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Editorial

Editorial for *Human Resources Management and Services* (Volume 6, Issue 1)

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Volume 6, Issue 1 covers a wide range of fields, mainly discussing issues related to human resource management in enterprises, hotels, schools, and organizations, spanning Indonesia, the United States, China, Malaysia, and several other countries. By reading these articles, readers can gain a broader understanding of the status and development trends of human resource management and services in various fields and countries in today's society.

Heriberta et al. (2024) took Jambi City in Indonesia as an example and analyzed the relationship between entrepreneurial motivation and the success of women in micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) through questionnaires and a five-point Likert scale. The results show that motivation consisting of self-confidence, risk-taking, result orientation, intelligence, and skills has a significant impact on the success of MSMEs.

Two other noteworthy articles in this issue are a comparative study of today's procedural and distributive justice systems and progress in unionization, and the relationship between proactive coping, organizational resources, and work engagement, focusing on social workers in China (Yuen-han et al., 2024). In today's society, employees' protection needs and awareness of self-rights in the employment relationship are becoming increasingly clear, and unionization has also developed rapidly in this social context. According to the findings of Cates et al. (2024), it is recommended that organizations implement alternatives to procedural and distributive justice systems authored by employee unions to achieve employee protection.

Finally, the rapid development of the times has led to increasingly fierce competition faced by enterprises. How to obtain competitive advantages in a changing environment has become a question that many entrepreneurs, managers, and researchers are pondering (Zhao et al., 2019). I hope that readers will gain something from reading the contents of this issue and also look forward to more academic achievements in the field of human resource management, thereby promoting the development of human resource management to be more complete.

Conflict of interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

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Article

Entrepreneurial motivation as a determinant of women success in micro small and medium enterprises: A case of Jambi City of Indonesia

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Abstract: Entrepreneurial motivation has been one psychological factor that determines the success of MSMEs as it interacts with external factors. However, this has been scarcely studied in relation to women and the success of MSMEs. This study aims to analyze the effects of motivation and external factors on the success of women running MSMEs in the province of Jambi, Indonesia. A survey research methodology through the distribution of questionnaires on the motivation scale and the success of the MSMEs scale that were constructed by the authors was applied. The rating scale of the questionnaires was rated on a five-point Likert scale. A total of 325 women running MSMEs in Jambi City were given and returned the questionnaires. The results showed that motivation, which is comprised of self-confidence, risk-taking, results-orientedness, intelligence, and skills, has a significant effect on the success of MSMEs. Meanwhile, the success of MSMEs is significantly more affected by time and length of effort than loans or funds due to the decreasing trend of demand for goods and services.

Keywords: entrepreneurial motivation; micro small and medium enterprises; women entrepreneurial; microfinancing; Indonesia

1. Introduction

The sector of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in Indonesia is dominated by females. Of the total number of 65 million units of MSMEs in Indonesia, the majority are owned and run by women (The Bureau of Statistics Centre, 2023). However, the scale of these women's businesses is largely dominated by microenterprises, which is 52.9%. The same is true for small businesses, where 50.6% of employees are women. Medium-sized businesses, on the other hand, account for 34% (The Bureau of Statistics Centre, 2023). It has been widely recognized that women have an important role in the economy, and theirs is doubled through their engagement in MSMEs. Therefore, such an issue is worth particular attention. However, many MSMEs run by women have low productivity, as seen from their low income.

While literature suggests that MSMEs have proved to have value-added and, thus, constitute an important player in the economy in terms of size (Carsrud and Brännback, 2011; Saleh and Ndubisi, 2006), the fact has shown that the evidence shown above indicates that Indonesian women's participation in economic activity still needs enhancement to be able to play in the bigger areas of medium enterprises to contribute more to the nation's economic growth and wealth and also that of their families. Therefore, gender responsiveness or appropriate interventions for women to enhance their MSMEs' capacity should be taken into consideration.

Literature on entrepreneurship suggests that the success of entrepreneurship depends on people's willingness to become entrepreneurs (Murnieks et al., 2020; Shane et al., 2003). To put it succinctly, it depends on the willingness of people to "play" the game (Murnieks et al., 2020; Shane et al., 2003). This is certainly important as, in order to pursue an entrepreneurial opportunity, it takes an evolutionary process, which means that people should be able to have knowledge and skills on how to evaluate and measure any opportunities. And to manifest these, human motivation and cognitive factors constitute one of many important aspects that may determine the success of entrepreneurial activities. As motivation involves cognitive aspects such as ability, intelligence, and skills (Locke, 2000), we believe that understanding what motivates women and how these motivations interact with cognitive aspects that may influence women's actions to start looking for business opportunities plays an important factor that may determine the success or failure of their MSMEs entrepreneurship activities. Because the success of entrepreneurship is not only affected by human action but also by external factors, we argue that both the motivational and external environments will determine the success of women in running their MSMEs. Therefore, we propose in our study to examine the influence of motivation on the success of women in MSMEs. Because we contend that entrepreneurship is related to the process of looking for entrepreneurial opportunities, we focus our study on the analysis of the entrepreneurial process of looking for entrepreneurial opportunities and how that process is influenced by human motivation. Research on entrepreneurial motivation that focuses on such a topic is lacking. Therefore, we believe that our study may bridge this lacuna and advance understanding about the particular roles of human motivation and cognitive factors in influencing human actions in making entrepreneurial decisions and in influencing the entrepreneurial process.

While research on entrepreneurial motivation is rife, its foci have been on the dichotomy of external pull and push factors (Kirkwood, 2009; Nchimbi, 1999), which are related to economic motives. Other research has concentrated on factors that are related to individual and environmental factors, such as limited marketing areas, low-quality human resources, low entrepreneurial spirit, and limited access to capital (Adom and Asare-Yeboah, 2016; Cabrera and Mauricio, 2017; Peters and Brijlal, 2011; Zamberi Ahmad, 2011). None of this research focuses on the interaction of "process-opportunity-entrepreneurial success".

Meuller and Cockburn (1995) argue that the cognitive aspects of motivation do not work in isolation in order to bring success in entrepreneurship. They need to interact with external factors as well. Financial supports or loans from banks or from governmental institutions, education, the length of time spent, and independence may also become important factors that contribute to the success of women in enterprises. Our research offers a combination of cognitive aspects of motivation and external factors, with particular attention given to the function of microloans and their effect during the COVID-19 pandemic in the sub-national context of Jambi Province, Indonesia. In so doing, we believe that our research may enrich the literature on cognitive aspects of entrepreneurial motivation and how they interact with aspects of education, loans, and time and effort spent. In addition, the context of the specific Jambi Province of Indonesia, with its unique patterns and practices of MSMEs and the

majority of women from lower educational backgrounds, may help others understand the struggle of women to succeed in MSMEs where gender bias also exists. In practical aspects, our research contributes to the need for the individual improvement of women in terms of education and the governmental support of loans.

2. Literature review and hypotheses development

2.1. Conceptual theory of entrepreneurial motivation

The success of entrepreneurship depends on the strength of the willingness of people, which Shane et al. (2003) called “to play the game” in relation to seeking out entrepreneurial opportunities. In order to play the game, human action, which is influenced by motivation, plays a key role. This is because the pursuit of entrepreneurial opportunities is “an evolutionary process” (Shane et al., 2003), where people apply their abilities and skills to measure and evaluate resources, opportunities, and decisions and undertake entrepreneurial processes. Without human motivation, these will be in a vacuum of space. Because entrepreneurship involves human agency, people’s willingness to pursue entrepreneurial opportunities is also different. These differences are caused by several factors, such as opportunity cost (Amit, 1995), stock of financial capital, and career experience (Evans and Leighton, 1989).

With the association of entrepreneurship with the process of looking for an opportunity and involving some interrelated phases of development (initiation, growth, and exit) (Murnieks et al., 2020), these phases should be addressed in a continuum (Shane and Venkataraman, 2000). The reason behind this caveat is that individuals may experience different types and levels of motivation across those phases. Yet, researchers have studied those phases in a separate way, giving more weight to the process of initiation. As a result, the study on this issue is unbalanced (Murnieks et al., 2020).

Literature has indicated that there have been different types of motivation that drive individuals to start businesses, and they have been largely related to economic and sociological factors. These motives are put into the dichotomies of the pull and push factors (Kirkwood, 2009; Nchimbi, 1999) that may facilitate and forestall the success of women in entrepreneurship. The former is related to psychological and sociological motives motivating women to start their own enterprises, and it is seen as a positive driver that is most likely to contribute to the success of women in running their businesses. The latter is related to external environmental factors: negative conditions that influence people to start their business (Nchimbi, 1999; Nguyen et al., 2020) and are frequently the reported motives or motivating factors for women in developing countries to start their own business—those motives are being unemployed, divorced, being forcefully fired, or widowed (Nguyen et al., 2020). These factors are mostly related to economic reasons. Even if the economic factor of earning money is not the primary reason entrepreneurs start businesses, economic motives still play an important role (Weber et al., 2008; Westhead and Wright, 1998). According to Benzing and Chu (2009), women in African countries such as Ghana, Nigeria, and Kenya have been successful in starting small businesses due to their pull factor motives: to increase income and to improve family and life. However, research conducted by Nguyen et al. (2020) in Vietnam and Tlaiss (2015) in the United Arab

Emirates reported that the combination of both the push and pull factors of motivation is the key factor that contributes to the success of women in running small enterprises. While such research indicates an initiation phase of motivations for starting businesses, it lacks integration of the growth and exit continuum processes.

While pull and push factors are related to external economic motives, trait-based research has focused on the intrinsic and cognitive aspects of individuals, and these are related to personality traits and how women see themselves (Kirkwood, 2009; Tlaiss, 2015; Rey-Martí et al., 2015). Meredith et al. (1997) suggest that entrepreneurial traits include self-confidence, results-orientedness, risk-taking, leadership, originality, and future orientation as variables that may determine people's pursuit of entrepreneurial opportunities. This idea is confirmed by research conducted by Rey-Martí et al. (2015) in Valencia, Spain, who reported that the motive of women to start enterprises, which is based on their propensity for risk-taking, plays a significant effect on the success of women entrepreneurs. Pull factors that include creativity, innovation, and self-identity have also facilitated the success of women entrepreneurs in running their enterprises in Jaipur, the capital of Rajasthan, India (Shastri et al., 2019).

From the perspective of cognitive psychology (Ryan and Deci, 2000), human needs for achievement and success constitute a genuine and strong motive behind the actions of individuals. Linking this idea to entrepreneurial motivation suggests that the willingness of individuals to start businesses is driven by those needs. Self-confidence is one trait that may strengthen the decision of entrepreneurs to start enterprises. The success of women in running their enterprises is also associated with self-confidence (Kirkwood, 2009). According to Zimmerer and Scarborough (2006), someone who has confidence tends to have confidence in achieving success. An entrepreneurial spirit is a spirit that makes people feel confident in the sense that they believe what they are doing will be successful despite facing various obstacles. Women entrepreneurs in New Zealand are reported by Kirkwood (2009) to have less confidence in calling themselves "entrepreneurs". Some women in Kirkwood's study reported a growth in confidence along with their time spent in business, while others appeared to experience a constraint in the growth of their confidence. This would impede their ability to access finance and their growth aspirations in terms of starting a business (Kirkwood, 2009). The lack of confidence in women is not only confined to western countries. Such an issue also prevails in developing countries, for example, in Pakistan (Khan et al., 2021) and Nigeria (Kehinde et al., 2020). The lack of confidence of women in entrepreneurship in developing countries is due to their low level of education. In India, for example, the low level of education has impacted the low level of confidence of women in rural areas to start their own enterprises (Gautam and Mishra, 2016).

