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Study of Human Resource Practices and Work Engagement in Public Sector Universities of Pakistan: An Intervening Analysis of Procedural Justice

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the upshot of human resource practices on work engagement with mediation of procedural justice among faculty members of public sector universities in Pakistan. The target population of study is faculty member of 13 universities Pakistan. The research undertakes a cross-sectional and causal research design. The quantitative data is being analyzed with the help of inferential tool, structural equation modelling (SEM). Results documented that HR Practices have positive and significant effect on work engagement. Outcomes have additionally recognized that HR Practices do have positive and significant influence on procedural justice and in turn procedural justice has positive and significant impact on work engagement. Lastly study outcomes observe that procedural justice fully intervenes the association between human resource practices and work engagement. Study is domineering and important because it has observed a least observed area in research. Top management and policy makers can use findings of this research to better imply human resource practices to enhance work engagement level with the help of procedural justice in public sector universities.

Keywords: *Human resource practices; Work engagement; Procedural justice; Mediation*

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INTRODUCTION

Occupational psychology has gained a lot of importance in recent times because of complexity of employee's behavior at workplace. Organizational effectiveness has proven to be dependent on behaviors that are adopted by employees in organization. It has become pertinent for people at top to control and mend this unpredictable behavior in favor of organization. This dire need of studying occupational psychology has always been an area of interest for researchers. Further evidences related to the importance of the level of engagement towards the achievement of company goals are increase job performance (Peng & Tseng, 2018; Menguc et al., 2013), reduce turnover intention and burnout (Saks, 2019), and increase positive well-being and health perception (Bailey et al., 2017). This particular research work is steered to comprehend three significant variables related to occupational psychology including HR related practices, work engagement and procedural justice. These practices related to HR are procedures laid down in organizations incrementally associated with employee's level of engagement in their work. Human resources practice (HRP) is consider major factor that can influence employee engagement (Hetaljani & Bayan, 2016; Alola & Alafeshat, 2020). Because the policy and practice of human resource function in terms of training and development, rewards management, and fair treatment can become sources of satisfaction, well-being, comfort, and motivation for employees. It is also believed that if managed effectively, HRP can create healthy work environment which support engagement. Perceived organizational support (POS) also defined as important cause of employee engagement (Aktar & Pangil, 2017; Rubel & Kee, 2013). Procedural justice is another significant construct that is associated with work engagement and has potency to mediate between human resource practices and work engagement. Volatility of human performance specially in working place is a substantial issue and occurs to be the demonstration of numerous influences. This change of behavior is quite weighty and significantly important in job outcomes. Current research work has attempted to analyze different constructs like human resource practices, work engagement and procedural justice. Since the conclusion of thorough study of existing literature it was found that there are only few tapering and limited studies are available in which in which relationship of human resource practices and work engagement has been tested with intervention of procedural justice in public sector universities of Pakistan becoming a research gap. Above research gap has also been noticed and directed to be filed by future researchers by (Anuradha & Opatha, 2017). Based on this research problem of study is to see whether procedural justice mediates the relationship between human resources related practices and engagement of work in public sector universities of Pakistan. Current work is deliberated in government sector universities of Pakistan because these are primarily governed by government and economical source of getting higher education for people at large. Recently organizations are facing

multiple challenges and opportunities at same time and organizations have to remain vigilant in grabbing opportunities and diverting challenges. In order to achieve these organizations need to have mechanisms which could mainly focus on employees working in the organizations. This study is significant because it has studied major construct directly related to employees like human resource practices, work engagement and procedural justice. Moreover study is noteworthy because its findings can be used and executed for betterment of public sector universities by policy makers. In the end findings of current study will help in addition of valuable literature in the field. Thematic scope of this study is that it would comprehend human resource practices, work engagement and procedural justice while geographical scope is public sector universities of Pakistan.

