleted from the opportunity-enhancing practices (OEP5) and seven items were used for further statistical analysis. Total 5 items were deleted out of 36 items because of their lower loadings. Following convergent validity, the measurement model's discriminant validity was used. The correlation of the other constructs was compared to the square root of AVE to assess the discriminant validity. According to the study, the square root of AVE is bigger than the correlation value of other constructs.



Table 1.

Convergent Validity: Loadings, Composite Reliability and Average Variance Extracted

Construct	Type	Items	Loading	Deleted Items	CR	VE
Skill-enhancing Practices	Reflective	S	0		0.910	.669
		EP 3	.827			
		SEP 4	0.852	SEP1[0.327]		
		SEP 5	0.792	SEP 2 [0.238]		
		SEP 6	0.821			
Motivation enhancing Practices	Reflective	M	0		0.828	.548
		EP 1	.806	MEP4 [-0.118]		
		MEP 2	0.650	MEP 5 [0.024]		
		MEP 3	0.796			
Opportunity enhancing Practices	Reflective	O	0		0.905	.578
		EP 1	.666			
		OEP 2	0.658			
		OEP 3	0.853	OEP 5 [0.514]		
		OEP 4	0.650			
		OEP 6	0.790			
		OEP 7	0.875			
Physical Engagement	Reflective	P	0		0.955	.808
		E 1	.896			
		PE 2	0.875	None		
		PE 3	0.937			
		PE 4	0.895			
Cognitive Engagement	Reflective	C	0		0.961	.859
		E 1	.952			
		CE 2	0.921	None		
		CE 3	0.941			
Emotional Engagement	Reflective	E	0		0.926	.67
		E 1	.867			
		EE 2	0.902			
		EE 3	0.801	None		
		EE 4	0.784			
		EE 5	0.728			
EE 6	0.843					

SEP= Skill-enhancing Practices, MEP= Motivation-enhancing Practices, OEP= Opportunity-enhancing Practices, PE= Physical Engagement, Cognitive CE= Engagement, EE=Emotional Engagement.



Construct Validity- Discriminant Validity

Table 2 displays the statistics for discriminant validity based on the Fornell-Larcker criteria. Only with this approach do the indicator loadings of the constructs being evaluated seem to differ substantially, which is troubling considering recent criticism of the Fornell-Larcker criterion (Hair et al., 2014). To evaluate discriminant validity more effectively, we additionally evaluated the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) criterion established by Henseler et al. (2015). Henseler et al. (2015) suggested two cutoff values for the HTMT criterion: 0.85 and 0.90. This study used the HTMT ratio limit of 0.90 to establish discriminant validity. Using the HTMT criteria, Table 3 illustrates the discriminant validity of the measurement model. All values are below the threshold of 0.90.

Table 2.

Discriminant Validity - Fornell-Larcker Criterion

	SEP	MEP	OEP	PE	CE	EE
SEP	0.818					
MEP	0.434	0.74				
OEP	0.6	0.457	0.761			
PE	0.306	0.233	0.294	0.899		
CE	0.52	0.409	0.571	0.646	0.927	
EE	0.487	0.362	0.562	0.468	0.765	0.823

Note: Diagonals represent the square root of the AVE while the other entries represent the correlations.

Table 3

Discriminant Validity – Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT)

	SEP	MEP	OEP	PE	CE	EE
SEP						
MEP	0.501					
OEP	0.67	0.514				
PE	0.337	0.274	0.294			
CE	0.569	0.428	0.578	0.684		
EE	0.512	0.368	0.569	0.501	0.785	

Note: Diagonals represent the square root of the AVE while the other entries represent the correlations.

Structural Assessment Model

To assess the importance of the hypotheses, it has been suggested that the structural model report the path coefficients, p values, and t-statistics (Hair et al., 2019). Regression analysis was employed to govern the effect of HR practices on work engagement.