To start enterprises and achieve success, seeking entrepreneurial opportunities needs other supporting personality traits, for example, being results-oriented. Someone who is results-oriented is generally someone who does their job well. Every job demands results, and the work targets, values, motives, achievement, profit-orientedness, perseverance, grit, determination to work hard, solid drive, energy, and initiative are all results necessary for success in entrepreneurship (McClelland, 1965). Research by Staniewski and Awruk (2019) demonstrated that there is a positive

correlation between results-oriented success and entrepreneurial success. Also, the success of women entrepreneurs depends on their high self-concept related to their commitment to the industry and managing their potentially contradictory roles (Ehigie and Umoren, 2003).

H₁: Motivation, which consists of self-confidence, risk-taking, profit-orientedness, intelligence, and skills, affects the success of women in running MSMEs.

2.2. External factors influencing the success of MSMEs

Although the literature has debated the importance of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation in entrepreneurship success, some scholars have proposed an important idea to combine both (Murnieks et al., 2020; Shane et al., 2003). Therefore, intrinsic entrepreneurial motivations may not work in isolation, as they have to interact with external factors that may strengthen the opportunity for women to succeed in MSMEs. Cabrera and Mauricio (2017) argue that external factors of entrepreneurship that encourage it consist of human resources, education, experience, and access to resources. Socio-cultural factors such as norms, gender stereotypes, and gender division of labor influence the development of women's entrepreneurship in Zimbabwe (Mauchi, 2014) and Tanzania (Mashenene and Majenga, 2014), where these are exacerbated in patriarchal societies.

Women's entrepreneurship has grown significantly, which contributes significantly to increasing economic growth and wealth (Amrita et al., 2018; Cabrera and Mauricio, 2017). This cannot be separated from economic and social conditions, government support and initiatives, and increased education and awareness (Amrita et al., 2018; Cabrera and Mauricio, 2017). However, in many developing countries, gender bias has created hostile business environments for women, making it difficult for them to obtain financial assistance. Zamberi Ahmad (2011) argues that bureaucracy, a lack of credit options, and a hostile business environment are the main obstacles for MSMEs owned by female entrepreneurs in Saudi Arabia. In addition, other problems are related to the issue of a chaotic business environment, inadequate government support, unpredictable policy changes, and a lack of training (Zamberi Ahmad, 2011). The main problem encountered by women in developing countries, for example, in Pakistan, in getting access to financial support is the absence of private property ownership that can be used as a guarantee (Safavian and Haq, 2013). Fortunately, the easy access and improved opportunity to get access to loans for women in Bangladesh have improved because of the government's initiative (Rahman, 2009). Based on the research carried out to improve women's entrepreneurship (WE) in MSMEs in India, the majority of success reported by women in running MSMEs is influenced by the combined individual dimensions of management and the government's support.

With regard to capital aid, the existence of gender bias may limit women's access to capital aid. An interesting pattern has occurred in several African countries. Although MSMEs in Nigeria are supported by the provision of capital from banking and financial institutions, its effects are not significant because the requirement for getting the capital is conditional on having bank accounts or savings. A different pattern has also occurred in Ghana (Asare et al., 2015), where men must take part in

internships in order to get capital to open new MSMEs. Other research has demonstrated that the success of MSMEs in South Africa is determined by education, income, job growth, the center of operations, financial inclusion, experience, financial literacy, advertising budget, and asset ownership (Maduku and Kaseeram, 2021). In contrast, the success of MSMEs in Myanmar since 2013–2016 has been supported by information and communication technology (internet use and the presence of WEB) (Bala and Feng, 2019).

Education is one key determinant for women entrepreneurs to succeed in running their enterprises. The relationship between education level and income level is important because human resources can improve the quality of life through an educational process, training workshops, and focus group discussions on increasing work productivity (Baum et al., 1998; Khan et al., 2021; Tambunan, 2019). Finally, it can provide a sufficient income and increase the quality of life (Sagir, 1986). Research conducted in the province of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa (Peters and Brijlal, 2011) revealed that the government's initiative to help improve women's level of education has led to an increase in productivity and income for women running MSMEs. The importance of career preparation for the future determines the success of women in the future (Essel et al., 2019; Orser and Leck, 2010).

Gender patterns of balancing work and home are also one socio-cultural factor that can affect women's ability to succeed in SMMEs (Loscocco and Bird, 2012). This is because women entrepreneurs are expected to care for their families while at the same time caring for their businesses, causing a conflict of time priorities. Therefore, the term "dual role of women" is known, namely the role of women in family life as independent individuals, homemakers, mothers and wives, and first and foremost educators for their children and as women. While research has proven that the length of time spent by female entrepreneurs working on their businesses will contribute to the success of their businesses, that dual role may become a barrier for women to achieve their success in MSMEs (Strauch, 1986). Such barriers have been experienced by women in Pakistan (Rehman and Azam Roomi, 2012), in Nigeria (Halkias et al., 2011), and in India (Siddiqui, 2012). In addition, acting as a member of society, as citizens and citizens of the world, is carried out in harmony and balance (Ekpe et al., 2015). At present, the COVID-19 pandemic has stopped global mobility on an unprecedented scale. Finally, the community's demand and purchasing power have decreased for business formats while other new businesses have emerged (Ahn et al., 2020; Ioannides and Gyimóthy, 2020). It can be said that the effect of shocks and uncertainty is closely related to the current global pandemic and is estimated to recover within 4 to 6 years (Sobieralski, 2020). The economic downturn led to decreased production capacity due to increased travel restrictions and the post-stimulus impact on labor.

H₁: Motivation, which is driven by external factors such as microloans, education, the length of time spent, and independence, affects the success of women in running MSMEs.

2.3. MSMEs and their contribution to the Indonesia economy

Although the contribution of MSMEs to the economy in the last five years is quite significant, that is, 1.5%, with a turnover of business units of Rp. 300–500 million per year, their contribution to the Gross Regional Domestic Product is relatively low, namely less than 10%. The main characteristics of the existence of MSMEs are the obstacles to accessing credit from formal financial institutions and certificates of MSMEs' management capability. The COVID-19 problem is also one of the factors causing the difficulty of making MSMEs successful. It is difficult to get a turnover that exceeds costs; MSME actors consist of people with low productivity and the poor. The government provides a credit interest subsidy facility (for conventional banks) and a mudharabah (Islamic bank) subsidy to solve this problem. If necessary, the government provides an interest-free credit facility.

Micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) receive full attention from the central and local governments because MSMEs contribute to overcoming the problem of unemployment and reducing poverty. Many MSMEs have low productivity, as seen from their low income. Low income is due to limited marketing areas, low quality of human resources, a humble entrepreneurial spirit, and limited access to capital. Some MSME owners are gender-responsive; some are men, and some are women. There is a stereotype that women are considered inferior to men. Women's productivity is lower than that of men (Cho et al., 2021). The involvement of women in MSMEs aims to improve family welfare, and many women are now starting to act as breadwinners for their families.

In addition, based on the results of Najwa's research, it was stated that the sectors that had an impact because of the COVID-19 funds were due to a decrease in MSMEs caused by the fact that the community no longer extended activities outside the home. In addition, MSMEs are under pressure because they cannot carry out business activities, resulting in problem loans. Conditions during usual pandemic problems are almost the same as each other (Susanti et al., 2018). The results showed that COVID-19 had a negative effect on the development of micro, small, and medium enterprises in the Kerinci Regency, where the magnitude of the influence was 4.1% (Sarmigi, 2020).

When viewed from the classification, the number of MSMEs in Jambi Province in 2020 is 127,129, or 53.4%, while small businesses are 10,318 and medium businesses are 905, so the overall data for UMKM in Jambi Province is 139,362 businesses. The increase in MSMEs is in line with the number of workers—as much as 139,362 people. Total asset growth in 2020 was 26.3%, or around 2,479,271,316,879.00 with a turnover in 2020 of 18.9%, or around 4,091,883,904,323. Based on the Regency/City in Jambi Province, when viewed from the total assets, the largest is owned by the City of Jambi, while the highest turnover is in Tebo Regency.

Table 1 shows that Jambi City has a substantial MSME level with around 41,722 MSMEs, with the classification of micro MSMEs at 38,216 and macro MSMEs at 3506. Thus, the development of UMKM in Jambi City, compared to other regencies/cities in Jambi Province, is substantial. This is what underlies the research and development agency of human resources from the Ministry of Communication and Information of the Republic of Indonesia in training related to digitalization, the

Entrepreneur Academy (DEA), and financial technology (Fintech) for free. Then, the Jambi City MSME Service socialized MSMEs and formed a youth group that would assist MSMEs in the Jambi City community.

Table 1. Development of MSMEs in Jambi Province in 2020.

No	District/City	Enterprise			Total	Labor	Asset	Turnover
		Micro	Small	Medium				
1.	Merangin	3395	693	13	4101	12,283	282,030,480,917	892,282,441,793
2.	Jambi city	38,216	3506	-	41,722	125,166	1,043,050,000,000	233,134,200,000
3.	Sarolangun	4115	567	35	5872	10,088	160,025,025,350	8,139,750,000
4.	Sungai Penuh City	7461	1127	184	8772	12,954	709,405,650,441	706,209,865,615
5.	Kerinci	11,187	1088	125	12,400	18,374	398,000,000,000	410,323,750,000
6.	Batang Hari	11,937	344	25	12,306	20,705	283,373,948,641	1,012,599,788,045
7.	Muaro Bungo	8917	881	290	10,088	2933	38,799,375,000	62,862,150,000
8.	Tanjung Jabung Barat	7262	1048	-	8310	10,268	91,644,134,200	127,814,870,000
9.	Tebo	1592	274	232	2098	3570	84,429,300,000	1,134,802,700,000
10.	Muaro Jambi	20,058	459	1	20,518	23,631	133,600,487	500,844,748
11.	Tanjung Jabung Timur	12,989	331	-	13,220	6696	434,040,000,000	459,462,150,000
Total	127,129	10,318	905	139,362	246,669	3,364,706,515,036	5,048,132,510,201	Total
Year 2020	59,197	11,778	1151	72,126	101,972	2,479,271,316,879	4,091,883,904,323	Year 2020
Growth (%)	53.4	-14.2	-27.2	48.2	58.7	26.3	18.9	Growth (%)

Source: Jambi Province MSMEs Office, 2021.

3. Methodology and method

3.1. Samples and collection data procedures

Purposive sampling was used to recruit samples for the study. Based on the data taken from the Office of MSMEs of the Province of Jambi (**Table 1**), we sampled the samples from eleven districts in Jambi City: Jambi District (23%), Jelutung District (8%), East Jambi District (9%), Paal Merah District (18%), Danau Teluk District (10%), Pasar District (6%), Alam Barajo District (5%), Kota Baru District (3%), Pelayangan District (1%), Telanaipura District (12%), and Danau Sipin District (3%). From the sampling procedures, 325 samples were selected, to whom the questionnaires were distributed. The majority of these samples are women. **Table 2** below provides detailed information about the characteristics of the samples from each district in Jambi City.