Objectives

This study contains the objective to understand human resource practices, work engagement and procedural justice among public sector universities of Pakistan. Furthermore, study aimed to find out relationship of human resource practices, work engagement and procedural justice among public sector universities of Pakistan. In the end, this paper estimates mediating effects procedural justice between human resource practices and work engagement among public sector universities of Pakistan.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Human Resource Practices

Khan et al. (2012) researched on the idea of human resource practices and found that these are mechanisms directly associated with functioning of employees in organization. They found that employee's effectiveness is significantly depending on kind of human resource practices employed by organization. Research exertion on HR Practices becomes extraordinary prominent for investigators because they deliberate it as an extent of consideration and intense attentiveness because of its significance (Mahadevan & Mohamed, 2014). They have considered human resource practices as a key factor of organizational effectiveness because growing competition and advancement in businesses need this to these practices up to mark. Mahadevan and Mohamed (2014) suggested training and development, employee compensation, human resource planning and work environment as strategic dimensions of human resource practices. Irshad (2001) defined training and development as a process of transferring essential skills and techniques in employees resulting in personal upliftment and organizational effectiveness. Training and development is a sequence of activities through which mandatory skills and information is advanced among workers to achieve and ample the job in an effective manner (Cardon & Stevens, 2004). Smith (2001) worked on employee compensation and found that employee compensation is a pivotal part of any employee's working career and employee considers it significant and prefer to work in the organization providing better employee compensation. Mahadevan and Mohamed (2014) define employee compensation as benefits in terms of money given or reimbursed to an employee while working in an organization as per approved policy. They also finished their work by noting that better employee compensation packages increase repute of that organization and people would love to join and continue working there. Human resource planning is third dimension of human resource practices and defined as all the notable steps, mechanisms and procedures taken by organization with an aim to better utilize and use their employee's potential along with their and organizational effectiveness and betterment (Cardon & Stevens, 2004). Ledimo and Hlongwane (2014) found that human resource planning is allocating and taking care of employees as per their abilities and organizational requirement. They further added that better human resource planning by organizations can lead toward employee- organization benefit. Castilla (2005) defined work environment as an atmosphere in which an employee works and performs his/her job. Researchers also believe that it is the working environment which is responsible for attracting employees in chosen, remaining and working in organization diligently (Ardakani & Mehrabanfar, 2015).

Work Engagement

The construct is of very much importance and was formerly introduced in the works of (Kahn, 1990) and considered it as a behavior of full attention and allegiance for job and organization. Work engagement is a name of remained meticulously elaborated in allotted work and carries required results in the organization (Chandani & Mehta, 2016). Research on work engagement has incrementally increased because management whims to retain employees and keeping them involved in organizations to accomplish essential doles (Pollak et al., 2017). They complemented that companies and organizations have determined that work engagement has begun to relish essential character in occupational psychology research. Schaufeli et al. (2002) suggested that vigor, dedication and absorption three most likely dimensions associated with work engagement. Vigor is deliberated as an emotional incline in which employee is fully resolute to finish assigned work and job successfully (Chughtai & Buckley, 2011). Another important dimension is vigor and is demarcated as ideal level of energy, enthusiasm, energy, soul and pliancy to specified profession by a worker within (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Second dimension is dedication is second dimension of work engagement which is defined as robust and strong mental love in allocated job (Chughtai & Buckley, 2011). It is an overall fondness with work and association as worker struggles to abide all effort in implementation of job and helping association. (Mauno et al., 2007). Third dimension is of absorption is a vital part of work engagement

responsible to make appeal and attraction in allocated job (Chandani & Mehta, 2016). This is further comprehended as strong and sturdy concentration and request in dispensed job finally making resilient affection serving both workers and groups (Pollak et al., 2017).

Procedural Justice

Wendy (2007) worked on this construct and defined it as an important dimensions related to organizational justice which is associated with the level of equality, fairness and justice practiced by an organization in the organizational procedures and mechanisms at all levels. Procedural justice gives an employee the veracious to express, link and speak up concerning just or biased tools existing in the measures for association (Nabatchi et al., 2007). They also suggested that justice and fairness practiced in procedures gives an employee a chance to remain active and perform diligently in organization.

Procedural Justice as mediator between Human Resource Practices and Work Engagement in Services sector

HR Practices are noteworthy factors employed in an organization relating to work engagement (Ahmed et al., 2016). They concluded that HR practices direct and important influence on work engagement. Human resource practices are those significant construct associated with increase in fairness in mechanisms and procedures adopted by organization (Hashish et al., 2018). Ozer et al. (2017) while working on organizational justice and its relationship with work engagement talked about procedural justice. They said that procedural justice has the tendency to increase level of work engagement withing employees. Procedural justice can be caused by human resource practices and can cause work engagement justifying its role as mediator between human resource practices and work engagement (Yigitol & Balaban, 2018).