Further analysis shown a significant positive relationship between skill-enhancing and physical engagement ($\beta= 0.18$, t-value = 2.327, p 0.05), cognitive engagement ($\beta= 0.242$, t-value = 4.027, p 0.05), and emotional engagement ($\beta = 0.212$, t-value = 3.204, p 0.05). Therefore, the findings support the H1, H2, and H3 hypotheses.

The association between motivation increasing and physical involvement was also examined using the same approach, and the results were insignificant ($\beta = 0.088$, t-value = 1.295, p > 0.05). Both the association between motivation-enhancing and cognitive engagement and the relationship between motivation-enhancing and emotional engagement were revealed to be significantly positive ($\beta = 0.139$, t-value = 2.423, p 0.05). As a result, the data disproved H4 and validated H5 and H6. Like this, a significant positive relationship was found between opportunity-enhancing and physical engagement ($\beta= 0.146$, t-value = 1.865, p 0.05), cognitive engagement ($\beta= 0.362$, t-value = 5.964, p 0.05), and emotional engagement ($\beta= 0.394$, t-value = 6.231, p 0.05). H7, H8, and H9 were therefore supported.

Table 4.

Hypotheses Testing of Direct Relationship

Hypo	Relationship	Path Coefficient	Std. Error	t-value	P value	Decision
H1	SEP -> PE	0.18	0.077	2.327	P < 0.05	Accepted
H2	SEP -> CE	0.242	0.06	4.027	P < 0.05	Accepted
H3	SEP -> EE	0.212	0.066	3.204	P < 0.05	Accepted
H4	MEP -> PE	0.088	0.068	1.295	P > 0.05	Rejected
H5	MEP -> CE	0.139	0.057	2.423	P < 0.05	Accepted
H6	MEP -> EE	0.090	0.053	1.642	P < 0.05	Accepted
H7	OEP -> PE	0.146	0.078	1.865	P < 0.05	Accepted
H8	OEP -> CE	0.362	0.061	5.964	P < 0.05	Accepted
H9	OEP -> EE	0.394	0.063	6.231	P < 0.05	Accepted

Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

In this study, predictive accuracy of the structural model was measured by coefficient of determination R^2 . The R^2 value signifies the collective effect of exogenous latent variables on the endogenous latent variable (Hair et al., 2014). The R^2 value should be between 0 and 1. However, R^2 values 0.26, 0.13–0.25, and 0.02–0.12 were interpreted as substantial, moderate, and weak respectively (Cohen, 1988). Therefore, the present study R^2 values were determined for all



endogenous latent variables. The R^2 value of physical engagement was 0.119, suggesting that 11% of the variance in the physical engagement was explained by the skill, motivation, and opportunity-enhancing practices. According to Cohen (1988) the R^2 value physical engagement was explained as weak level. Cognitive engagement was 0.388, suggesting that 38% of the variance in the cognitive engagement was explained by the skill, motivation, and opportunity enhancing practices. The R^2 value cognitive engagement was explained as substantial level. The R^2 value of emotional engagement was 0.35, suggesting that 35% of the variance in the emotional engagement was explained by the skill, motivation, and opportunity-enhancing practices. Table 5 shows the R^2 Values of Endogenous Latent Constructs.

Table 5.

R^2 Values of Endogenous Latent Constructs

Exogenous Variable	Endogenous Variable	R^2 Values	Variance Explained
Skill, Motivation, and Opportunity enhancing Practice	Physical Engagement	0.119	Moderate
Skill, Motivation, and Opportunity enhancing Practice	Cognitive Engagement	0.389	Substantial
Skill, Motivation, and Opportunity Enhancing Practice	Emotional Engagement	0.357	Substantial

Discussion and Conclusion

Discussion

The results correlate with previous studies (Gubman, 2004; Jose, PM, & Kuriakose, 2022; Vance, 2006) they have also shown the imperative role of HRM practices in stimulating high level of physical, cognitive, and emotional engagement among employees. The idea that HRM practices and work engagement are related is further supported by the most recent research conducted by Yadav, Bhakar, and Upadhyay (2022), the study underscores the significance of organizational tactics in forming employee commitment and involvement by focusing on employees' perceptions of HRM practices and their impact on engagement. Saks (2022) adds subtlety to the knowledge by emphasizing the beneficial relationship between HRM systems and practices and employee well-being, which raises engagement.