Table 2. Characteristics of research respondents.

No	District name	Number of respondents	Percentage %
1	Jambi Selatan	75	23.08
2	Jelutung	27	8.31
3	Jambi Timur	28	8.62
4	Pal Merah	59	18.15
5	Danau Teluk	34	10.46
6	Pasar	20	6.15
7	Alam Barajo	16	4.92
8	Kota baru	11	3.38

Table 2. (Continued).

No	District name	Number of respondents	Percentage %
9	Pelayangan	5	1.54
10	Telanai Pura	40	12.31
11	Danau sipin	10	3.08
Total		325	100

Source: Data processed, 2020.

The questionnaires were returned by all 325 samples. The data obtained were screened and analyzed using structural equation modeling (SEM), a multivariate technique to test and evaluate multivariate causal relationships. SEM is also used to measure latent variables while at the same time measuring the relationship between latent variables (Hair Jr. et al., 2014). In our study, SEM-PLS was combined with PLS to assess the impact of an independent variable (motivation) on a dependent variable (MSMEs' success).

3.2. Respondent education

Figure 1 shows the majority of the respondents for this study have a high school education (D3: diploma, S-1: bachelor). Respondents also have a primary education level, as well as junior and senior high school SMP and SMA. Women who run medium-sized MSMEs are 1.75, while men are 2.19%. Thus, the extent of this research is more for medium-sized MSMEs than large-scale businesses. The majority of these respondents run their own medium-sized SMMEs.

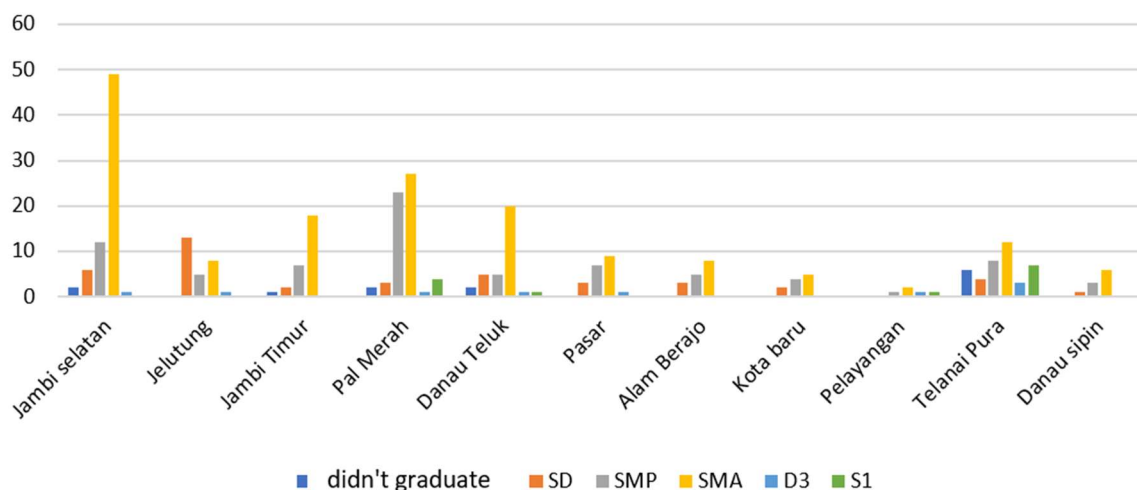


Figure 1. The educational background of respondents.

Source: Data processed, 2020.

3.3. Measurement scale

This study is a survey using questionnaires as the instruments to collect data. A scale of measurement for motivation developed by the team of researchers was applied. This scale has five dimensions: self-confidence, risk-taking, results-orientedness, intelligence, and skills. A scale for measuring the success of MSMEs developed by the team of researchers was also applied in this study. This scale has five dimensions: microloans, education, outpouring time, the effort put in, and independence. Following Malhotra (Malhotra, 1987), the scale of motivation and the success of MSMEs are

rated using the 5-point Likert scale, which consists of five categories, as those in **Table 3**.

Table 3. Measurement rating scale.

Response answer	Codes	Value
Strongly disagree	SA	1
Do not agree	DA	2
Agree	A	3
Strongly agree	SA	4
Very strongly agree	VSA	5

Resources: Maholtra, 2010: 276 (modified).

4. Results

4.1. Validity and reliability

In this research, the validity and reliability tests are conducted using Partial Least Square (PLS), which includes research on the goodness of fit model (inner model) to determine the accuracy of the model used in this study by using internal variables of length of effort, time, and education.

Following this, the reliability testing can be done by looking at the results of composite reliability (ρ_c). If the composite reliability test shows the measurement of internal consistency with a value of 0.6, then it is not reliable. Based on the table, it shows that the composite reliability is 0.841, or it can be stated that the measurement of motivation is reliable because of 0.6. Meanwhile, the validity test can be shown by the results of the AVE (Average Variance Extracted). If the average variance of the extract has a value of >0.5 , it is used as a determinant of convergent validity, whereas if it is 0.5, it is not convergently valid. The AVE value is at least 0.5. This value indicates adequate convergent validity, which means that one latent variable is able to explain more than half of the variance of its indicators on average. The table shows that the AVE test result is 0.535, which describes the latent validity of motivation to explain the success of MSMEs in Jambi City. The following **Table 4** provides detailed information about the reliability and validity of the scales.

Table 4. Test of reliability and validity.

Variables	Cronbach's alpha	rho_A	Composite reliability	Average variance extracted (AVE)
The success of MSMEs		1.000		
Motivation	0.705	0.737	0.841	0.535

4.2. Model fit test

The suitability test of the model in this study is based on the use of SEM. This is done to test whether the SEM model is feasible or not. The Chi-Square test is the most basic measuring tool to measure overall fit, so the size of the sample will affect the chi-square. Furthermore, there are RMSEA results as a measuring tool that must be

used in the model fit test, where it is said to be good if <0.08 , then it is recommended as a guide to declaring the model acceptable, while the RMSEA value between 0.081 and 0.10 is declared marginal fit. In addition, there is also the Comparative Fit Index (CFI) test, which is a revised form of the NFI that takes into account the sample size and can test well even when the sample size is small. A model is said to be a good fit if it has a CFI value greater than or equal to 0.9 (CFI 0.9) and is marginally fit if (0.8 CFI 0.9), as shown in **Table 5**.

Based on the value of SRMR, or Standardized Root Mean Square, in the table, the value is $0.081 < 0.10$, so the model fits. So, it can be concluded that the model fits the data.

Table 5. Model fit.

	Saturated model	Estimated model
SRMR	0.081	0.081
d_ULS	0.186	0.186
d_G	0.539	0.539
Chi-Square	76.420	76.420
NFI	0.803	0.803

Source: Data processed, 2020.

According to Sarjono and Julianita (2015), the value of the normed fit index (NFI), which takes into account the sample size, can test well even when the sample size is small. Based on the table, the NFI is 0.803, so it can be said to be marginally fit if (0.8 NFI 0.9).

Based on **Figure 2**, it explains that motivation affects the success of MSMEs. Motivation is formed by the factors of self-confidence, risk-taking, results-orientedness, intelligence, and skills. Meanwhile, intelligence and outpouring of time factors have no effect, while the success of MSMEs is shaped by the factors of time and length of effort. Meanwhile, the education factor does not affect the success of the gender-responsive community in Jambi City. Because the model has three invalid factors, the researcher tries to eliminate them to see how big the influence is and get the best model for the success of gender-responsive MSMEs in Jambi City.

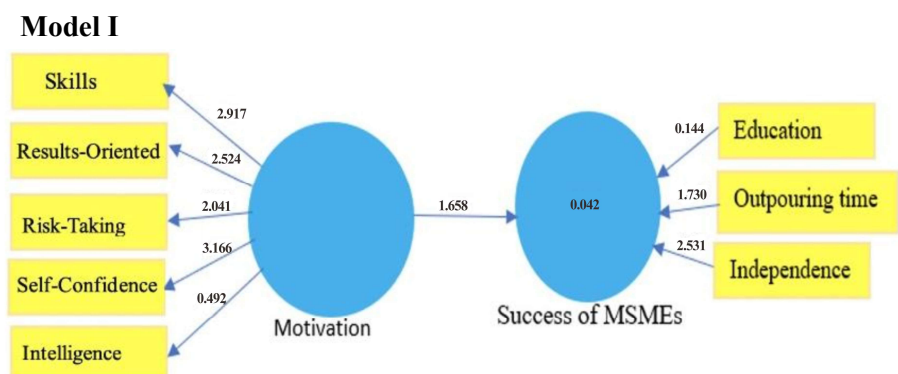


Figure 2. Output calculate algorithm in model I.

In **Table 6**, what is not significant is that education does not affect the success of MSMEs, intelligence does not affect motivation, and the outpouring of time does not

affect the success of MSMEs. This is due to the economic conditions during a pandemic, so that education, length of effort, and time spent do not affect the success of one's MSMEs. From the results of outer loading, which have constraints, we will try to eliminate the insignificant ones to get a better model.

Table 6. Formative and reflective variables of the motivation and success of MSMEs without capital factors as model I.

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values
Skills - Motivation	0.656	0.561	0.225	2.917	0.004
Results-oriented - Motivation	0.581	0.508	0.230	2.524	0.012
Education - The success of MSMEs	0.018	0.064	0.375	0.047	0.963
Risk-taking - Motivation	0.694	0.575	0.340	2.041	0.042
Self-confidence - Motivation	0.780	0.673	0.246	3.166	0.002
Intelligence - Motivation	0.142	0.121	0.289	0.492	0.623
Outpouring of time - The success of MSMEs	0.627	0.532	0.325	1.929	0.054
Length of effort - The success of MSMEs	0.827	0.656	0.321	2.574	0.010

Source: Data processed, 2020.

Figure 3 and **Table 7** show that motivation affects the success of MSMEs. Motivation is formed by the factors of self-confidence, risk-taking, results-orientedness, skills, and intelligence, while the success of MSMEs is formed by the time and length of effort factors. Because the initial model of this study used capital, the researchers tried to add capital to see how much influence it had on the success of gender-responsive MSMEs in Jambi City.

Model II

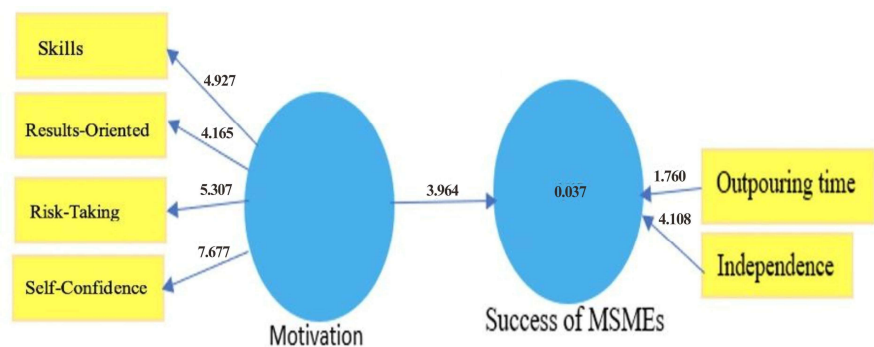


Figure 3. Output calculate alghoritm in model II.

