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Impact of Organizational Human Resource Practices on the Level of Employee Engagement- Mediating and Moderating Roles of Work-Life Balance and Perceived Organizational Support

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Abstract

Organizational Human Resource (HR) practices are important for nurturing employee engagement prospects. The present research classifies those HR practices of the organization that are directly targeted at encouraging high-level employee engagement both at the individual and organizational levels. The HR practices exercised explicitly to promote employee engagement are hypothesized in the framework of this study. Taking a sample size of N=300, in the Pakistani Telecom Sector, this study resolves to contribute to any organisation refining its HR mechanisms that encourage the level of employee engagement to rise. The data analysis reveals that practising a relevant HR mechanism improves the employee's commitment towards his/her job and the organization. Whereas the work-life balance and perceived organizational support have a controlling effect on this relationship. The research findings can support telecom managers in strengthening their human resource practices. The study can also help enhance employee

engagement through appropriate interventions in work-life balance and perceived organizational support domains.

Keywords: Human Resource Practices, Work-Life Balance, Perceived Organizational Support, Employee Engagement, Organizational Human Resource

1. Introduction

Human Resource Practices (HRP) inspires employees to work engagement; as a strong HRM system proves that employees prefer the HRM system to be high in individuality, consistency and consensus. It is foreseen that applying smart HR practices yields positive outcomes in terms of employee engagement (EE). Employee engagement receives considerable thoughtfulness currently, among corporate gurus, yet more deliberations in the academic literature are to be done. HR practices are examined from the employer's perspective, stressing the organizational objectives for increasing the sustainable employability of their workforce through HR policies that are aimed at stimulating employee motivation (Ybema, et. al., 2020). Organizations implement broad-range HR practices to improve employee health, motivation, knowledge, and skills because top management regards HR practices as being more effective in increasing employee engagement and sustainable employability. The execution of widespread HR practices is more directed towards achieving high job satisfaction rather than attaining increased organizational productivity in the long run.

Past and current research in the concerned area focuses on the fact that concentrating on HR practices improves organizational performance through solidifying employee engagement that leads towards the achievement of organizational goals (Khan & Roy, 2023). In detail, HR practices involve; strategic HR planning, recruitment and selection, training and development (T & D), career management, employee motivation, payroll and compensation packages, a healthy and safe working environment, etc.

Employee engagement and HR practices are correlated, aiding the organization in achieving its objectives (Abolnasser et al., 2023). The strength of the emotive connection, which employees and the organization have, results in their better performances (Tabasum & Shaikh, 2022). Additionally, employee retention, which is an essential indicator of organizational performance is always improved through the level of employee engagement with the organization (Awolusi & Jayakody, 2021). Employee engagement has been apparent in HR practices by adding value towards promoting employees' job-related attitudes (Boccoli et al., 2022). For achieving an effective level of EE, alignment of the organization's HR practices is important (Kerdpitak & Jermsittiparsert, 2020). One of the principal factors for employees to repay their employers is because they are mentally and psychologically engaged towards their job. This job engagement is because they are provided with economic and socio-economic resources through a well-established mechanism of human resource practices. This makes the employees feel interested in their work life; hence, they are more than eager to achieve organizational goals. Employee engagement is also boosted if employees are provided with prospects for career development and are recognized on behalf of their worthy practices at their place of work.

Although employee engagement receives extensive responsiveness in literature, the influence of HR Practices headed for EE attains slight consideration. It seems that HR practices meaningfully do value addition by promoting positive job-related attitudes and a level of employee motivation that also positively affects employee behaviour (Katou, 2017). Engagement means developing an emotional link concerning the employee and the organization. This linkage is possible once the organizational objectives at different organizational levels are identified. Contemporary research aims to focus on the positive linkage between HR mechanisms and employee engagement, as evident in the corporate sector.