Skilled employees use their abilities to create innovative ideas (Teir & Zhang, 2016). Zhenjing et al. (2022) argue that skill-enhancing motivation and opportunity enhancing practices impact the commitment of the employees individually, which leads to increase in the commitment of whole group of the employees. Motivation-enhancing practices are supposed to bring the attainment of specific goals and provide adequate reward, promotions to increase the performance. Aybas and Acar (2017) has shown that HRM practices directly effect on employees' engagement. Similarly, previous studies have emphasized the imperative role of HRM practices in stimulating high level of engagement among employees (Jose, PM, & Kuriakose, 2022; Schaufeli & Bakker 2004; Vance, 2006) Similar results were shown by Aybas and Acar (2017) these practices had direct effect on employees' physical, cognitive, and emotional engagement. Opportunity enhancing practices allow employees to take a part in decision-making, sharing information and treating employees with respect. These approaches strengthen the common opinions of congruence among employees and organization (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001).

Practical Implication

The current study offers several significant conclusions that practitioners and decision-makers can find to be quite helpful. The key ideas derived for the public universities in Sindh, Pakistan, are covered in this part. Additionally, recommendations are offered that can be extremely helpful for administrators and policy makers, including the following: The findings of the current study demonstrate that skill-, motivation-, and opportunity-enhancing HRM practices have a considerable impact on academic staff members' physical, cognitive, and emotional engagement when they work in Sindh, Pakistan's public universities. Proper HRM procedures will raise engagement levels, but improper procedures will diminish levels of engagement. To retain their highly qualified and professional academicians, administrators of public universities in Sindh, Pakistan, and associated authorities are recommended to develop efficient HRM practices. This means that university administrators should make every effort to implement appropriate HRM practices, including hiring and selection procedures, training and development, teamwork, activities, and interaction among academicians, and providing fair remuneration, promotion, and benefits, such as sabbatical leave, housing loans, and better insurance plans. Academicians who engage in these practices are highly engaged physically, mentally, and emotionally. The employees are required to exert a higher level of engagement at work because these practices send the message that their organization is interested in their advancement. Similarly, Pillay,



Dawood, and Karodia, (2015) highlighted the fact that staff members will be more motivated if they are pleased with the training programs and career development chances, devoted, and engaged at their workplace.

Theoretical Implication

To anticipate the academic staff's physical, cognitive, and emotional involvement, the current study examines the influence of skill, motivation, and opportunity boosting HRM practices. Prior research (Aktar & Pangil, 2017; Cooke, Cooper, Bartram, Wang, & Mei, 2019; Jose, PM, & Kuriakose, 2022; Karatepe, 2013) placed more emphasis on HRM practices to predict solely work engagement than on other dimensions of engagement, such as physical, cognitive, and emotional engagement. Therefore, by revealing that skill, motivation, and opportunity boosting practices are major predictors of academician's engagement, the current study theoretically supplies an extra information regarding employees' physical, cognitive, and emotional engagement. These outcomes match those of the SET. For example, consider the possibility that employees will be satisfied and more likely to respond with stronger dedication and involvement if organizations give them with social and financial resources. According to SET, a sequence of exchanges between two people who feel obligated to each other and are in a condition of reciprocate interdependence can reveal a reciprocal connection. (Saks, 2006). Employees will feel obligated and, as a result, produce favorable results for their company when required resources are provided to them (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Focusing on SET, this study hypothesizes that employees will feel obligated and exhibit high levels of engagement if they believe the organization is providing suitable socio-economic resources through HRM practices to assure their well-being. The study advances the hypothesis regarding how academic personnel in Pakistani institutions might be inspired to continue being dedicated to their company.