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Past review of literature has been employed to design a model shown below:

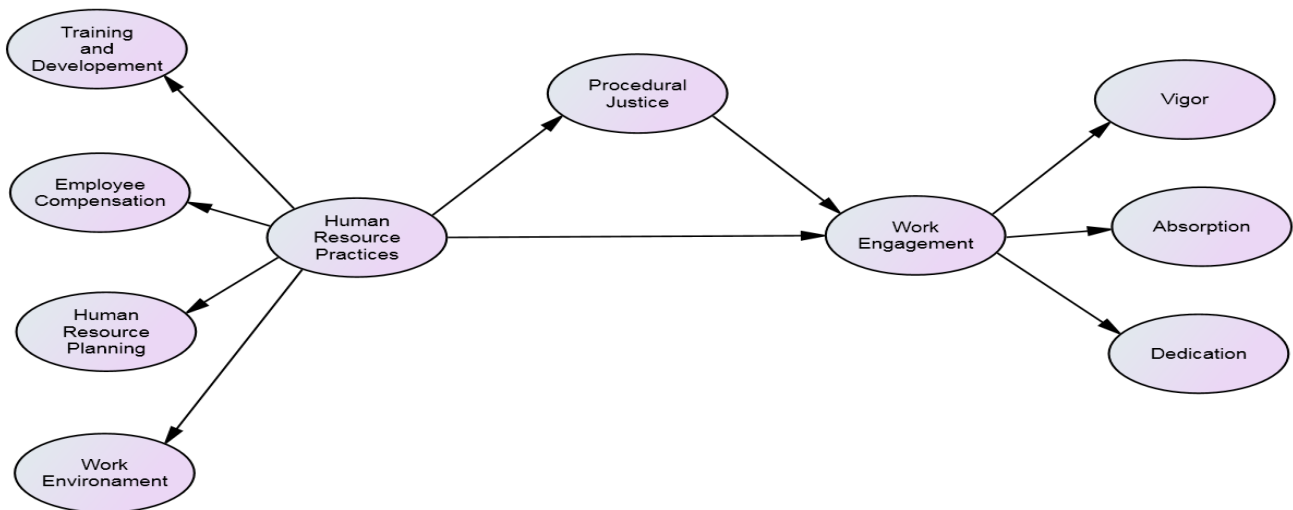


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Existing literature became basis for formation of this study model. Above study model represents that human resource practices are exogenous variable and work engagement is endogenous variable. Moreover procedural justice has been shown as mediating variable between independent and dependent variables.

Hypotheses

- H1: HRP have positive and significant effect on WE in public sector universities of Pakistan. (Ahmed et al., 2016).
- H2: HRP have positive and significant effect on PJ in public sector universities of Pakistan. (Hashish et al., 2018).
- H3: PJ has positive and significant effect on WE in public sector universities of Pakistan. (Ozer et al.,2017)
- H4: PJ mediates the relationship between HRP and work WE in public sector universities of Pakistan. (Yigitol & Balaban, 2018)

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Current study is causal and quantitative as it has comprehended causal influences with quantified numbers. Population of study comprised of population frame consisting of faculty members from 13 public sector general universities of Pakistan. It was so divided that two universities were taken from federal capital Islamabad (Top two public sector general universities in Islamabad as per HEC (Higher Education Commission, Islamabad Pakistan)

ranking, 2015), three universities each were taken from Punjab, Sindh and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (Top three public sector general universities present in respective provinces as per HEC ranking, 2015). Two universities were taken from Baluchistan (Top two public sector general universities of Baluchistan as per HEC ranking, 2015). Male and female faculty members were taken as from above universities using convenient sampling technique. Sample was conveniently taken because it was difficult to go to each university due to large distances, financial and time issues. Sample size was kept as 500 because this sample size is suitable for structural equation modeling as it is a sample sensitive technique. Primary data was collected using questionnaires of (Qureshi & Ramay, 2006) for human resource practices, (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003) for work engagement and (Niehoff & Moorman, 1993) for procedural justice. Structural equation modeling has been used to analyze and test data.