Employees who are engaged in their job duties remain extensively obsessive about their job tasks and are proactive, while disengaged employees spend time at the workplace without being attentive. A professionally engaged workforce is more creative and consequently exceeds performance expectations (Rezeki et al., 2023) and emphasizes achieving competitive advantage. Employee engagement helps as a forecaster of the organizational ability to effectively manage difficult situations. It has received prevalent attention in literature but control of HR practices towards EE achieves slight recognition in corporate mechanisms (Rasool et. al., 2021). Contemporary research aims to fill this gap while contributing towards the literature concerning HRP and the level of EE by supporting an innovative framework.

Work-life balance (WLB) stands as the distribution of time flanked by work and family in a balanced manner so that neither of the two entities is neglected (Soelton, 2023). Work-life balance is the effort made by an individual to balance the two roles that are being carried out (Saputri & Helmy, 2021). Work-life balance is the key towards maintaining a constant employee-committed towards their job tasks (Soleton, 2023). Soelton (2020), suggested that WLB is a state where the stability between work and personal life is appropriate and where the conflict experienced by employees is low. It is notable that organizations looking after their employees have better employee-engagement, (Carnevale, & Hatak, 2020), higher levels of organizational commitment (Rhoades et al., 2001) and decreased dissatisfaction from work (Miao & Kim, 2010). It is because employees constantly notice how they are treated by their employer and whether their positive contributions towards organizational progress are being valued or not. Managers should understand the aspects that have visible effects on employee engagement; one of them being - organizational support. Employees who have weak or no feelings of organizational support might embrace work-avoidant and deviant behaviours that will ultimately lead them towards quitting the organization. This is why it remains necessary for organizations to induce a sense of support among employees, for workforce retention. Eisenberger has contributed vastly towards scholars' understanding of the idea of 'perceived organizational support' (POS).

Most research so far has revealed that POS is enough for better employee engagement and employee performance (Dawley et al., 2010; Eisenberger et al., 1990). However, POS and WLB have seldom been studied together. This study shall determine a framework through replication of West-based findings on a Pakistani sample, illustrating that the attitudes of employees here are modified by specific HR practices. Hence, this research investigates the moderating effect of POS on employee engagement. This study shall thus, contribute towards literature in a subsequent manner; only a sense of organizational support is not sufficient the presence of work-life balance is equally important in having a high level of employee engagement provided

through appropriate HR Practices in any organization. The contemporary investigation shall also suggest that participating in the domain of HR Practices expands the work-life balance of employees, which increases the level of his/her engagement with the job tasks. Employee engagement is conceived as a powerful tool of organizational capabilities related to HRP and WLB (Opoku et al., 2023).

2. Literature Review

2.1. Organizational Human Resource Practices (HRP)

HR practices are a set of separate yet interrelated activities, directed towards the development and retention of competent human resources. HR mechanisms have significantly predicted employee job engagement across the Globe through research. Previous research has confirmed that human resource management practices positively relate to employee engagement (Saks, 2022). Levels of employee engagement that are dependent upon certain HR practices may vary from person to person, yet; job design, T & D and flexible work hours can be better tested in a framework where employee engagement is dependent upon the HR practices of an organization (Saks, 2020). Besides, managers are realizing that an employee's personal life quality impacts his/her work quality and there are concrete business reasons that promote work and non-work combination. Here, it is ascertained that employee assistance for achieving work-life balance is an imperative measure of HR mechanisms, as it aims towards accomplishing the best from its workforce without leaving them disengaged from their job tasks and organizational goals. HR practices like recruitment, training, compensation, etc., also predict POS. POS also affects employee satisfaction by moderating the relationship between organizational HRP and EE (Mayes et al., 2016). Thus, through the above deliberation, it is postulated that:

H_1: Organizational HR practices are positively related to the level of employee engagement.