Table 7. Formative and reflective variables of the motivation and success of MSMEs with the elimination of invalid factors in model I without capital as model II.

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values
Skills <- Motivation	0.637	0.612	0.129	4.927	0.000
Results-oriented <- Motivation	0.587	0.549	0.141	4.165	0.000
Risk-taking <- Motivation	0.731	0.700	0.138	5.307	0.000
Self-confidence <- Motivation	0.783	0.763	0.102	7.677	0.000
Outpouring of time -> The success of SMEs	0.556	0.518	0.264	2.104	0.036
Length of effort -> The success of SMEs	0.875	0.825	0.194	4.517	0.000

Source: Data processed, 2020.

Based on the data above, it illustrates that all significant models can be seen from a significant p value. From the results of outer loading, model III is the worst car compared to the previous model.

Figure 4 shows that motivation affects the success of MSMEs. Where motivation is formed by the factor of assurance, empathy, reliability, and responsibility, while the success of MSMEs is formed by the time and length of effort factors. Meanwhile, invalid capital has an effect on business success. This shows that the success of newly developing MSMEs has not been significant when obtaining funds will affect the success of MSMEs because demand for goods and services is decreasing.

Model III

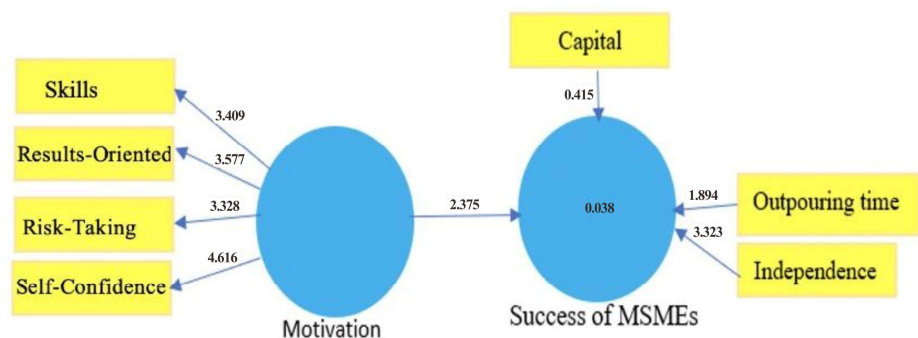


Figure 4. Output calculate algorithm in mode III.

Based on the data in **Table 8**, it is seen that what is not significant is that capital does not affect the success of MSMEs. This is because capital is not the main point of success for MSMEs. From the results of invalid outer loading, the author still raises a model where capital does not significantly influence the success of a person's MSMEs.

Table 8. Displays the formative and reflective variables of the motivation and success of MSMEs by eliminating invalid factors in model I by adding the capital factor as model III.

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values
Skills <- Motivation	0.620	0.588	0.182	3.409	0.001
Results-oriented <- Motivation	0.589	0.559	0.165	3.577	0.000
Capital-> The success of SMEs	-0.078	-0.040	0.310	0.252	0.801
Risk-taking <- Motivation	0.749	0.700	0.225	3.328	0.001
Self-confidence <- Motivation	0.779	0.724	0.169	4.616	0.000
Outpouring of time <- The success of SMEs	0.543	0.485	0.265	2.050	0.041
Length of effort -> The success of SMEs	0.874	0.777	0.249	3.505	0.000

Source: Data processed, 2020.

5. Discussion

Entrepreneurial motivation combined with cognitive factors play significant roles in shaping the initial process of entrepreneurship. Such an initial process is indicated by the willingness of women to run MSMEs. While entrepreneurship is related to the ability and willingness of people to recognize business opportunities and develop ideas in order to pursue those opportunities, these cognitive factors may be helpful for women who wish to begin their enterprises. In the first stage of the process of recognizing an opportunity to begin business, it does require self-confidence. An

individual with high self-confidence would have a strong propensity to start looking for business opportunities. An individual could put in more effort and time to achieve his goals if he has a positive attitude toward looking for opportunities. Our research shows that self-confidence has a strong and significant effect on the success of MSMEs, where this confidence influences the action to exert more effort over a longer period of time. According to Neill (2015), “self-confidence” is a combination of “self-esteem” and “self-efficacy”. Individuals with high self-confidence, regardless of their level of education, may have a strong propensity to take risks. McClelland’s (1965) entrepreneurial motivations assert that individuals with high self-efficacy, which is a combined measure of self-confidence and self-esteem, would be brave enough to confront challenging business opportunities to get their goals accomplished. This finding is consistent with the findings of Rey-Martí et al. (2015), Kirkwood (2009), Khan et al. (2021), and Kehinde et al. (2020). Although literature has shown that education has a positive correlation with the success of MSMEs (Gautam and Mishra, 2016; Peters and Brijlal, 2011), our research shows otherwise. It is quite interesting to note then that while education is an important variable that may increase the self-confidence of women in developing countries, our research demonstrates that education has no correlation with the improved self-confidence of women to run their MSMEs. This might advance our understanding that self-confidence is about an individual’s internal beliefs about his own ability to carry out something without anxious feelings. Following this, we argue that it is not the level of education that might reinforce self-confidence but rather individual traits. Therefore, we believe that people differ in their level of self-confidence. Thus, we agree with the thesis proposed by Shane et al. (2003) and Murnieks et al. (2020), who argue that entrepreneurial motivation differs between individuals. Following that, we argue that an individual’s personal characteristics may be a more important predictor of self-confidence than education.

Another cognitive-motivational factor that has a significant effect on the success of entrepreneurship is skills. Individuals with skills would have the ability to set goals and visions and set strategic actions to achieve those goals. Individuals with the ability to evaluate risks and benefits may be able to set their own goals or outcomes. Our research shows that women with a risk-taking and results-oriented personality would have more opportunity to succeed in their MSMEs. This result confirms other research conducted by Sharma et al. (2019). The least influential factor in the success of women in MSMEs is intelligence. With this result, we argue that women might not need to be intelligent in order to start and run their MSMEs.

As our research argues that entrepreneurial motivations do not work in isolation, we examined their interaction with external factors such as education, loans, length of time and effort spent, and independence. Regarding these, our research found that capital and education do not affect the success of MSMEs. Although literature has indicated the importance of financial support or loans from banks or governmental institutions to assist women in starting and running their MSMEs, our research shows otherwise. According to our research, loans, in this case microloans from banks, have no effect on the success of MSMEs due to the constraining situation of the COVID-19 pandemic, where demand and supply of goods and services have been restricted. This condition has been exacerbated by the low level of education of women in

MSMEs. MSMEs are owned by 70% of people with a high school diploma, 5% with an undergraduate degree, and the remaining 25% with a junior high school diploma (Ardiana et al., 2010). Besides the low education of MSME owners, the lack of skills, experience, and knowledge about MSMEs affects the limited productivity of MSMEs. Another factor faced in increasing the productivity of MSMEs is the different educational abilities of MSME owners in terms of gender. Some of the owners are men, and others are women. With this idea, we argue that loans would work effectively to support women in MSMEs in an unconstrained condition. Thus, we argue that even if gender bias related to the opportunity for women to get access to loans can be mitigated, a constraining environment that blocks the usage of loans might become a factor that facilitates and forestalls the success of women in MSMEs.

Literature suggests that more and more women act as breadwinners to support the economy and welfare of their families through microbusiness. According to Davidson and Burke (2004), women's participation in entrepreneurship plays a vital role in their involvement in small businesses and entrepreneurial performance. Yet, literature reports that some individual barriers faced by women have caused them to choose to run microbusinesses due to, among other things, a lack of network capabilities, strategies, and flexibility in time (Dumas, 2001). Many microbusiness owners in developing countries are women (Sharma et al., 2012). Many obstacles to the advancement of women entrepreneurs are closely related to factors such as religious beliefs, age, marital status, education, and ethnicity (Khattab, 2002). Furthermore, several other indicators, such as the socioeconomic pressures that female entrepreneurs face when running their businesses (Zamberi Ahmad, 2011) and human capital components such as education level, expertise, training, and work experience, have a direct impact on women's entrepreneurship in developing countries (Adom and Asare-Yeboah, 2016). Having access to capital and having sponsors can play a significant role in the success of female entrepreneurs as well.

Despite its lower rating compared to neighboring nations like Singapore, Malaysia, and Thailand, Indonesia's government has implemented several measures aimed at enhancing the country's investment environment. It has cancelled or amended 3143 regional rules and regional head regulations that impede investment via the Ministry of Home Affairs in June 2016.

6. Conclusion

The result of the study has revealed that psychological factors, along with cognitive aspects of motivation, have a significant effect on the success of MSMEs owned by women in Jambi City, Indonesia. Aspects of motivation include the factors of self-confidence, risk-taking, results-orientedness, intelligence, and skills that interact with external factors of education, loans, time spent, effort put, and independence to facilitate the success of women in MSMEs. The stage of the initial process of looking for business opportunities is heavily influenced by the level of self-confidence supported by skills, willingness to take risks, and result orientation required to support the business growth process. While education does not have an influence on the success of MSMEs, it is worth paying attention to the importance of skills as an important variable used to manage and run those business opportunities,

challenges, and barriers. Following this, the majority of women in Jambi Province running micro enterprises might not be due to their low level of education but to their low level of skills to manage and run businesses. Even if this is confronted with other external factors, such as loans, time spent and effort put in, and independence, the role of skills overtakes these factors.

7. Implication of the study

This study has implications for the theory of entrepreneurship and its practice. By examining the traits of women entrepreneurs along with their cognitive aspects that interact with the entrepreneurial process of looking for a business opportunity, it would contribute to a new way of understanding how the initiation or decision to start a business can, to some extent, be influenced by those aspects. The combined analysis of external environmental factors such as education, loans, time spent, and effort expended has provided evidence that entrepreneurial motivation cannot function independently in the absence of these external factors. For practice, it would be important for the government of Indonesia and other developing countries that share a similar condition as that of women in the Jambi Province of Indonesia to provide assistance with personality and entrepreneurial skills training. This aims to develop and advance the psychological aspects of women who want to start running MSMEs, as well as the skills to overcome challenges and barriers in the process of looking for opportunities, growing a business, and exiting it. In addition, the need for coordination of micro-providers, industry, and trade offices to increase the productivity of gender-responsive MSMEs in Jambi City was also strengthened by launching promotions to awaken an entrepreneurial spirit in developing sustainable MSMEs.

8. Limitations of the study

Although this research has some importance, it also has some weaknesses in that it only covers a limited area of Jambi, a city in Indonesia. Future research should focus on other areas of Indonesia to provide a more comprehensive and in-depth comparative picture of women in MSMEs.

Author contributions: Conceptualization, H and MR; methodology, DH and NG; software, MR; validation, NG and H; formal analysis, H and AO; investigation, AO; resources, H and NG; data curation, MR; writing—original draft preparation, H and NG; writing—review and editing, H and NG; visualization, H; supervision, H; project administration, DH; funding acquisition, H. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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Article

Structural equation models in proactive coping, organizational resource and work engagement of Chinese social workers

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Abstract: Proactive coping behavior has been considered an important personal job resource for employees. Organizations have paid considerable attention to the proactive coping behavior of employees to maintain their competitive advantage. The purpose of the current study is to discover the relationship between organizational job resources, work engagement, and proactive coping using structural equation modeling. The participants were 340 licensed Chinese social workers. In the rapidly growing social work sector in China, social work organizations require psychologically connected and dedicated social workers. Findings include the effect of organizational job resources and work engagement on proactive coping. Based on the results, impacts on organizational management are discussed.