RESULTS AND HYPOTHESES TESTING

Demographic Profile of Universities

Faculty members from following public sector general universities have been taken.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of public sector general universities

| Islamabad | Punjab | Sindh | Baluchistan | KPK |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|--|
| Quaid-i-Azam University Islamabad | University of the Punjab Lahore | University of Karachi | University of Peshawar | University of Science and Technology (Bannu) |
| International Islamic University | G.C University Faisalabad | University of Sindh | Abdul Wali Khan University | University of Baluchistan |
| — | Bahauddin Zakriya University Multan | Shah Abdul Latif University | — | Sardar Bahadur Khan Women's University |

Descriptive and Correlation Analysis

Table 2: Mean, Slandered Deviation and Correlation Static

| Variable | Mean | Standard Deviation | HRP | WE | PJ |
|----------|------|--------------------|-----|------|-------|
| HRP | 3.9 | 0.61 | 1.0 | .55* | .61** |
| WE | 4.1 | 0.52 | | 1.0 | .52* |
| PJ | 4.2 | 0.51 | | | 1.0 |

HRP=Human Resource Practices, WE=Work Engagement, PJ= Procedural Justice

The outcomes display that HRP have positive and significant association with work engagement (r=.55, p<.05) and procedural justice (r=.61, p<.01). Work engagement has positive significant association with procedural justice (r=.52, p<.05).

Structural Equation Modelling

It involves confirmatory factor analysis and structural model. Hypotheses will be tested using structural model evolved during structural equation modeling.

CFA for Measurement Model

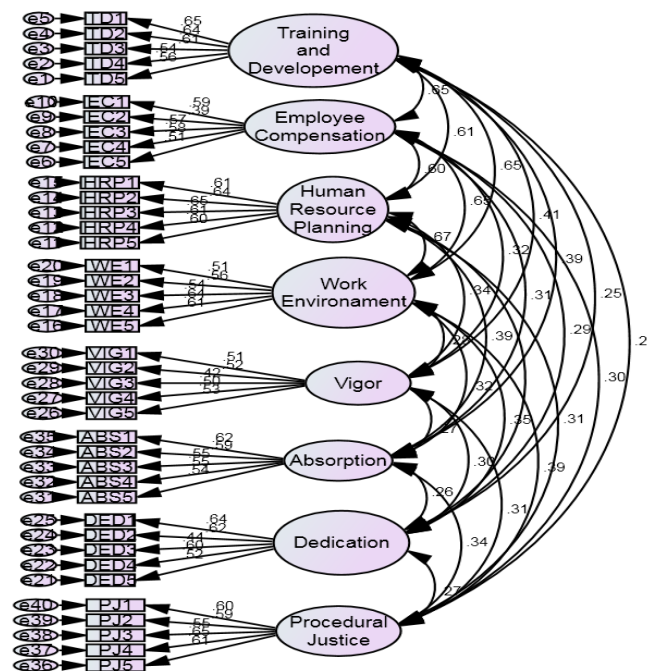


Figure 3: CFA for Measurement Model

| CMIN/DF | PVALUE | GFI | AGFI | TLI | CFI | PCFI | RMSEA | PCLOSE |
|---------|--------|------|------|------|------|------|-------|--------|
| 3.46 | .060 | .781 | .779 | .810 | .812 | .798 | .058 | .044 |

Figure 3 represents confirmatory factor analysis of measurement model. It can be seen that most of loadings are greater than >.5 except items EC2, VIG3 and DED3 which is <.5. Jackson et al. (2009) suggested to retain all items having significant loading greater than .5 and exclude all items with loadings lesser than .5 or insignificant. Hence all items having loadings greater than .5 were significant and have been retained for further analysis and three items EC2, VIG3 and DED3 having loadings less than .5 and were insignificant have been excluded from analysis. All other model specifications are well within desired ranges given by (Jackson et al.,2009).