2.2. Work-Life Balance (WLB)

Work-life balance is a concept at the individual employee level that balances out the incompatibility between an employee's professional and family life. Offering specific practices or specific types of support is not enough; a strong work-life balance system must also be in place (Pasamar et al., 2020). This strong HR System enables the organization to deliver dependable information regarding the content of organizational HR Practices. An employee's behaviour towards his/her job tasks largely depends on the work-life balance. This means it is the way work-life balance facilitates the correlation of organizational human resource practices and employee engagement. HR practices provide and implement those human resource policies and regulations that are controlled by work-life balance, ensuring a high level of employee engagement (Huong Le et al., 2020). Scholars researching work-life balance have done their investigations in Asia as well. These investigations have examined the various work-life constructs on work and non-work outcomes. Furthermore, management researchers are also debating on the fact that whether the Western work-life constructs can be differently hypothesized in the Asian context or not. Thus, current research tends to study a framework built on the variables already tested in the West but now to be investigated in the Pakistani context.

In the current working landscape, HR practices and work-life balance have commonly been deemed necessary in contributing towards employees' work and organizational engagement (Yuwono et al., 2023). So, the contribution of this research is the investigation of the way how work–life balance impacts the connection concerning organizational human resource practices and level of employee engagement; a structure not yet tested in Pakistan (even though it might be operational in the country's corporate sector). This research shall investigate the contribution of HRP in improving the WLB and EE. It is aimed at identifying the way employees manage their work and life with their organization's assistance in the form of organizational human resource practices) for achieving sturdier employee engagement. Prevailing research has depicted a constructive influence of HR Practice on work-life balance and then together having a positive effect on employee engagement (Luturlean et al., 2020). The current research investigates the already-proved frameworks in which WLB has a mediating effect on EE (Dinh, 2020). The sub-variables of WLB have a significant influence on employee engagement (Arief et al., 2021). Due to progressive business environments, organizations are required to focus on innovation as an indispensable condition for enhancing their organizational efficiency. Hence, organizations recompense bigger considerations towards increasing employee engagement. Subsequently, business investigators have explored the probable mediating effect of work-life balance between organizational mechanisms and employee engagement (Ali et al., 2022). Contemporary research tends to strengthen such a framework by reviewing the mediation of work-life balance specifically between organizational HR Practices and the level of its employee-engagement. Thus,

H_2: Organizational HR practices are positively related to work-life balance.
H_3: Work-life balance is positively related to the level of employee engagement.
H_4: Work-life balance mediates the relationship between organizational HR practices and the level of employee engagement.

2.3. Perceived Organizational Support (POS)

Past research has proved POS to be moderating the HRP-EE linkage (Akhtar, 2018). They have suggested that employees possessing comparatively low levels of perceptions about their managerial resources will start to show a high level of employee engagement if they perceive their organization to be supporting them in their day-to-day tasks. By linking HR Practices to employees' workplace behaviour through employee-perceived organizational support (POS), a researcher can test the comprehensive nature of HR practices to recognize the relative importance of each of them in terms of influencing employee behaviours (Gavino et al., 2021). Here, the hypothesis is that employees' perceptions about the implemented HR practices demonstrate their organization's recognition of their contribution towards organizational performance. The management's attention towards their employees' welfare will also grow the perceived organizational support that in turn will lead towards constructive employee attitudes and behaviors. Moreover, it is likewise suggested that employees' professional commitment ought to interrelate with POS to influence outcomes (Zenf et al., 2004).

HRP and POS have been proven to prompt employee engagement; this link offers a managerial model involving critical dynamics that are focused upon for increasing it. The current

literature lacks a detailed investigation involving participants from large organizations for gathering standardized data regarding HRP, POS, and EE. Besides, researchers should also device profound analysis using other statistical methods like the SEM. Moreover, an examination of work behaviour such as job satisfaction is to be deliberated upon to determine whether it has a greater impact on employee work engagement or not (Djatmiko et al., 2020). Thus, contemporary research is aimed at completing the missing areas through testing and concluding by involving the current framework. It also tends to evaluate the mediation by WLB upon the organizational HRP-EE linkage. Depending upon previous work, this research also offers to reflect upon POS as the moderator of the HRP–EE relationship (Côté et al., 2021).

