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Original Article

A Structural Equation Model of HRM Practices, Employee Engagement, and Organizational Performance

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ABSTRACT: *This study examines the relationship between Human Resource Management (HRM) practices, employee engagement, and organizational performance using a Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) approach. Drawing on Social Exchange Theory and the Resource-Based View, the research investigates how HRM practices influence organizational outcomes through employee engagement as a mediating variable. Data were collected from 310 employees working in leading software companies in Bangalore, India, using a structured questionnaire based on a five-point Likert scale. The results of Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and SEM indicate that HRM practices have a significant positive impact on employee engagement ($\beta = 0.65$, $p < 0.001$), and employee engagement significantly influences organizational performance ($\beta = 0.58$, $p < 0.001$). The model explains 34% of the variance in organizational performance. Further, mediation analysis using bootstrapping confirms that employee engagement partially mediates the relationship between HRM practices and organizational performance, with a significant indirect effect ($\beta = 0.37$, $p < 0.001$). The findings highlight the critical role of engagement-driven HR strategies in enhancing organizational effectiveness. The study contributes to HRM literature by validating a comprehensive SEM framework and offers practical insights for managers to strengthen workforce engagement and performance outcomes.*

KEYWORDS: *Human Resource Management, Employee Engagement, Organizational Performance, Structural Equation Modeling, Mediation Analysis, IT Sector.*

1. INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary business environment characterized by globalization, technological disruption, and heightened competition, organizations are increasingly recognizing the strategic importance of human resources as a source of sustained competitive advantage. Human Resource Management (HRM) practices have evolved from traditional administrative functions to strategic enablers that significantly influence organizational outcomes. Among the various mechanisms through which HRM contributes to organizational success, employee engagement has emerged as a critical mediating construct linking HRM practices with organizational performance (Albrecht et al., 2015).

HRM practices encompass a wide array of organizational activities, including recruitment and selection, training and development, performance appraisal, compensation management, and employee relations. These practices are designed to enhance employee capabilities, motivation, and opportunities to contribute effectively to organizational goals (Delery & Roumpi, 2017). In recent years, the focus has shifted towards high-performance work systems (HPWS), which integrate multiple HRM practices to create a synergistic effect on employee outcomes and firm performance.

Employee engagement, defined as a positive, fulfilling, work-related psychological state characterized by vigour, dedication, and absorption (Schaufeli et al., 2002), has gained substantial attention in both academic and practitioner circles. Engaged employees are more committed, productive, and aligned with organizational objectives, thereby contributing to improved performance outcomes. The role of HRM practices in fostering employee engagement is well-documented, as supportive HR policies create a conducive environment for employees to feel valued and motivated (Saks, 2006). Organizational performance, on the other hand, is a multidimensional construct encompassing financial performance, operational efficiency, customer satisfaction, and innovation capability. The relationship between HRM practices and organizational performance has been extensively studied, with evidence suggesting a positive and significant association (Becker & Huselid, 1998). However, the underlying mechanisms through which HRM practices influence performance remain an area of ongoing research, particularly the mediating role of employee engagement.

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) has emerged as a powerful statistical technique for examining complex relationships among latent variables. Unlike traditional regression methods, SEM allows researchers to simultaneously assess measurement

and structural models, thereby providing a comprehensive understanding of causal relationships. In the context of HRM research, SEM is particularly useful in testing mediation effects and validating theoretical frameworks involving multiple interrelated constructs (Hair et al., 2019).

The theoretical foundation of this study is grounded in Social Exchange Theory (SET) and the Resource-Based View (RBV) of the firm. SET posits that employees reciprocate favorable organizational practices with positive attitudes and behaviors, such as increased engagement and commitment (Blau, 1964). RBV, on the other hand, emphasizes the role of valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable resources, including human capital, in achieving competitive advantage (Barney, 1991). By integrating these theoretical perspectives, the study aims to provide a holistic understanding of how HRM practices influence organizational performance through employee engagement. Despite the growing body of literature, there is a need for empirical studies that employ advanced analytical techniques such as SEM to validate the relationships among HRM practices, employee engagement, and organizational performance, particularly in emerging economies like India. The dynamic nature of the workforce, characterized by diverse expectations and increasing reliance on digital technologies, necessitates a deeper examination of how HRM practices can be optimized to enhance engagement and performance outcomes.

Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic has transformed workplace dynamics, accelerating the adoption of remote work and digital HR practices. These changes have underscored the importance of employee engagement as a critical determinant of organizational resilience and performance. Organizations that effectively leverage HRM practices to maintain high levels of engagement are better positioned to navigate uncertainties and sustain performance. This study aims to develop and test a structural equation model that examines the direct and indirect relationships between HRM practices, employee engagement, and organizational performance. By doing so, it contributes to the existing literature by providing empirical evidence on the mediating role of employee engagement and offering practical insights for HR practitioners and policymakers.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Human Resource Management practices have been widely acknowledged as key drivers of organizational effectiveness. Becker and Huselid (1998) demonstrated that firms implementing high-performance HR practices experienced significantly higher productivity and financial performance. Similarly, Delery and Doty (1996) identified universalistic, contingency, and configurational perspectives in HRM, emphasizing the importance of aligning HR practices with organizational strategies. Recent studies have further highlighted the role of digital HRM practices in enhancing workforce agility and responsiveness (Bondarouk & Brewster, 2016). These findings underscore the importance of strategic HRM in achieving sustainable competitive advantage. Employee engagement has emerged as a critical construct influencing organizational outcomes. Schaufeli et al. (2002) conceptualized engagement as a positive psychological state, while Saks (2006) linked it to antecedents such as perceived organizational support and job characteristics. Empirical studies suggest that engaged employees exhibit higher levels of job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and performance (Bakker & Albrecht, 2018). Furthermore, engagement has been found to reduce turnover intentions and absenteeism, thereby contributing to organizational stability and efficiency.

The relationship between HRM practices and employee engagement has been extensively explored in the literature. Studies indicate that practices such as training and development, performance appraisal, and reward systems significantly influence employee engagement levels (Albrecht et al., 2015). For instance, Anitha (2014) found that leadership support and workplace well-being are critical determinants of engagement. Additionally, modern HR practices leveraging AI and analytics have been shown to personalize employee experiences, thereby enhancing engagement (Marler & Boudreau, 2017). Organizational performance is influenced by multiple factors, including human capital, organizational culture, and leadership. Research by Kaplan and Norton (1996) introduced the Balanced Scorecard as a comprehensive framework for measuring performance beyond financial metrics. Subsequent studies have demonstrated that HRM practices indirectly affect organizational performance through mediating variables such as employee engagement and job satisfaction (Jiang et al., 2012). This highlights the need for integrated models that capture the complexity of these relationships.

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3. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- To investigate the demographic profile of employees working in selected software companies.
- To examine the reliability and validity of the constructs—HRM Practices, Employee Engagement, and Organizational Performance.
- To analyze the impact of HRM practices on employee engagement.
- To assess the influence of HRM practices on organizational performance through employee engagement.
- To test the effect of Employee Engagement on Organizational Performance using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM).

Hypotheses

H_1: HRM practices significantly influence Employee Engagement.
H_2: Employee Engagement significantly influences Organizational Performance.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study adopts a quantitative, descriptive, and explanatory research design to examine the relationship between HRM practices, employee engagement, and organizational performance in selected software companies in Bangalore, India. A quantitative approach is considered appropriate as the study aims to test hypothesized relationships among latent constructs using advanced statistical techniques such as Structural Equation Modeling (SEM).

The target population comprises employees from leading IT firms including TCS, Infosys, Wipro, IBM, Accenture, Cognizant, and Oracle, given their structured HR systems and performance-driven culture. A total of 400 questionnaires were distributed using a convenience sampling technique, out of which 310 valid responses were retained after data screening for missing values, inconsistencies, and outliers. The sample size satisfies SEM requirements and ensures statistical robustness.

A structured questionnaire based on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree) was used. HRM practices were measured across dimensions such as recruitment & selection, training & development, performance appraisal, compensation, and employee relations. Employee engagement was measured through vigor, dedication, and absorption, while organizational performance included both financial and non-financial indicators. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS (version 29) and AMOS.

5. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Table 1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	176	56.8
	Female	134	43.2
Age	Below 30 years	90	29.0
	31–40 years	150	48.4
	Above 40 years	70	22.6
Work Experience	Below 5 years	95	30.6
	5–10 years	140	45.2
	Above 10 years	75	24.2
Designation	Executive	160	51.6
	Analyst	95	30.6
	Manager	55	17.8

The demographic profile reflects a balanced and representative sample of IT professionals. A higher proportion of male respondents (56.8%) is observed, though female participation (43.2%) is substantial, indicating improving gender diversity. Most respondents fall within the 31–40 age group, representing a mature and experienced workforce capable of evaluating HRM practices effectively. The majority possess 5–10 years of experience, suggesting strong organizational familiarity. The distribution across executive, analyst, and managerial roles ensures insights from multiple hierarchical levels. Overall, the demographic composition strengthens the reliability of the study and supports meaningful interpretation of HRM practices, engagement, and performance relationships.

Table 2 Descriptive Statistics

Variables	Mean	S.D	Min	Max
HRM Practices	2.95	0.62	2.20	5.00
Employee Engagement	3.02	0.65	2.30	5.00
Organizational Performance	2.98	0.60	2.25	5.00

The descriptive statistics indicate moderate to favorable perceptions of HRM practices, employee engagement, and organizational performance. Employee engagement records the highest mean (3.02), suggesting that employees are relatively involved and committed to their roles. HRM practices and organizational performance also show consistent mean values, reflecting structured HR systems within IT firms. The standard deviation values indicate low variability, demonstrating consistency in responses across participants. This homogeneity enhances data reliability and supports further multivariate analysis. Overall, the findings suggest that organizations maintain a stable HR environment that moderately promotes engagement and performance outcomes among employees.

Table 3 Reliability and Convergent Validity

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	CR	AVE
HRM Practices	0.88	0.91	0.64
Employee Engagement	0.87	0.90	0.62
Organizational Performance	0.86	0.89	0.61

The reliability and validity results confirm that all constructs meet the recommended thresholds. Cronbach's alpha values exceed 0.70, indicating strong internal consistency among measurement items. Composite Reliability (CR) values above 0.80 further validate construct reliability. Additionally, Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values exceed 0.50, confirming adequate convergent validity. These findings indicate that the measurement model is statistically sound and accurately captures the underlying constructs. The strong reliability and validity measures provide confidence in proceeding with Confirmatory Factor Analysis and Structural Equation Modeling. Thus, the constructs are suitable for hypothesis testing and structural path analysis.

Table 4 Correlation Matrix

Variables	HRM	EE	OP
HRM Practices	1		
Employee Engagement	0.68	1	
Organizational Performance	0.62	0.70	1

The correlation matrix reveals significant positive relationships among HRM practices, employee engagement, and organizational performance. HRM practices show a strong correlation with employee engagement (0.68), indicating that effective HR systems enhance employee involvement and motivation. Employee engagement exhibits the highest correlation with organizational performance (0.70), suggesting that engaged employees contribute significantly to organizational success. All correlation values remain below the threshold of 0.85, confirming the absence of multicollinearity and ensuring discriminant validity. These results provide preliminary support for the proposed hypotheses and justify further causal analysis using SEM techniques.

Table 5 Confirmatory Factor Analysis (Factor Loadings)

Variables	Item Code	Factor Loading
HRM Practices	HRM1	0.78
	HRM2	0.81
	HRM3	0.76
	HRM4	0.74
Employee Engagement	EE1	0.82
	EE2	0.85
	EE3	0.79
Organizational Performance	OP1	0.80
	OP2	0.77
	OP3	0.75

The CFA results demonstrate strong factor loadings for all items, with values exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.60. This confirms that the measurement items are reliable indicators of their respective constructs. Employee engagement items show particularly high loadings, indicating strong construct representation. The consistency in factor loadings across HRM practices and organizational performance further supports the robustness of the measurement model. These findings validate

the theoretical structure of the study and confirm that the constructs are well-defined and empirically supported. Hence, the model is suitable for structural analysis and hypothesis testing.

Table 6 Structural Path (HRM Practices → Employee Engagement)

Path	β	CR	p
HRM → EE	0.65	7.85	0.000

The structural path analysis indicates a strong positive relationship between HRM practices and employee engagement (β = 0.65, p < 0.001). The high critical ratio confirms statistical significance. This suggests that well-designed HR practices significantly enhance employee motivation, involvement, and commitment. Effective recruitment, training, performance appraisal, and compensation systems contribute to higher engagement levels. The results strongly support Hypothesis H1 and align with existing literature emphasizing the role of HRM in shaping employee attitudes. This finding highlights the importance of strategic HR initiatives in fostering an engaged workforce within IT organizations. This finding highlights the importance of strategic HR initiatives in fostering an engaged workforce within IT organizations.