CFA for Modified Model

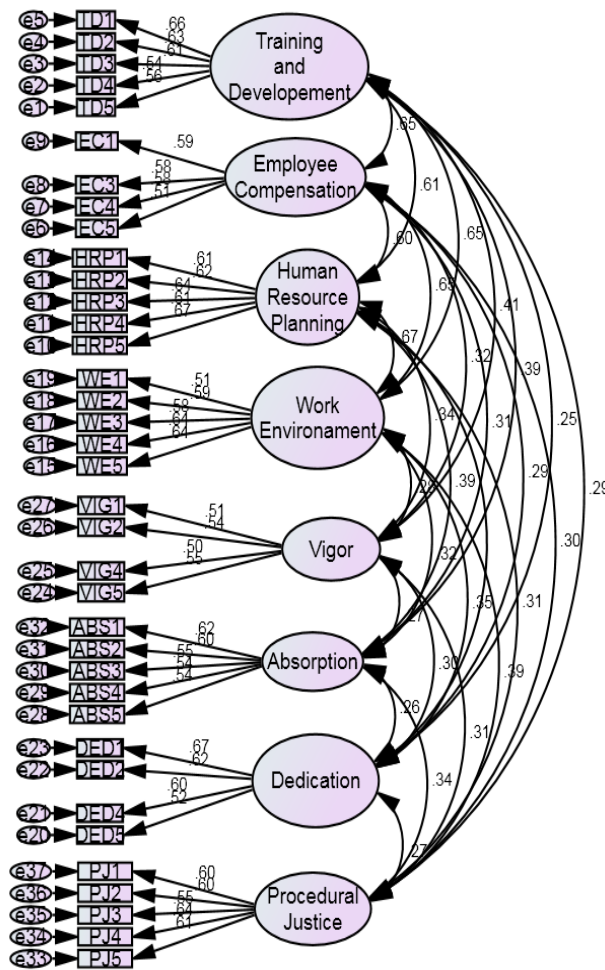


Figure 4: CFA for Modified Model

| CMIN/DF | PVALUE | GFI | AGFI | TLI | CFI | PCFI | RMSEA | PCLOSE |
|---------|--------|------|------|------|------|------|-------|--------|
| 2.87 | .001 | .900 | .891 | .903 | .904 | .912 | .044 | .054 |

Figure 4 represents confirmatory factor analysis for modified model. Modified model contains all retained items and have loadings greater than .5 and are significant. Moreover due to exclusion of low loading items fit indices have also improved.

Structural Model for Path C

HRP= Human Resource Practices, WE= Work Engagement

Figure 5 represents structural model of path (c). It can be seen that all items are having loadings greater than .5 and are significant. Fit indices also match the least standards suggested by (Jackson et al.2009). Model further depicts that HRP have positive and significant impact on work engagement ($\beta=.59$, P Value<.05) fulfilling first condition of mediation procedures adopted by (Barron & Kenny,1986).