The importance of organizational HRP in determining the level of employee engagement is becoming recognized with time. In this context, no preceding study has empirically considered the moderating role of POS in the link between the above-mentioned independent and dependent variables (Musenze & Mayende, 2023). Therefore, this research aims to broaden the current literature by examining the relationships between organizational HR practices, work-life balance and level of employee engagement with moderation by POS. Never before this assumed direct linkage amongst HRP and employee-engagement was investigated with the mediation of work-life balance and moderation of POS. Lastly, it is conjectured.

H_5: Perceived organizational support moderates the relationship between organizational HR practices and the level of employee engagement.

2.4. Employee Engagement (EE)

Organizations committed to their employees' professional and personal welfare receive the latter's work engagement in return. Organizations where the HR Department is all about sustaining a good workforce always have productive employees with better psychological health and professional growth (Siddiqui & Ijaz, 2022). HRP pursues positive employee outcomes through the implementation of justifiable work systems. Hence, they facilitate employees' work-life balance devoid of bargaining for their job performance (Indiparambil, 2019). Post-COVID, employee engagement became the centre of attention for corporate managers and practitioners due to the global lockdowns. The organizational HRP establishes itself in employee engagement. EE serves as the predictor of an organization's capacity to effectively cope with challenging circumstances. Engagement refers to building an emotional rapport between the employee and the organization. This is reflected in HR objectives and their implementations at different levels (Shuck et al., 2011).

EE has emerged as one of the significant managerial topics meant for both scholars and specialists. Provided the strong substantiation that EE is strongly associated with employee attitudes, behaviours, performance (Bailey et al., 2017) and organizational performances (Schneider et al., 2018); employee engagement is investigated widely in the management and human resource literature. Still, the association between an employee's perceptions of HR practices and his/her work engagement has not been adequately researched (Fulmore, 2022). Although HRP and employee engagement are surely related, it is yet to be determined which HR practices are of the greatest importance for having high-level EE. Contemporary

research aims at providing solutions to such quarries by developing a structure with specific HR Practices and the variables determining the level of employee engagement, based upon work-life balance and perceived organizational support.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