Conclusion

To fully retain and engage their personnel feasible is the largest issue that organizations confront in the present business environment. Designing proper HRM practices to empower employees and increase their engagement in their job roles is a critical challenge for the human resource management system. Investigating how HRM practices affect employee engagement was the goal of the current study. The study's findings indicate a connection between HRM procedures and employee engagement. Organizations that implemented HRM practices saw an increase in employee engagement and empowerment to perform better in their assigned jobs. The study



findings are related to the conclusions and recommendations of (Chen, 2017; Van De Voorde, 2015). The study's conclusions imply that prioritizing HRM practices is necessary for corporate organizations to prosper over the long term. Adopting good HRM practices demonstrates to staff members that the business views their efforts as important assets. Providing employees with opportunities for professional growth propels them to work harder at their jobs and helps them progress in their professions (Huang, 2017). People feel more at ease and are more likely to give their best work when job security interventions are used in the workplace. (Chen, 2017). The findings offer business managers insight into how crucial it is to have efficient HRM procedures to raise staff members' levels of engagement with their jobs. To retain potential employees and keep them interested in their jobs so that they can contribute to the overall success of the company, corporate organizations are implementing a variety of employee engagement programmers. The current study's findings are an attempt to compile the most pertinent and significant HRM practices that aid in employee engagement and encourage people to contribute to the organization and themselves.

Limitations of the Study

Although the result of this research is to provide important insights in the form of contributions to theory and practice, but this study has some limitations. First, this study limited in its scope, because it only covers public universities public Sindh, Pakistan but not at country level and private universities of Pakistan. Therefore, the findings were confined to only one province, which is not suitable to generalize to all provinces of Pakistan. Second, this study has focused only on the direct relationship between skill, motivation and opportunity enhancing HRM practices on work engagement. Third, the research design was cross-sectional which limits the results. It's also true that causality cannot be established with certainty using cross-sectional data. Fourth, the data were solely collected from academicians working higher education institutes Sindh, Pakistan.

Future Direction

Although there are some limitations in the current study, the findings of present research can be expanded in many ways to further explore HRM practices. First, future research can be extended present study by covering country-wide level to cover all private and public universities and other sectors of Pakistan. In addition, future studies can consider various mediators such as, employee development and rewards/recognitions). Third, the future research can be intended at



longitudinal analysis to predict behaviors over time to time. In this way, potential interactions and discrepancies could be examined in a more suitable way. Fourth, the future research can be based to collect data from all employees' i.e. part time academic staff, managers and supporting staff, and start some comparative research between staff members at various levels. It's possible that the comparison study produced better findings.

References

- Abdullah, Z., Ahsan, N., & Alam, S. S. (2009). The effect of human resource management practices on business performance among private companies in Malaysia. *International Journal of Business and management*, 4(6), 65-72.
- Abubakar, A. M., Foroutan, T., & Megdadi, K. J. (2019). An integrative review: High-performance work systems, psychological capital, and future time perspective. *International Journal of Organizational Analysis*, 27(4), 1093-1110.
- Agyemang, C. B., & Ofei, S. B. (2013). Employee work engagement and organizational commitment: A comparative study of private and public sector organizations in Ghana. *European Journal of Business and Innovation Research*, 1(4), 20-33.
- Ahmad, S., & Schroeder, R. G. (2003). The impact of human resource management practices on operational performance: recognizing country and industry differences. *Journal of operations Management*, 21(1), 19-43.
- Aktar, A., & Pangil, F. (2018). Mediating role of organizational commitment in the relationship between human resource management practices and employee engagement: Does black box stage exist? *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, 38(7-8), 606-636.
- Al Mamun, C. A., & Hasan, M. N. (2017). Factors affecting employee turnover and sound retention strategies in business organization: a conceptual view. *Problems and Perspectives in Management*, 15(1), 63-71.
- Alfes, K., Shantz, A.D., Truss, C., & Soane, E. C. (2013). The link between perceived human resource management practices, engagement, and employee behaviour: A moderated mediation model. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 24(2), 330-351.
- Ang, S. H., Bartram, T., McNeil, N., Leggat, S. G., & Stanton, P. (2013). The effects of high-performance work systems on hospital employees' work attitudes and intention to leave: a multi-level and occupational group analysis. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 24(16), 3086-3114.
- Aybas, M., & Acar, A. C. (2017). The effect of human resource management practices on employees' work engagement and the mediating and moderating role of positive psychological capital. *International Review of Management and Marketing*, 7(1), 363-372.
- Bailey T. (1993). *Discretionary effort and the organization of work: Employee Participation and work reform since Hawthorne*. Columbia University, New York (Paper prepared for the Sloan Foundation).