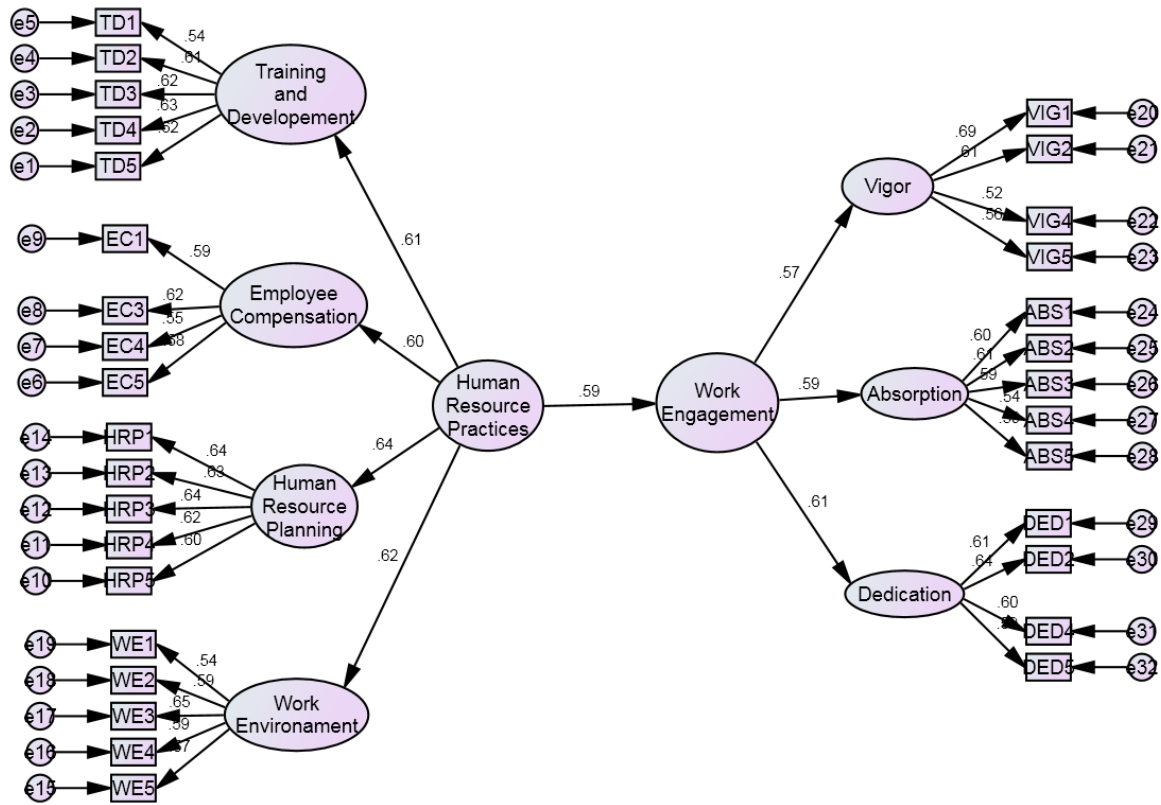


Figure 5: Structural Model for Path C

| CMIN/DF | PVALUE | GFI | AGFI | TLI | CFI | PCFI | RMSEA | PCLOSE |
|---------|--------|------|------|------|------|------|-------|--------|
| 2.69 | .000 | .901 | .892 | .906 | .914 | .914 | .034 | .059 |

| Variables | Estimate | P Value |
|-----------|----------|---------|
| WE ← HRP | .59 | .031 |

Final Structure for Path A, B and C'

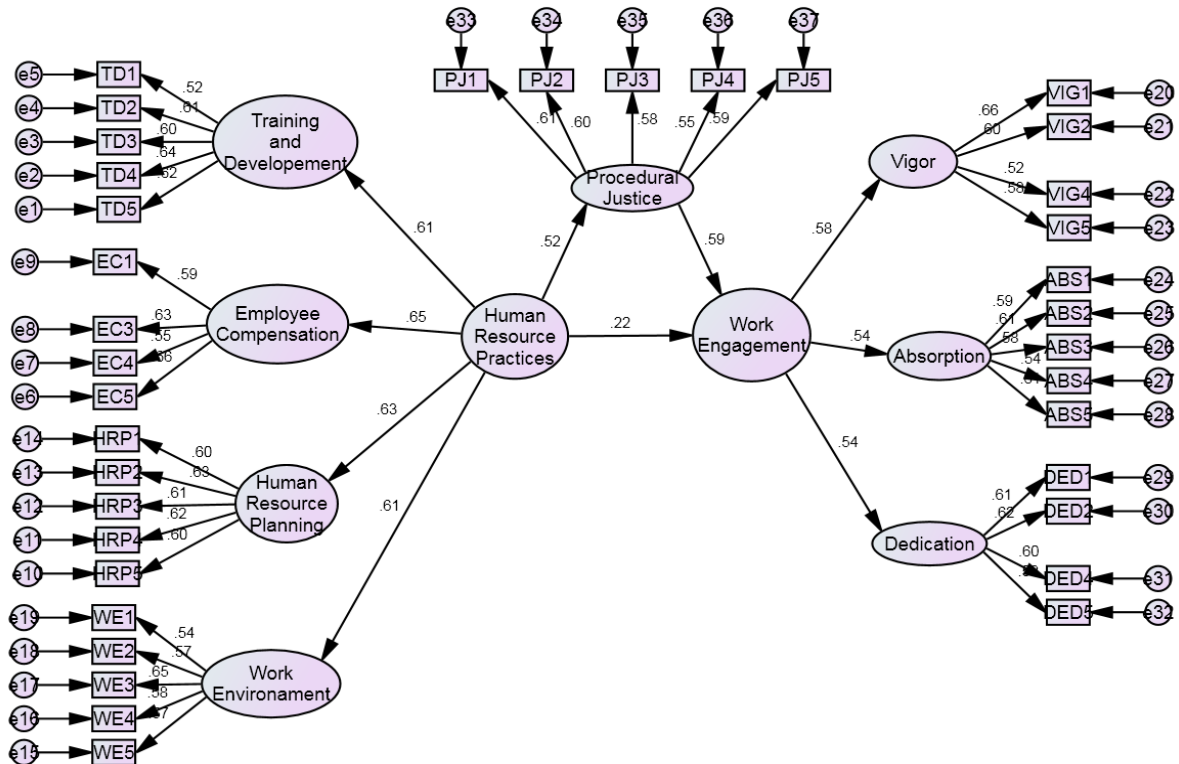


Figure 6: Final Structure for Path A, B and C'

| CMIN/DF | PVALUE | GFI | AGFI | TLI | CFI | PCFI | RMSEA | PCLOSE |
|---------|--------|------|------|------|------|------|-------|--------|
| 2.79 | .000 | .911 | .905 | .916 | .916 | .920 | .042 | .061 |

| Variables | Estimate | P Value |
|-----------|----------|---------|
| PJ← HRP | .52 | .040 |
| WE← PJ | .50 | .035 |
| WE← HRP | .22 | .071 |