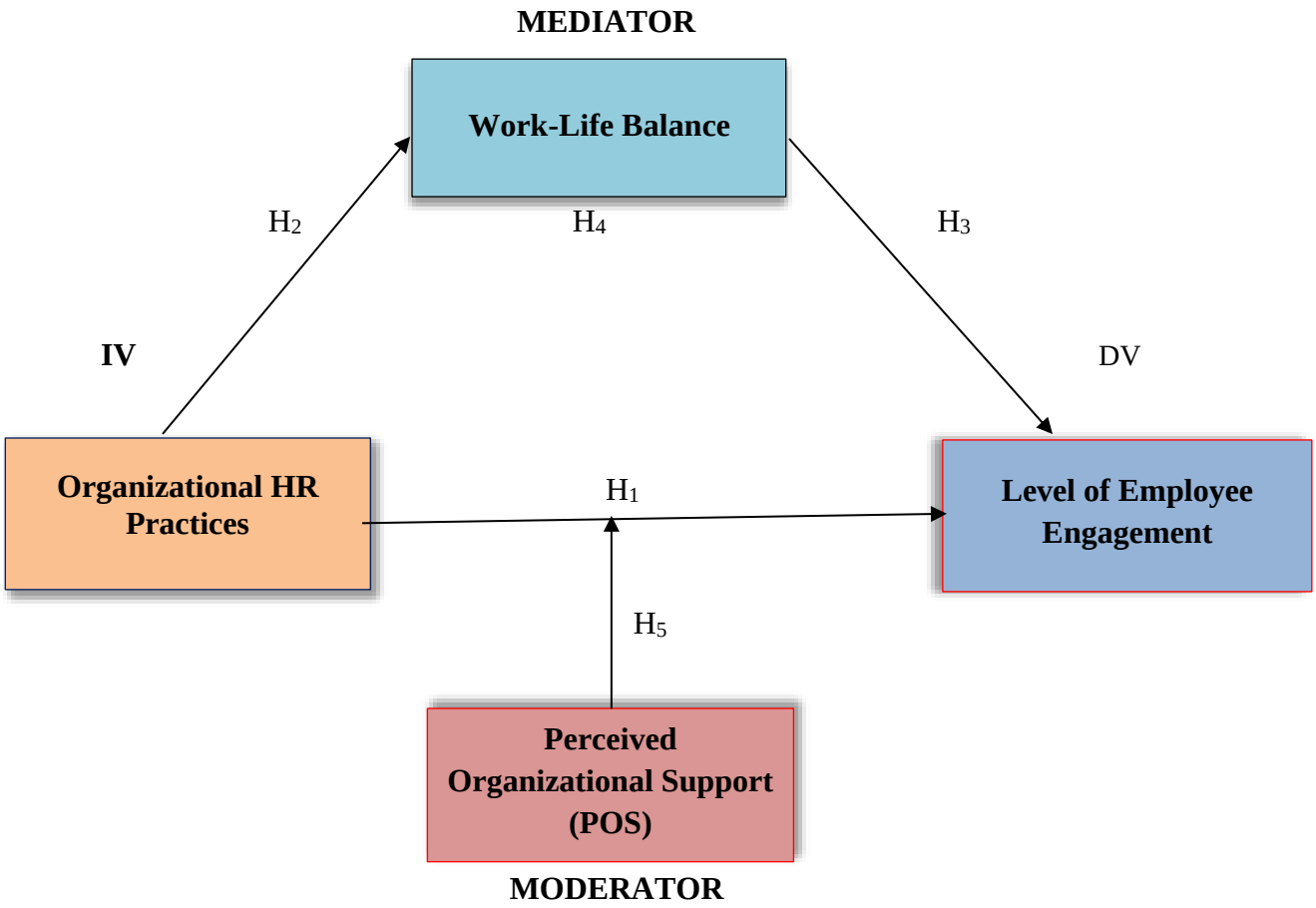

Figure 1. *Theoretical Framework*

3. Methodology

A self-administered survey consisting of questionnaires was piloted for collecting data from concerned organizational members, regarding; Organizational HRP, WLB, POS and level of EE. SPSS (22.0 V) analysis was used for evaluating estimations of contemporary frames. The organizations surveyed are four telecom companies of Pakistan operating in the northern and southern regions of the country.

3.1. Data Collection and Sample

Before creating a questionnaire, the researcher discussed the main constructs of contemporary research with concerned managers of the surveyed companies. It was done to find out whether they could comprehend managerial terms or not. The questionnaire was made according to selected scales. The sample population encompasses employees at all managerial levels of the four telecom companies chosen. It consists of two parts: demographics and research topics. There were four questions in total with inquiries about their separate items. Out of the total 320 questionnaires distributed, 300 were chosen for hypothesis testing after discarding the ones with imperfect responses.

3.2. Scales

The items for organizational human resource practices (OHRP), scale recommended by Saks (2020) shall be used. OHRP has three items. For evaluating work-life balance (WLB), the scale directed by Soelton (2023) is used having four items. Perceived organizational support (POS) is tested through the scales described by Eisenberger (2001) with three items. For measuring the level of employee engagement (LEE), the scale proposed by Opoku (2023) will be used, having two items.

4. Empirical Results

4.1. Descriptive Analysis

Table 1 displays the number of items for all constructs involved alongside their validity ratios as per Cronbach's alpha. As we can see the value of Cronbach's Alpha is greater than 0.7, hence, all variables are reliable for further hypothesis testing.