Keywords: proactive coping; social worker; organizational job resources; work engagement; mainland China

1. Introduction

Proactive coping is a kind of personal job resource that helps mitigate the negative effects of job demands (Demerouti et al., 2001). The Job Demand and Resources Theory (JD-R) suggests paying attention to the efforts employed by employees in facing their job challenges. Engaged employees who hope to enhance their career development will adopt proactive coping (Angelo and Chambel, 2014). In fact, proactive coping involves various job behaviors, such as help-seeking behavior and networking activities (Kalliath and Kalliath, 2013). Proactive coping reflects employees' ability to handle difficult job situations, as previous research has shown a positive relationship between proactive coping behavior and work engagement (Searle and Lee, 2015; Wilke et al., 2019). Moreover, organizational resources play a role in reducing the negative effects of job demands. These resources can include positive feedback, team support, opportunities for job advancement, or financial rewards (Salanova et al., 2006). Proactive coping and organizational resources are important factors in managing job demands and minimizing their negative impact on individuals.

In the Chinese social work setting, social workers face various difficulties, including low job security, a heavy workload, low job satisfaction, and low public acceptance (Lei et al., 2018; Mo and Ho, 2021; Porfeli and Savickas ML, 2012). These challenges have negative effects on social workers' well-being and job performance. It is important to find ways to improve their work conditions and reduce the negative impact of job demands. Previous studies have highlighted the importance of organizational resources and their relationship with job performance, work

engagement, self-care, and job satisfaction (Mo, 2022). However, there is limited research on the individual proactive coping behaviors of Chinese social workers. It is necessary to study the proactive behavior of social workers in the context of Chinese social work because of the following reasons: a) The problem of the turnover of social workers in China is serious, and many studies have tried to explore ways to retain social workers (Su and Ng, 2019). How to increase the proactive coping behavior of Chinese social workers and how to help them engage in proactive behavior may be an effective solution; b) The development of social work in China has lasted for more than ten years, and more and more studies have begun to care about the career planning and personal growth of social workers (Mo, 2022); c) The development of social work in China has gradually expanded to remote areas and rural areas. The types of social work services are becoming more and more diversified (Jian et al., 2023); thus, the rapid development of social work services has given social workers more job opportunities, and social workers can use proactive behavior to give themselves more work options.

Overall, the study aims to fill the research gap by examining the relationship between organizational job resources and proactive coping among Chinese social workers. It also explores whether work engagement enhances proactive coping behavior. The findings of this study will contribute to understanding the factors that facilitate proactive coping. In the current study, proactive coping is chosen as the personal resource since previous studies have discovered that there is a positive relationship between proactive coping and work engagement (Searle and Lee, 2015; Wilke et al., 2019). Proactive coping reflects employees' personal confidence about their abilities to cope with difficult job situations and their optimistic attitude about their future career development (Xanthopoulou et al., 2007). The current study aims to address the research gap regarding the relationship between organizational job resources and proactive coping behavior in the context of Chinese social work. It also seeks to explore whether work engagement enhances proactive coping behavior among Chinese social workers.

2. Literature review

2.1. Understanding job resources

Job resources encompass organizational resources and personal resources under the Job Demands-Resources model (JD-R), which explains the balance between job demands and job resources (Demerouti et al., 2001; Bakker and Demerouti, 2017). According to the model, job resources help reduce stress and the negative effects of job demands (Demerouti et al., 2019; Schaufeli and Taris, 2014). Job resources include organizational resources like feedback from supervisors, peer support, and teamwork arrangements. These resources enhance successful adaptation to job challenges and reduce job stress (Salanova et al., 2006; Xanthopoulou et al., 2007; Bakker and Demerouti, 2017). A past study about home care workers discovered that job resources increase work motivation and enhance their professional efficacy (Bakker and Albrecht, 2018). Although they experience job burnout, they feel support in the human resource systems, such as supervisory support and positive relationships with upper-

level management (Beckstrand et al., 2017; Radey and Wilke, 2021). Similarly, Chinese social workers who are working in family services also benefit from job resources, which predict their organizational commitment and buffer the effects of heavy workloads (Luo and Lei, 2021; Su and Ng, 2019).

In addition to organizational resources, personal resources like self-efficacy, resilience, personality traits, optimism, family support, and proactive coping have been identified as moderators of the effects of work demands on burnout and work engagement (Searle and Lee, 2015; Geisler et al., 2019; Holman and Axtell, 2016). In particular, employees who adopt proactive coping behave in a more innovative way in handling their job challenges (Kwon and Kim, 2020). Past studies suggest that child welfare workers who adopt proactive coping have better psychological well-being (Wilke et al., 2019; Lee and Cho, 2020). Moreover, social workers who adopt proactive coping can achieve good work-life balance and enhance job flexibility (Kalliath and Kalliath, 2013; Searle and Lee, 2015; Wilke et al., 2019). The JD-R model suggests that proactive behavior is the result of high job resources and high job demands (Kwon and Kim, 2020). Engaged employees often adopt proactive coping in the workplace. Proactive coping is a valuable personal resource and an effective strategy for dealing with job stressors (Demerouti et al., 2019). Proactive coping involves employees' efforts to build personal job resources that support career growth and advancement (Angelo and Chambel, 2014; Demerouti et al., 2019).

In the context of Chinese social work, local studies have shown that social workers perceive their job as meaningful, but they experience a high level of job stress (Mo and Ho, 2021). The JD-R model has been applied in these studies to explore job demands and resources among Chinese social workers, investigating various types of job resources such as job autonomy, team support, collective psychological ownership, and mindfulness intervention (Su and Ng, 2019; Luo and Lei, 2021; Huang et al., 2021; Zhang and He, 2022). However, the exploration of proactive coping as a personal job resource remains limited. Therefore, the current study focuses on proactive coping as a personal resource and examines its relationship with work engagement among Chinese social workers.

2.2. Relationship between proactive coping and work engagement

Work engagement is a concept reflecting the level of an employee's dedication to their jobs (Bakker and Albrecht, 2018). Engaged workers show better work performance, and they have more creative ideas (Cartwright and Cooper, 2014; Panthee et al., 2014). Past studies have explored the predictors of work engagement, for example, human resources practices, leadership, and organizational-level resources (Holman and Axtell, 2016; Panthee et al., 2014). Health workers who have higher work engagement will have a lower level of job burnout (Fong and Ng, 2012). Interventions such as job crafting will lead to more job resources, higher levels of work engagement, and improved performance (Gordon et al., 2017). International studies explain that work engagement encompasses workers' participation, energy, and efficacy (Kahn, 1990; Maslach and Leiter, 1997). An engaged employee has a higher level of work energy and organizational commitment (Fong and Ng, 2012). Work

engagement also brings benefits to the mental, physical, and social well-being of employees in the workplace (Seppälä et al., 2012; World Health Organization, 2004).

In the rapidly growing social work sector in China, social work organizations require psychologically connected and dedicated social workers (Wong, 2020). Employees' belief in their ability to meet challenges is crucial in this context (Xanthopoulou et al., 2007). Using career construction theory, proactive coping is viewed as an important coping behaviour in response to a rapidly changing working environment (Porfeli and Savickas, 2012). International studies suggest that proactive coping mediates the relationship between challenging work stressors and work engagement (Searle and Lee, 2015). Using JD-R theory, employers can provide job resources to enhance work engagement and job performance (Bakker and Demerouti, 2017). The provision of organizational support will enhance the job performance of Chinese social workers, and they have a higher intention to achieve career success (Mo and Ho, 2021). However, local studies often focus on the provision of organizational resources as a means to enhance work engagement; little is known about the relationship between proactive coping and work engagement among Chinese social workers.

2.3. Conceptual framework

Proactive coping refers to individual job resources that reflect employees' confidence, willingness, and abilities to actively cope with difficult job situations (Xanthopoulou et al., 2007). It encompasses various behaviors such as building human capital, influencing, networking, seeking help, career development, and job mobility (Kim et al., 2018; Sturges et al., 2010; Wilhelm and Hirschi, 2019). Previous studies in occupational health psychology have found a relationship between proactive coping and subjective perceptions of job difficulties and stress (Gillespie and Gates, 2013). Proactive coping also serves as a preventive measure against future job stress and helps reduce its impact (Aspinwall, 2011). Work engagement is defined as a fulfilling emotional state related to the job, characterized by absorption, vigor, and dedication (Schaufeli and Taris, 2014; Schaufeli et al., 2006). Absorption refers to complete immersion in one's work, while vigor represents a willingness to invest personal effort, energy, and time. Dedication reflects an employee's enthusiastic involvement in their job. In this study, it is hypothesized that work engagement and proactive coping have a negative relationship, as a higher level of proactive coping is required to handle job difficulties, resulting in lower work engagement due to high job demands.

Organizational job resources are supportive resources provided within an organization's human resources system. These resources include different kinds of career support, the provision of career-related training and information, performance feedback, advancement opportunities, salary, and staff benefits (Beckstrand et al., 2017; Radey and Wilke, 2021). Previous research has shown that support from leaders, supervisors, and career development opportunities increases employees' likelihood of achieving career goals and investing effort in their job (Bakker and Demerouti, 2017; Schaufeli et al., 2006). It is hypothesized that organizational job resources play a motivational role in enhancing the proactive coping behaviors of social workers. In a

supportive work environment, social workers are more likely to take an active approach to exploring their career paths and developing their careers. Therefore, organizational job resources are expected to have a significant positive relationship with the proactive coping behaviors of social workers. It is further hypothesized that social workers who engage in proactive coping behaviors will perceive organizational job resources as highly important and actively utilize them for their career development.

Based on the literature review, the hypotheses are set as follows:

- H1: A significant positive relationship is found between social workers who engage in proactive coping behaviors and their perception of organizational job resources.
- H2: A significant positive relationship is found between social workers who engage in proactive coping behaviors and their work engagement.

3. Methods

3.1. Sampling procedures

In the current study, a representative sampling method was employed to recruit a small pool of social workers who shared similar traits and attributes as the entire population. These participants were selected from the attendees of a national-level supervisor training program. The sample included social workers from different age groups, ranging from 20 to above 61, and from six regions in China, including the east, south, northeast, middle, southwest, and northwest regions. This representative sample aimed to capture the characteristics of social workers across different regions. The supervisory program, organized by the Institute of Social Service Development and the National Social Workers' Association, offered both classroom face-to-face training and online training modes. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the online mode was predominantly used to accommodate social workers from anywhere. The program covered advanced social work knowledge and skills, as well as supervision and management knowledge. The trainers were experienced social work experts with at least five years of frontline or management experience. The supervisory program consisted of eight subject areas and a total of 47 hours of learning. To be eligible for the program, social workers were required to have a minimum of three years of frontline social work experience or be currently working as a social work manager. Prior to data collection, the researchers obtained approval from the program organizers and sent an invitation letter to the supervisory program participants, explaining the study's objectives and data protection procedures. The first phase of the data collection period lasted for approximately six months, during which participants voluntarily completed an anonymous online survey. To prevent multiple responses from the same participant, response tracking was implemented within the survey platform. A total of 340 questionnaires were collected, resulting in a response rate of around 85%. The study received ethical approval from the Research Ethics Review Committee of the author's previous employer.