HRP= Human Resource Practices, PJ= Procedural Justice, WE= Work Engagement

Figure 6 depicts structural model for path (a, b and c'). It can be seen that all items are having loadings greater than .5 and are significant. Fit indices also equals the least criteria proposed by (Jackson et al.2009). Further we can see that for path (a) human resource practices positively and significantly influence on procedural justice ($\beta = .52$, PValue $<.05$) satisfying second condition of mediation processes for path (a) adopted by (Barron & Kenny, 1986). For path (b) it can be seen that procedural justice has positive and significant effect on work engagement ($\beta = .50$, PValue $<.05$) satisfying third condition of mediation processes for path (b) adopted by (Barron & Kenny, 1986). Lastly we can see that in path (c) influence of HR practices on work engagement was positive and significant ($\beta = .59$, PValue $<.05$, see fig:05) and now in (c') it has been changed with addition of mediator procedural justice and have become insignificant with decreased estimate ($\beta = .22$, PValue $>.05$, see fig: 06) completely satisfying state of full mediation given by (Barron & Kenny, 1986).

HYPOTHESES OUTCOMES

H1: HRP have positive and significant effect on WE in public sector universities of Pakistan

Outlined hypothesis recommends that HRP have positive and significant impact on WE in public sector universities of Pakistan. Outcomes from structural model for path (c) suggest that HRP have positive and significant impact on WE in public sector universities of Pakistan (.59, $p <.05$, see fig: 05). Henceforth hypothesis is retained

H2: HRP have positive and significant effect on PJ in public sector universities of Pakistan

Delineated hypothesis mentions that HRP have positive and significant impact on PJ in public sector universities of Pakistan. Outcomes from structural model for path (a) recommends that HRP have positive and significant impact on PJ in public sector universities of Pakistan (.52, $p <.05$, see fig: 06). Henceforth hypothesis is retained.

H3: PJ has positive and significant effect on WE in public sector universities of Pakistan

Defined hypothesis mentions that procedural justice is having positive and significant impact on work engagement in public sector universities of Pakistan. Outcomes from structural model for path (b) recommends that PJ has positive and significant impact WE in public sector universities of Pakistan (.50, $p <.05$, see fig: 06). Henceforth hypothesis is retained.

H4: PJ mediates the relationship between HRP and WE in public sector universities of Pakistan

Defined hypothesis comments that PJ mediates the relationship between HRP and WE in public sector universities of Pakistan. Results depict that in path (c) impact of HRP on WE was positive and significant ($\beta = .59$, P Value $<.05$, see fig:04) and now in (c') it has been changed with addition of mediator PJ and have become insignificant with decreased estimate ($\beta = .22$, P Value $>.05$, see fig: 06) suggesting a full mediation following the guidelines by (Barron & Kenny, 1986). Hence above framed hypothesis is retained.

HRP=Human Resource Practices, WE=Work Engagement, PJ= Procedural Justice

CONCLUSION

Current research work was aimed at comprehending influence of human resource practices on work engagement with intervention of procedural justice in public sector universities of Pakistan. All framed hypotheses were accepted. Study proved that HRP have positive and significant effect on WE in public sector universities of Pakistan and result is in continuation of results obtained by (Ahmed et al., 2016) in same kind of research. Study also proved that HRP have positive and significant effect on procedural justice in public sector universities of Pakistan and result is in continuation of results obtained by (Hashish et al., 2018) in same kind of research. Study verified that procedural justice have positive and significant effect on work engagement in public sector universities of Pakistan and result is in continuation of results obtained by (Ozer et al.,2017) in same kind of research. Lastly study demonstrated that procedural justice fully intervenes the relationship between human resource practices and work engagement in public sector universities of Pakistan and result is in continuation of results obtained by (Yigitol & Balaban, 2018)) in same kind of research. Those in position of devising different policies can use this research outcome in increasing work engagement level among faculty of public sector universities of Pakistan and in turn whole society will be benefitted. Due to scarcity of financial resources and time constraints multiple sectors could not be grasped in this study. Future researchers can conduct an inter-sectorial study to more generalize the results.

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