Table 1. Reliability of Measurement Instrument

Research Concept	No. of Items	Cronbach Alpha
Organizational HR Practices	3	0.86
Work-life Balance	4	0.78
Level of Employee-Engagement	2	0.81
Perceived Organizational Support	3	0.79

As tabulated above, the Cronbach alpha coefficient values array from 0.78 to 0.86. Thus, it is seen that the internal consistency/reliability of the coefficients of the scales used in this research is justly high. Henceforward, the results to be got with these dimensions of organizational HRP and other variables can be reliant upon to a larger degree.

Table 2. Results of Correlation Matrix

	Mean	Std. Deviation	OHRP	WLB	LEE	POS
OHRP	4.3114	.70190	-			
WLB	4.1570	.74041	.692**			
LEE	3.9873	.73632	.661**	.810**		
POS	4.7162	.71091	.698**	.697**	.710**	-

Note: OHRP, Organizational HR Practices; WLB, Work-life Balance; LEE, Level of Employee Engagement; POS, Perceived Organizational Support
***Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level*

Table 2 reports the correlations for all measures, including organizational human resource practices, work-life balance, level of employee engagement and perceived organizational support. The results show that all the variables are positively and significantly correlated with each other.

4.2. Hypothesis Testing

Table 3. Results of Regression Analysis

Predictors	Work-life Balance		Level of Employee Engagement	
	Beta	**Sig.**	**Beta**	**Sig.**
HR Practices (Model 1)	.189	.000	.201	.000
Work-life Balance (Model 2)	-	-	.263	.000

Dependent Variable: Level of Employee Engagement

Table 3 shows a constructive relation between the independent variable organizational HR Practices and dependent variables; work-life balance and level of employee engagement, proving H_1, H_2 and H_3 of this research as positive. The entire calculated specimen along with the significance $p<0.05$, falls in the standard range making the test positive.

Table 4. Results of Mediation Analysis of Work-life Balance

Predictors	**Beta**	**Sig.**
Work-life Balance (Model 3)	.175	.000

Note: The level of employee engagement is the dependent variable.

Table 4 reveals that by introducing the third variable work-life balance between the direct relation of organizational HRP and employee engagement, the β is decreased to 0.175, showing partial mediation. Hence, H_4 is accepted.

Table 5. Results of Moderation Analysis of POS

Predictors	**Beta**	**Sig.**
Work-life Balance (Model 4)	.168	.000
WLB x POS (Model 5)	.297	.000

Note: Level of employee engagement is the dependent variable

In the wake of the results obtained through moderation analysis of perceived organizational support, it is conclusive that POS significantly moderates (beta = 0.297, $p < 0.05$) the relation between OHRP and EE when WLB has a mediating influence on their direct relationship.

Table 6. Consolidated Model Summary

Model	**R Square**	**Adjusted R Square**	**F-Value**	**△ F-Value**
1	0.27	0.25	7.17	9.51
2	0.37	0.33	9.26	13.15
3	0.41	0.39	14.18	19.03
4	0.37	0.33	9.26	13.15
5	0.41	0.39	14.18	19.03

Table 6 shows the complete consolidated model summary of the framework as shown in Figure 1. All results are within the justified limits that are compulsory for proceeding

with such a framework for hypothesis testing. Model 1 is the direct relation between the independent variable organizational HRP and EE. Model 2 is the direct relation concerning organizational HRP and WLB. Model 3 is the direct association between WLB and EE. Model 4 is the mediating effect of WLB upon the direct linkage between organizational HRP and EE and Model 5 is the moderation of perceived organizational support (POS) over the direct proportion linkage of HRP and EE.

5. Discussion

Results of this research specify that organizational HR practices are directly connected to employee engagement and then connected through employees perceived organizational support along with the mediating influence of work-life balance. The objective of this study was the identification of whether and how WLB and POS act as a mediator and moderator variable (respectively) upon association concerning organizational HRM practices and employee engagement of telecom employees, or not. The test results showed that all HR practices, namely, job design, T & D and work flexibility were significantly related to employee-engagement sub-variables; job-engagement and organizational engagement. The results also indicate that appropriate HR practices give strong indications to employees that they are valued and recognized by their organization. Huang et al. (2017) recommended that appropriate and relevant job designs motivate employees towards professional progression which in turn makes them obligated towards their employer organizations and they apply a higher level of energy during their job tasks. Similarly, T & D is also an important incentive given to employees that makes them grasp that they are the most important organizational asset for their employer organization. Thus, this way employees will be able to use time and energy during their tenure in the specific organization (Chen, 2017).