- Bakker, A. B., Shimazu, A., Demerouti, E., Shimada, K., & Kawakami, N. (2011). Crossover of work engagement among Japanese couples: Perspective taking by both partners. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology, 16*(1), 112-125.
- Chen, S. (2017). Cross-level effects of high-commitment work systems on work engagement: the mediating role of psychological capital”, *Asia Pacific Journal of Human Resources*. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1111/1744-7941.12144>
- Church, A. H., & Waclawski, J. (2010). Organizational self-awareness and authentic engagement. *The 2010 Pfeiffer Annual: Leadership Development, 1*, 148-161.
- Church, A. H. (2011). Bridging the gap between the science and practice of psychology in organizations: State of the practice reflections. *Journal of Business and Psychology, 26*(2), 125-128.
- Cooke, F. L., Cooper, B., Bartram, T., Wang, J., & Mei, H. (2019). Mapping the relationships between high-performance work systems, employee resilience and engagement: A study of the banking industry in China. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management, 30*(8), 1239-1260.
- González-Romá, V., Schaufeli, W. B., Bakker, A. B., & Lloret, S. (2006). Burnout and work engagement: Independent factors or opposite poles? *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 68*(1), 165-174.
- Gubman, E. (2004). From engagement to passion for work: The search for the missing person. *Human Research Planning, 14*(2), 42-46.
- Halbesleben, J. R. (2010). A meta-analysis of work engagement: Relationships with burnout, demands, resources, and consequences. *Work Engagement: A Handbook of Essential Theory and Research, 8*(1), 102-117.
- Henseler, J., Ringle, C. M., & Sarstedt, M. (2015). A new criterion for assessing discriminant validity in variance-based structural equation modeling. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, 43*(1), 115-135.
- Hair, J. F., Risher, J. J., Sarstedt, M., & Ringle, C. M. (2019). When to use and how to report the results of PLS-SEM. *European Business Review, 31*(1), 2-24.
- Huang, Y.M.Z. a. M.Y. (2017). High-performance work systems and employee engagement: Empirical evidence from China. *Asia Pacific Journal of Human Resources*. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1111/1744-7941.12140>
- Huselid MA. (1995). The impact of human resource management practices on turnover, productivity, and corporate financial performance. *Academy of Management Journal, 38*, 635-672.
- Jiang, K., Lepak, D. P., Hu, J., & Baer, J. C. (2012). How does human resource management influence organizational outcomes? A meta-analytic investigation of mediating mechanisms. *Academy of Management Journal, 55*(6), 1264-1294.
- Jose, G., PM, N., & Kuriakose, V. (2022). HRM practices and employee engagement: Role of personal resources-a study among nurses. *International Journal of Productivity and Performance Management*.