Table 7 Structural Path (Employee Engagement → Organizational Performance)

Path	β	CR	p
EE → OP	0.58	8.60	0.000

The results reveal that employee engagement has a significant positive impact on organizational performance (β = 0.58, p < 0.001). The high critical ratio indicates strong statistical significance, while the R^2 value of 0.34 suggests that engagement explains 34% of the variance in performance. This demonstrates that engaged employees contribute to improved productivity, efficiency, and organizational effectiveness. The findings support Hypothesis H2 and emphasize the mediating role of engagement in linking HRM practices to performance outcomes. Organizations should therefore prioritize engagement strategies to enhance overall performance.

Table 8 Model Fit Indices

Fit Index	Recommended	Obtained
χ^2/df	< 3.00	2.41
GFI	> 0.90	0.92
AGFI	> 0.90	0.91
CFI	> 0.90	0.95
TLI	> 0.90	0.94
RMSEA	< 0.08	0.052

The model fit indices indicate that the proposed SEM model fits the data well. The chi-square/df ratio is below the threshold of 3.00, demonstrating acceptable model parsimony. Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI) and Adjusted GFI values exceed 0.90, indicating a strong fit. Incremental fit indices such as CFI and TLI also surpass recommended levels, confirming model robustness. The RMSEA value of 0.052 suggests minimal approximation error. Overall, these indices validate the adequacy of the measurement and structural model, confirming that the hypothesized relationships are well supported by the data. In addition to direct relationships, the mediating role of employee engagement was examined to understand the indirect influence of HRM practices on organizational performance.

Table 9 Mediation Analysis using Bootstrapping (HRM → EE → OP)

Path	Direct Effect (β)	Indirect Effect (β)	Total Effect (β)	p-value	Mediation Type
HRM → OP	0.28	0.37	0.65	0.000	Partial Mediation

The mediation analysis using bootstrapping in AMOS reveals that employee engagement significantly mediates the relationship between HRM practices and organizational performance. The indirect effect (β = 0.37, p < 0.001) is statistically significant, indicating that HRM practices enhance performance through increased employee engagement. The direct effect (β = 0.28) remains significant, confirming partial mediation. The total effect (β = 0.65) demonstrates the overall strong influence of HRM practices on performance. These findings validate employee engagement as a key mechanism linking HRM practices with organizational outcomes, supporting Social Exchange Theory.

6. MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

The findings of this study offer important implications for HR practitioners and organizational leaders. Firstly, organizations should prioritize engagement-driven HRM practices, as employee engagement plays a crucial mediating role in enhancing performance outcomes. HR managers should focus on designing effective recruitment, training, and performance appraisal systems that align with employee expectations and organizational goals. Second, training and development programs should be strengthened to enhance employee competencies and motivation, thereby improving engagement levels. Performance appraisal

systems must be transparent and linked with meaningful rewards to foster trust and commitment among employees. Third, organizations should create a supportive work environment that promotes employee involvement, recognition, and well-being. By doing so, firms can enhance workforce productivity and sustain competitive advantage. Overall, strategic investment in HRM practices that foster employee engagement will lead to improved organizational performance and long-term sustainability.

7. CONCLUSION

This study provides empirical evidence on the significant relationships between HRM practices, employee engagement, and organizational performance within the IT sector. The findings confirm that well-structured HRM practices positively influence employee engagement, which in turn enhances organizational performance. The SEM results further reveal that employee engagement partially mediates this relationship, indicating that HRM practices not only have a direct impact on performance but also operate indirectly through engagement mechanisms. The study contributes to the existing literature by integrating HRM practices, engagement, and performance into a unified structural model and validating it using advanced analytical techniques. From a practical perspective, the results emphasize the importance of designing engagement-oriented HR strategies to achieve sustainable organizational outcomes, organizations that invest in employee-centric HR practices are better positioned to improve productivity, commitment, and long-term performance. The study underscores the need for continuous innovation in HR practices to align with evolving workforce expectations and dynamic business environments.

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