3.2. Measurement

The questionnaire consisted of four parts.

Demographic variables include age, gender, job position, work experience, location, and service area. The location is based on the textbook “New Chinese Physical Geography/Teaching Materials for Colleges and Universities” (Zhao et al., 2015), which was commonly used by teachers and students majoring in geography in colleges and universities.

Organizational job resources: adopted organizational job resource scale (Baruch and Peiperl, 2000), which includes 11 job resources such as opportunities for career development, support from supervisors and team building, performance appraisal, job training, and support from upper-level management. These job resources were available in Chinese social work organizations. Sample questions were, “What is your perceived importance of supervision provided by your organization?” “What is your perceived importance of career information provided by your organization?” The responses were rated on a five-point Likert-type scale, ranging from one to five points, from totally not important to totally important.

Work engagement: adopted a shortened version of the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004), which has nine items. The scale has good internal consistency and test-retest reliability (Fong and Ng, 2012; Schaufeli et al., 2006; Balducci et al., 2010). The Utrecht Work Engagement Scale preliminary manual provided a Chinese version. The scale measures vigor (3 items), dedication (3 items), and absorption (3 items). Sample questions include “I am enthusiastic about my job” (dedication), “At my job, I feel strong and vigorous” (vigor), and “When I am working, I forget everything else around me” (absorption). The responses were rated on a Likert scale ranging from zero (“never”) to six (“always”).

Proactive coping: The Adopted Career Self-Management Scale (Sturges et al., 2010) with nine items was selected to measure proactive coping behaviors. The items chosen were suitable for the social work context in China. Sample questions were, “I will take the initiative to introduce myself to people who have an impact on my career.” “I will build good relationships with people I work with in the workplace.” The responses were rated on a 5-point Likert-type scale, ranging from one (strongly disagree) to five (strongly agree).

3.3. Statistical analysis

Frequency statistical analysis was done to examine the sample structure. Exploratory factor analysis tested the factor structure of proactive coping, organizational job resources, and work engagement. Path analysis was conducted to explain the causal relationships among variables. Structural equation modelling was used to test the relationship between observed variables and their latent constructs. The model fit index was used to assess model performance, with indices calculated for the overall goodness of fit. According to the model fit index, the value of Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) was set at 0.06 or below, and the Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Goodness-of-Fit (GFI) and Bentler-Bonnet Normed Fit Index (NFI) were above 0.9, indicating a satisfactory fit.

4. Results

4.1. Descriptive statistics

Table 1 presents the demographic statistics of the respondents (N = 340). The majority of the participants were female (76.5%) and male (23.5%). The age range of the participants was 20–30 (27.9%), 31–40 (45.9%), 41–50 (21.1%), 51–60 (4.7%), and 61 or above (0.4%). More participants were from north and northeast China (9.1%), east China (29.7%), middle China (9.1%), south China (44.4%), southwest China (5.3%), and northwest China (2.4%). Frontline social workers (12.4%), center-in-charge (27.6%), group leader (22.1%), supervisor (7.6%), headquarters administrator (20.6%), and another administrative role (9.7%). In terms of working experience, 42.6% of them had social work working experiences below 3 years. All of them were licensed social workers.

Table 1. Demographic variables.

	Item	%
Gender	Male	23.5
	Female	76.5
Age	20–30	27.9
	31–40	45.9
	41–50	21.1
	51–60	4.7
	61 or above	0.4
	3 years or below	42.6
Social work working experiences	5 to 8 years	39.4
	9 years or above	18.0
Job position	Frontline social worker	12.4
	Centre in charge	27.6
	Group leader	22.1
	Supervisor	7.6
	Headquarter administrator	20.6
	Another administrative role	9.7
	North and Northeast China	9.1
Region	East China	29.7
	Middle China	9.1
	South China	44.4
	Southwest China	5.3
	Northwest China	2.4

4.2. Factor analysis

Table 2 presents the factor analysis of the three variables, namely proactive coping (PC), work engagement (WE), and organizational job resources (OR). Principal component analysis with Varimax rotation revealed three components with eigenvalues greater than one, which explained 34.6%, 19.7%, and 11.2% of the total

variance, respectively. Factor 1 labeled “organizational job resources” (OR) (11 items with loadings from 0.796 to 0.883). Factor 2 is labeled “work engagement” (WE) (9 items with loadings from 0.701 to 0.848). Factor 3 is labeled “proactive coping” (PC) (9 items with loadings from 0.638 to 0.796). The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy was 0.925, indicating that there were sufficient items for each factor. A visual inspection of the scree plot for all variables revealed that the components could be used. The probability associated with the Bartlett test for all variables was $p < 0.001$. The diagonals of the anti-image correlation matrix were all over 0.5. The Cronbach’s alpha of the respective scales is “proactive coping” ($\alpha = 0.898$), “work engagement” ($\alpha = 0.924$), and “organizational job resources” ($\alpha = 0.964$). The Cronbach alpha level of the three scales indicated that the internal consistency of the measures was good.

Table 2. Factor analysis.

	Factor		
	1	2	3
OR5	0.883	−0.015	0.195
OR6	0.871	−0.024	0.142
OR8	0.856	−0.080	0.194
OR10	0.854	−0.007	0.200
OR7	0.847	−0.023	0.110
OR4	0.846	−0.050	0.124
OR3	0.846	−0.045	0.124
OR9	0.825	0.066	0.202
OR2	0.822	−0.032	0.178
OR1	0.804	−0.035	0.192
OR11	0.796	−0.008	0.209
WE8	−0.035	0.848	−0.157
WE4	−0.085	0.844	−0.057
WE3	−0.052	0.841	−0.082
WE2	−0.050	0.810	−0.015
WE9	0.004	0.796	0.003
WE7	−0.046	0.789	−0.168
WE1	−0.030	0.753	−0.045
WE6	0.010	0.701	−0.055
WE5	0.074	0.701	−0.119
PC4	0.175	−0.056	0.796
PC1	0.148	−0.118	0.791
PC3	0.182	0.063	0.783
PC6	0.239	−0.056	0.742
PC5	0.218	−0.054	0.726
PC15	0.204	0.062	0.706
PC12	0.175	−0.213	0.679
PC16	0.161	−0.174	0.640
PC2	0.146	−0.218	0.638

Extraction method: Principal component analysis. a. Five components with varimax rotation.

4.3. Structural equation modeling

First, structural equation modeling was used to test hypothesis 1. The results indicated that the model fitted the data well with $\chi^2/df = 2.117$, CFI = 0.972, NFI = 0.948, GFI = 0.919, RMSEA = 0.057, and PCLOSE = 0.085. The probability of getting a critical ratio as large as 7.771 in absolute value is less than 0.001. In other words, the regression weight for job resources in the prediction of proactive coping is significantly different from zero at the 0.001 level (two-tailed). Inspection of path coefficients revealed that when job resources go up by 1 standard deviation, proactive coping goes up by 0.459 standard deviations. The results indicated that H1: A significant positive relationship is found between social workers who engage in proactive coping behaviors and their perception of organizational job resources.

Second, structural equation modeling was used to test hypothesis 2. The results indicated that the model fitted the data well with $\chi^2/df = 1.938$, CFI = 0.97, NFI = 0.941, GFI = 0.97, RMSEA = 0.053, and PCLOSE = 0.347. The probability of getting a critical ratio as large as 3.128 in absolute value is less than 0.001. In other words, the regression weight for work engagement in the prediction of proactive coping is significantly different from zero at the 0.001 level (two-tailed). Inspection of path coefficients revealed that when work engagement goes up by 1 standard deviation, proactive coping goes down by 0.194 standard deviations. The results indicated that H2: A significant positive relationship is found between social workers who engage in proactive coping behaviors and their work engagement.

4.4. Discussion and implications

The current study aims to address the research gap regarding the relationship between organizational job resources and proactive coping behavior in the context of Chinese social work. It also seeks to explore whether work engagement enhances proactive coping behavior among Chinese social workers. The results supported the two hypotheses: H1: A significant positive relationship is found between social workers who engage in proactive coping behaviors and their perception of organizational job resources; and H2: A significant positive relationship is found between social workers who engage in proactive coping behaviors and their work engagement.

The results highlight that proactive coping is a personal job resource that has a significant relationship with organizational job resources and work engagement. In line with past local studies, Chinese social workers have confidence and a willingness to actively cope with difficult job situations (Xanthopoulou et al., 2007). The various proactive behaviors adopted by Chinese social workers, such as building human capital, influencing, networking, help seeking, and career development, support them in facing difficult job situations (Kim et al., 2018; Sturges et al., 2010; Wilhelm and Hirschi, 2019). Proactive coping and work engagement show a negative relationship, as a lower level of work engagement reflects a higher level of job difficulties, resulting in more proactive coping being required to cope with the job challenges. However, the current study does not explore the relationship between proactive coping and job stress; this can be explored in future studies.

Previous JD-R studies reveal that engaged social workers use their personal resources to act in opposition to excessive job demands (Yucel et al., 2023). Work engagement contributes to retaining social workers and reducing turnover (Geisler et al., 2019). The result of the current study provides empirical evidence of the significant negative relationship between work engagement and proactive behaviors. This result can be explained by the fact that when social workers feel their work engagement is at a low level, they soon realize there is a problem and they need to take action to deal with it. Thus, proactive coping behaviors such as networking behaviors, influencing behaviors, action for building human capital, job mobility behaviors, career development behaviors, and searching for informational or emotional support can be considered a kind of self-regulation mechanism. Hence, proactive coping behaviors are self-regulation strategies employed toward the management of job stress and challenges (Searle and Lee, 2015). This implies that proactive coping behavior reflects an employee's abilities to handle job challenges (Gillespie and Gates, 2013). Proactive coping behaviors are related to a reaction to the subjective perception of immediate danger and crisis encountered by employees (Gillespie and Gates, 2013). It also represents a response to the impacts caused by work stress (Reuter and Schwarzer, 2011). Previous studies have discovered that proactive coping acts as a moderator of the effects of job demand on work engagement and job burnout (Searle and Lee, 2015). A future local study can further investigate the relationship between proactive coping behavior among Chinese social workers and other work-related issues such as job stress, burnout, and job satisfaction.

Organizational job resources serve as an important motivator of proactive coping, as confirmed in the current study. The JD-R model explains that supportive resources provided within an organization's human resources system increase employees' likelihood of achieving career goals and adopting proactive coping behaviors (Bakker and Demerouti, 2017; Chan and Lei, 2017; Chan, 2016). The results of the current study are consistent with international studies showing that organizational job resources are perceived as important by Chinese social workers, and they will take an active approach to developing their careers if organizations provide them with enough and suitable organizational resources. Thus, social work organizations or social worker-employing agencies are recommended to pay attention to the proactive coping of their social work practitioners. Social work managers can expect their social workers to take a more proactive role in their career development. Consistent with positive organizational scholarship, social work managers are recommended to offer positive organizational processes and human resource management practices that facilitate the proactive coping of social workers (Cartwright and Cooper, 2014).