- Kavyashree, M. B., Kulenur, S., Nagesh, P., & Nanjundeshwaraswamy, T. S. (2023). Relationship between Human Resource Management Practices and Employee Engagement. *Brazilian Journal of Operations & Production Management*, 20(1), 1331-1331.
- Kehoe, R.R., & Wright, P.M. (2013). The impact of high-performance human resource practices on employees' attitudes and behaviors", *Journal of Management*, 39(2), 366-391.
- Kataria, A., Garg, P., & Rastogi, R. (2019). Do high-performance HR practices augment OCBs? The role of psychological climate and work engagement. *International Journal of Productivity and Performance Management*, 68(6), 1057-1077.
- Kundu, S. C., & Gahlawat, N. (2018). Ability–motivation–opportunity enhancing human resource practices and firm performance: Evidence from India. *Journal of Management & Organization*, 24(5), 730-747.
- Lee Whittington, J., & Galpin, T. J. (2010). The engagement factor: Building a high commitment organization in a low-commitment world. *Journal of Business Strategy*, 31(5), 14-24.
- MacDuffie JP. (1995). Human resource bundles and manufacturing performance: Organizational logic and flexible production systems in the world auto industry. *Industrial and Labor Relations Review*, 48, 197–221.
- Meyer, J. P., & Herscovitch, L. (2001). Commitment in the workplace: Toward a general model. *Human Resource Management Review*, 11(3), 299-326.
- Pichler, S., Varma, A., Yu, A., Beenen, G., & Davoudpour, S. (2014). High performance work systems, cultures, and gender demography. *Employee Relations*, 36(6), 693-707.
- Pillay, N. A. V. E. R. N., Dawood, Q., & Karodia, A. M. (2015). The relationship between career development and staff motivation in the South African petroleum sector: A case study of a Durban refinery. *Arabian Journal of Business and Management Review*, 3(2), 1-51.
- Podsakoff, P. M., MacKenzie, S. B., Lee, J. Y., & Podsakoff, N. P. (2003). Common method biases in behavioral research: a critical review of the literature and recommended remedies. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 88(5), 879-903.
- Rasool, S. F., Wang, M., Tang, M., Saeed, A., & Iqbal, J. (2021). What a toxic workplace environment effects the employee engagement: The mediating role of organizational support and employee wellbeing. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 18(5), 2294.
- Saks, A. M. (2006). Antecedents and consequences of employee engagement. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 21(7), 600-619.
- Saks, A. M. (2022). Caring human resources management and employee engagement. *Human Resource Management Review*, 32(3), 100835.
- Saleem, S., & Qamar, B. (2017). An investigation of the antecedents of turnover intentions and job-hopping behavior: An empirical study of universities in Pakistan. *South Asian Journal of Business Studies*, 6(2), 161-176.
- Samuel, M.O., & Chipunza, C. (2009). Employee retention and turnover: Using motivational variables as a panacea. *African Journal of Business Management*, 3(8), 410-415.



- Shah, S. H., & Beh, L. S. (2016). Impact of motivation enhancing practices and mediating role of talent engagement on turnover intentions: Evidence from Malaysia. *International Review of Management and Marketing*, 6(4), 823-835.
- Siddiqui, S. (2010). 18th amendment and education. Retrieved January 4, 2013.
- Soane, E., Truss, C., Alfes, K., Shantz, A., Rees, C., & Gatenby, M. (2012). Development and application of a new measure of employee engagement: The ISA Engagement Scale. *Human Resource Development International*, 15, 529-547.
- Sonnentag, S. (2003). Recovery, work engagement, and proactive behavior: A new look at the interface between nonwork and work. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 88(3), 518-528.
- Tay, L. C., Tan, F. Y., & Yahya, K. K. (2017). The power of ability-motivation-opportunity enhancing human resource management practices on organizational ethical climate. *International Journal of Business and Society*, 18(3), 547-562.
- Teir, R., & Zhang, R. Q. (2016). The current practices of human resource management in higher education institutions in Palestine. *Journal of Human Resources Management and Labor Studies*, 4(1), 65-83.
- Subramony, M. (2009). A meta-analytic investigation of the relationship between HRM bundles and firm performance. *Human Resource Management*, 48(5), 745-768.
- Yadav, M., Bhakar, S., & Upadhyay, Y. (2022). Impact of HRM practices on employee engagement and employee performance with special reference to academicians and work professionals. *International Journal of Health Sciences*, 6(S3), 5443-5456.
- Van De Voorde, K.B.S. (2015). The role of employee HR attributions in the relationship between high-performance work systems and employee outcomes. *Human Resource Management Journal*, 62- 78.