Contemporary research also determined the mediating part of WLB such that if employees have a balanced work and personal life without either of them interfering in the other and if interfering that also in a positive way, this shall enable the employee to develop engagement towards their job and eventually to their organization as well (Opoku, 2023). Then the framework included the moderating role of POS showing that employees can exhibit higher levels of engagement if they possess higher POS than those employees that possess lesser regarding organizational HRP. The survey here included dimensions like, organizational care for employee well-being, opinion and forgiveness, for the perceived organizational support variable.

The outcomes of the framework tested also displayed that POS moderates relations concerning all organizational HR practices and employee engagement. Therefore, perceived organizational support can recompense the lowly discernments of HR practices professed by employees. Employees having poor perceptions about organizational HR practices shall no longer display a lower level of engagement if they possess a high level of organizational support. Prior research (Shantz et al., 2014; Hur et al., 2013; Chen et al., 2012) deliberated that undesirable work behaviours are not probable to have poor work outcomes because POS always safeguards the link between HR Practices and employee engagement. Moreover, this investigation recognized the direct relationship between organizational HRP and employee engagement as being like the study of Iskandar (2023).

5.1. Theoretical Contribution

This research extends the existing research done on HRP and EE, through supporting specific HR practices affecting employee engagement that further develop the field of strategic HRM. Rendering to the results of the tests ran on the collected data, a targeted approach to HR practices like; job design, T & D and work flexibility—is indispensable for endorsing long-term business strategies. Through proposing experiential substantiation for the satisfactory association between HRP, work-life balance and employee engagement, the contemporary study adds to the theoretical framework of human resource management. This research brings in contemplation a predictable understanding of HRM, which primarily focuses on recruitment only and not beyond that. Contemporary research is also contributory towards the existing framework which identifies the direct relation between HRP and EE, by introducing WLB and POS as mediating and moderating variables, respectively. From the Pakistani perspective, such a unique framework ought to be formed and tested to find out the existence of operational WLB and POS mechanisms in a stable corporate sector industry – Telecom.

5.2. Practical Implications

The implication of employee engagement activities in HR perspective is highlighted in form of the healthy correlation existing between HR Practices and work-life balance. Programs that encourage employee participation in chalking out a relevant job design empower them to keenly add towards the sustainability of organizational objectives -something that organizations must capitalize upon. Contemporary results focus on the certainty of HR Practices that explicitly integrate sustainability objectives for specialists. HR managers ought to align employee engagement campaigns, recruitment mechanisms and training activities with their strategic goals. Such programs also promote an atmosphere that believes in employee engagement behaviour. Generally, these results identify the procedures and circumstances through which an employee's work-related engagements are boosted because of the presence of appropriate organizational HR practices.

5.3. Future Research

Future scholars should try to segregate organizational HR Practices into technology and non-IT resources. Then the researcher will be able to analyze the individual effect of these categorizations of HR Practices while interacting with the workforce; subsequently, confirming the connection of the technological aspect of HR Practices together with the association of non-IT resources with employee engagement. The contemporary framework is the first of its kind to be smeared in the Pakistani corporate sector. A general mechanism related to HR Practices and EE, WLB and POS was constituted, but succeeding studies should emphasize upon precise and accurate frameworks that ought to segregate the two types of HR Practices. Other factors like top-management support, human capital, culture, experience, etc., ought to be studied to determine their influence on the first hypothesis of this research. Lastly, it is recommended that this context should be tested with more precise constructs in Pakistan's public sector as well.

Human resource management existing as the essential domain of present-day business contrivances is likewise dynamic in the public sector.

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