The theoretical contributions of the current study are twofold. First, the current study aims to investigate the role of proactive coping as a personal resource based on the JD-R model. The study supports the relationship between proactive coping and work engagement among Chinese social workers. Moreover, the study supports the hypothesis that organizational job resources have a significant positive relationship with the proactive coping of Chinese social workers. The results extend the JD-R model by considering proactive coping as a meaningful and useful personal resource. Additionally, organizational resources can offer additional support to social workers when they are using proactive behaviors to cope with their stress and job difficulties.

Second, the current study considers proacting coping as a self-regulation strategy, and this further integrates JD-R theory with self-regulation theory to show how stressful working situations lower work engagement and translate social workers' efforts into proactive coping strategies. Thus, the study confirms that JD-R theory and self-regulation can be combined to understand the relationship between job strain and failed self-regulation (Bakker and De Vries, 2021; Mo et al., 2022; Mo and Chan, 2021).

5. Conclusions

To conclude, the JD-R model is used in the current study, which examines the relationship between proactive coping, organizational job resources, and work engagement. In line with the JD-R theory and self-regulation theory, Chinese social workers employ proactive coping to cope with difficult job demands and situations that lower their work engagement. Proactive coping can be viewed as a form of self-regulation. In the future, proactive coping can be further investigated to see its relationship with other job-related outcomes such as job burnout, job satisfaction, and job strain.

Finally, the limitations of the current study include: a) The scope of the current study is limited to social workers only; thus, the replication of the study should consider employees of other industries to see whether the results can be generalized to other work sectors; b) The data of the current study is only based on samples from a national supervisor training, and for more generalizability, another study is recommended to see whether the proposed model can work with another sample structure; c) The current study only examines the relationship between three variables, and other factors such as organizational culture or societal factors are ignored. A future study is recommended to test whether the proposed model can work with other factors.

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Article

Is there a need for employee protection processes in U.S. organizations today? A comparative study to assess the progress of procedural and distributive justice systems today versus unionization

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Abstract: This research study was undertaken to complete a comparative study of the seminal work conducted by Anderson and Ruderman on procedural and distributive justice systems versus unionization. This research was conducted in 2023. The main focus of this research effort was to determine if current U.S. organizations were utilizing any form of justice system in protecting employees' rights and providing processes that would prevent employees from having a desire to join a union for its protections. Parts of the original survey used by Anderson and Ruderman were used in this study to address the research questions and hypotheses posed for this study. A statistical analysis of the data was conducted, and the results indicated employees have a need for protection in their employment relationship. It is suggested that procedural and distributive justice systems be implemented as an alternative to unionization of employees to meet these employee protections.

Keywords: procedural justice; distributive justice; unions; employee relations; human resources management

1. Introduction

A major disruption in the U.S. workforce, associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, was the "Great Resignation" phenomenon, which has received significant attention. This phenomenon, whose moniker was coined by Anthony Klotz, involves record rates of job quitting during the pandemic (Klotz et al., 2020). As noted by Klotz, return-to-office mandates, attractive job offers from competing employers, and revelations about better work-life balance have motivated a "record-breaking departure from jobs in a shockingly small window of time. According to a global survey of 4000 companies and more than 9 million employee records, a recent study found that resignations increased the fastest among Millennial employees (i.e., those between 30 and 45 years of age). These resignations have also been attributed to people making changes to their work-life balance (Miller and Jhamb, 2022). There could also be critical factors that create reasons for employees to leave in the form of a lack of human resource management (HRM) systems that provide employee protections or having a "voice" in what they accomplish or how they perform their work, how employees are evaluated and rewarded for that work, and what protections they might have from unjustified discipline up to and including terminations of their jobs (Miller and Jhamb, 2022).

Given that U.S. employees see the need for employee protections as stated here, and the lack of those protections presently creates the need for research into what is being provided by their employers in the form of employee fairness systems, This

research is being conducted to examine if procedural and distributive justice systems in U.S. organizations exist or, in their absence, determine if they could be a major reason to provide employee protections that might deter unionization as well as reduce the causes for the Great Resignation that continues in the U.S. in the form of employee actions such as turnover, employee performance, and perceived fairness within their organizations.

2. Literature review

One of the earliest research studies on employee protectionism was conducted by Barnard (1938), who identified employee fairness as one of the fundamental bases of cooperative action in organizations in his research. Most of the original research on fairness, whether conducted in controlled laboratories or in actual industrial settings, has given some disproportionate emphasis to questions on distributive justice, which created, underestimated, and ignored the role of procedural justice in social behavior in private organizations in the U.S. (Alexander and Ruderman, 1987).

One study on the future of work explored the potential effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on “American ‘workism’”, observing that, compared with men, women are leaving the workforce more rapidly and in larger numbers for a variety of reasons, including gaining access to childcare and providing care for family. However, research conducted prior to the pandemic shows that hires, job openings, and quits all reached new highs in 2018. This finding certainly challenges the notion that the Great Recession could be attributed to all of this turnover up to and during the pandemic. This phenomenon of historical employee turnover demands empirical investigation that would determine the major causes of this attrition. One could surmise there were other forces working to cause employees to leave their jobs in record numbers (Miller, A., Jhamb, S., 2022).

The construct of fairness in the employee work environment has been a constant thread in the research as it relates to why people resigned their employment and sought better working conditions, as noted in the literature (Klotz et al., 2020). Coupled with the Great Resignation, some of the most dramatic recent union wins have occurred, such as the first Starbucks stores where unionization votes succeeded in 2021 and where the warehouse employees who created the Independent Amazon Labor Union famously won an election in April 2022. Research into the analysis of the reasons provided for the need for such unionization determined the lack of fairness and the need for a “voice” in the work environment and the working conditions, including wages, benefits, and work hours, among similar factors (Milkman and van der Naald, 2022).

The Great Resignation along with increased unionization actions indicate there are reasons for both that have almost identical desired outcomes for employees, and that is the protection of procedural and distributive justice in the workplace (Klotz et al., 2020).

Work environment fairness is a concern for most employees in their personal lives (Miller, 2001), as well as during their careers at work. Organizational justice (also known as organizational fairness) is composed of three types of justice, which include procedural justice, distributive justice, and interactional justice (Cohen-

Charash and Spector, 2001). This study is focused on procedural and distributive justice, which focuses on the perceptions an employee has concerning the policies and procedures administered by an organization that impact them (Konovsky, 2000; He et al., 2014). Research has shown that procedural justice is a factor that motivates employee cooperative behavior and enhances job-related performance (Aryee et al., 2004; Cohen-Charash and Spector, 2001; He et al., 2014). Distributive justice, however, refers to the fairness of outcomes employees receive (Adams, 1965; Cropanzano et al., 2002), and this is critical to how employees react if there are no protective systems in place.

This is a brief summary of the problem that we are studying and why this is an important topic to study and conduct research on. The purpose is to determine what, if anything, is being done to provide employees with the protections that unions historically have provided. The approach to this study, to create a baseline toward further extensive work with a future full replication study in this area, is this pilot program replication study, to determine if we could replicate results, in the form of a comparison today, of an original Table 1, focused on exogenous variables from a study on procedural justice and distributive justice, published in 1987 (Alexander and Ruderman, 1987), or 36 years prior to this study.

2.1. What is procedural and distributive justice?

Two dimensions of workplace justice are distributive and procedural. Distributive justice describes the distribution of resources and the criteria used to determine the outcomes of resource allocation decisions. In contrast, procedural justice is concerned with the extent to which perceptions about the fairness of outcomes in organizations are based on the processes and procedures used to determine these outcomes (Folger and Greenberg, 1985).

The study of distributive justice focuses on the fairness of rewards (or punishments) issued to an employee by their employer. The study of procedural justice focuses on the fairness of the rules and procedures by which rewards are distributed. In work environments, this could be described as the allocation of tasks as part of the overall job itself, as well as the rewards or punishments that come with the successful completion and attainment of meeting the job goals, which must be considered in examining procedural and distributive justice and fairness. The distinction made between procedural and distributive justice can be defined as those processes (means) and outcomes (ends). In order for one to understand the role of perceived fairness or judgments of justice in human interaction, there must be an examination of means as well as outcomes. This would be required of these perceptions in the study of organizations of all sizes (Alexander and Ruderman, 1987).

Procedural justice is directly associated with the concept of workplace fairness. This relationship is particularly relevant to the perceived fairness and transparency of the procedures used in decision-making (Karkoulian et al., 2016). Studies have shown a direct relationship between fairness and favorable employee outcomes, such as innovative work behaviors (Khaola and Coldwell, 2019), job satisfaction (Quratulain et al., 2019; Choi, 2011; Rubin, 2009), intrinsic motivation (Oh and Lewis, 2009), and organizational commitment (Cohen-Charash and Spector, 2001; Rubin, 2009;

Quratulain et al., 2019). Therefore, an absence of procedural justice or fairness could lead to unethical or harmful behaviors, such as employee retaliation (Skarlicki et al., 2008), employee revenge (Jones, 2009), and counterproductive work behaviors (Afghan et al., 2018). Gharbi et al. (2022) found that procedural justice is necessary for any organization, and when it is lacking, it is one of the major causes of turnover.

Studies have shown that leaders with characteristics that reflect or enhance other-serving motives such as agreeableness, conscientiousness (Mayer et al., 2007), moral identity (Brebels et al., 2011), status (Blader and Chen, 2012), and empathy (Cornelis et al., 2013) are relatively likely to serve the needs of their followers by enacting procedural justice. Other studies suggest that leaders enact procedural justice if they perceive their followers to have needs for control and belongingness (Cornelis et al., 2012; Cornelis et al., 2013; Hoogervorst et al., 2013). Finally, research shows that leaders enact procedural justice to facilitate organizational effectiveness because it stimulates employee compliance (Scott et al., 2014; Zhao et al., 2015).

In public sector and civil service positions, management since the 1970s has sought to provide new flexibilities for their managers, particularly in relation to the performance management of employees. General statutes passed by many U.S. states have been consistent with this trend. County and state employees report that these managerial flexibilities are designed to decrease perceptions of fairness. At the federal level, personnel reforms in the U.S. Department of Defense have also sought to increase managerial discretion. The leadership of the Department of Defense identified employee perceptions of fairness as key to the successful implementation of the evaluation and performance systems. The U.S. Office of Personnel Management surveys covering a 10-year period were analyzed, with results indicating that managers' and employees' perceptions of procedural justice were different over that time period, and these perceptions changed in different ways in response to the reforms (Rubin and Weinberg, 2016).

Research also indicates that a high measure of procedural justice provides two vital indicators about group memberships. Individual members are valued and respected, and they feel pride in the group as a whole (Lind and Tyler, 1988). Therefore, when employees feel they are treated fairly as a group, those individuals are more willing to accept any decisions and outcomes that affect the group and the procedures they must follow. They will comply with group rules and laws, identify more closely their status as an employee and group member, and help the group and other group members perform at high levels (Restubog et al., 2008; Tyler et al., 1996; He et al., 2014).

As early as 2005, inequality was reaching its peak before the Great Recession, and that highly unequal balance between worker and employer continues to grow at an even faster pace today. So, the question of what would create support from the public and from workers in times of sharp inequality is timely and worth considering (Fiorito and Padavic, 2022). Consistent with other procedural justice theoretical studies, researchers have suggested that greater autonomy leads to greater commitment and improved performance (Mumford and Henshall, 1979; Mumford et al., 1983; Ives and Olson, 1984; etc.).

Hunton and Price's (1997) experiments supported procedural justice theory for autonomy and employee commitment. Mirchandani and Lederer's (2014) research

also supported a direct correlation between procedural justice and autonomy as a direct mediator of employee commitment and loyalty, which directly leads to reduced employee turnover for organizations.

2.2. How does distributive and procedural justice systems exist in unionized organizations

In a union work environment, workplace justice is established through contractual grievance and arbitration procedures. The importance of the grievance system in union member relations was highlighted by Gordon and Fryxell (1993). They claimed that a union's relationship with its members is tied much more closely to the procedural and distributive justice systems afforded by its representation in the grievance system than by any other type of benefit provided in the collective bargaining agreement. The outcomes of workplace justice, therefore supported and protected by a contractual grievance and arbitration system, have been examined based on union employees and their attitudes toward employee protections (Gordon and Fryxell, 1993). Procedural justice has been shown to be more strongly related to union attitudes by employees than distributive justice (Clark et al., 1990; Eaton et al., 1992; Fryxell and Gordon, 1989).

Why has private sector union participation fallen away so much in the U.S. since the late 1950's? Schaller (2022) examined National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) representation elections, and his research provides evidence that import penetration accounts for approximately 40 percent of the decline in union formation for U.S. manufacturing. This estimate translates to 4.6 percent of the decline in private sector union density. This is driven by trade with low-income countries and, to some extent, other high-income countries. China, with its strong import growth since 2000, accounts for about 12 percentage points of the total decline.

So, the decline in unionization has not come from a lack of desire for employees to receive fairness and justice from employers. This is evident with the unionization of retail giants such as Starbucks and Amazon. The National Labor Relations Board reported a 57% increase in union election petitions filed during the first six months of fiscal year 2021 (Gallup, 2022).

Those union campaigns indicated the reasons for the need for unions and why they were important to employees were better pay and benefits (65%) and employee rights and representation (57%). More than a third of union members cite job security (42%) and better pension and retirement benefits (34%) as reasons for joining a labor union. Meanwhile, about one in four people list improving the work environment (25%) and fairness and equality at work (23%) (Gallup, 2022).

A recent study by Gallup (August 30, 2022) shows that seventy-one percent of Americans now approve of labor unions. Although statistically similar to last year's 68%, it is up from 64% before the pandemic and is the highest Gallup has recorded on this measure since 1965. The National Labor Relations Board reported a 57% increase in union election petitions filed during the first six months of fiscal year 2021 (see **Figure 1**).

As stated in the literature, unionization attempts are on the rise more than at any time in the past sixty years due to the lack of procedural and distributive justice systems provided by organizations.

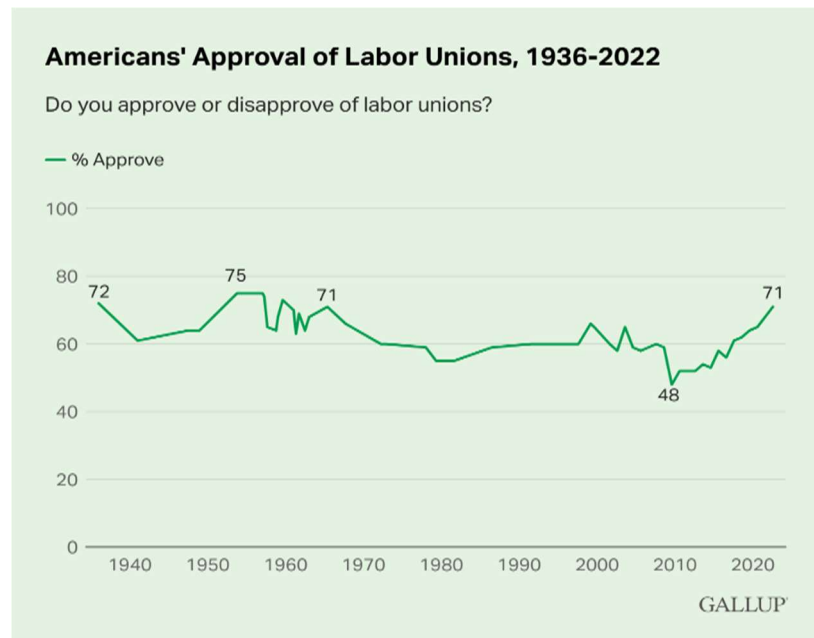


Figure 1. Gallup annual work and education survey, 1–23 August 2022.

One of the areas of this research ties the nonexistence of procedural and distributive justice systems to potentially why there has been a marked increase in successful union organizing drives that recently occurred at both Starbucks and Amazon, as well as in other organizations. Why is there a need for unions there? What caused employees to join unions, especially at Starbucks, since they have always touted having a “family” work environment?

Current research on procedural and distributive justice systems in U.S. organizations is sparse. Therefore, a complete picture of procedural and distributive justice systems or their equivalent in employee fairness requires studying how the enactment of procedural justice can serve the self-interests of organizations in lieu of unionization attempts. Leaders of modern organizations would find this of business interest in sustaining their workforce in a positive manner. To address this research gap, we will further the research conducted by Alexander and Ruderman (1987) with our pilot program replication study.

This research contributes to the existing literature in the following ways: it will provide an examination of how procedural and distributive justice systems can neutralize employees’ desires to unionize; it will provide evidence of how procedural and distributive justice systems can reduce employee turnover and improve employee performance; it can provide HRM with processes to address employee complaints; and it may help resolve issues over employee discipline and terminations.

The following conceptual model of the research, based on the literature review, is provided.

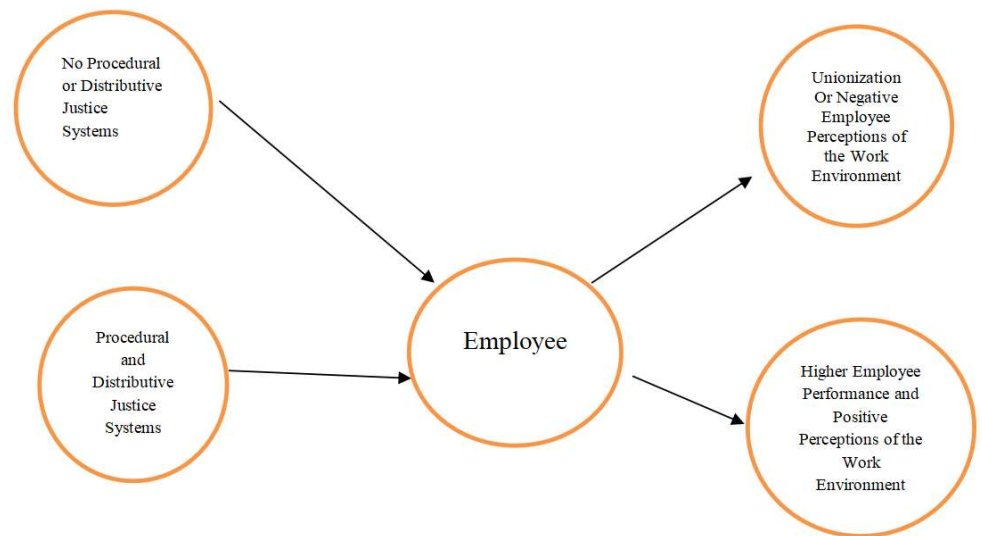


Figure 2. Initial conceptual model of this research study.

3. Methodology

3.1. Procedure

In 2023, a questionnaire was administered to collect baseline data for this pilot program replication study assessing employee perceptions of personnel and work environment procedures. Respondents were informed about the survey and the purposes of the study prior to the survey administration. Questionnaires were administered to respondents both in person and online using email from the researchers. Survey respondents were assured that their responses would be kept confidential. Participation in the survey was voluntary.

3.2. Survey instrument

The survey is taken from the work done by Alexander and Ruderman (1987) as well as from the original study conducted by the Michigan Organizational Assessment Questionnaire (MOAQ), developed by Cammann et al. (1983).

The validity and reliability of this survey questionnaire have been confirmed in multiple studies. Included in the survey questionnaire were questions about both specific processes and general attitudes about work. The items on the survey were measured on 7-point scales with Likert-type response options. Sixteen questions from the items in the overall questionnaire were analyzed in this investigation.

There were questions about certain features of how employees perceived fairness in treatment (procedural justice) in this study and their general attitudes about their treatment at work. Only a small portion of the items included in the original questionnaire were analyzed in this investigation.

One type of scale was used: measures of procedural and distributive fairness. This was the main area of replication for the study, and a comparison of the 1987 results will be provided with our 2023 results within **Table 1** in this report.

Table 1. Demographic data of survey respondents.

Age	Ethnic background	Gender	Marital status
18–25 = 2			
26–30 = 19			
31–35 = 8			
36–40 = 10	White = 97		
41–45 = 11	Black = 6	Male = 45	Married = 61
46–55 = 17	Hispanic = 10	Female = 72	Single = 32
51–60 = 12	Asian = 4	Nonbinary = 2	Other = 26
56–60 = 19	American Indian = 2		
61–65 = 12			
66–above = 9			

Fairness measures (predictor or independent variables) used questions about the distributive and procedural aspects of various work activities and policies to constitute the measures of fairness. These are the x-variables, or exogenous variables, at the core of this study.

Some items were taken from the Michigan Organizational Assessment Questionnaire (MOAQ, Cammann et al., 1983). Other items came specifically from the study conducted by Alexander and Ruderman (1987).

3.3. Demographics

The real-world sample for this 2023 study included $n = 119$ participants. **Table 1** shows the demographic groupings.

3.4. Sample

The demographics of this group differ from the original sample in many ways. Unlike the original study, which focused on “approximately 2800 federal government employees” (Alexander and Ruderman, 1987), our participants were from multiple private and non-private organizations, locations, and backgrounds. For the purpose of comparison (see **Table 1**), the original study narrowed the group down, via random down-sampling, to 930 participants. This was possibly due to the lack of computational power required for the calculations for the study when the original study was conducted. This present study, while having the benefit of much more powerful computational power constraints on the number of available sample respondents, as such, to match the 930 participants, random upsampling with replacement was utilized. Two box plots were created and compared to ensure our 930 simulated sample had similar characteristics as our 119 participants.

3.5. Computational software

The integrated development environment (IDE) of RStudio 2023.03.1 Build 446 was utilized with the R Programming Language Version 4.3.0 (2023-04-21)—“Already tomorrow”.

Packages utilized include Psych version 2.3.3 as well as Lavaan 0.6–15. Also, in a supportive role, the packages tidyverse, performance, datawizard, corrplot, and factoextra were used in the study for either computation or visualization. These are the only packages used other than those included with Base R, as an intentional effort was

made to minimize the packages used; they were only selected if essential to the study and the associated methodology workflow.

3.6. Methodology workflow

The methodology workflow was planned out to focus on the minimally accurate steps required to replicate the comparative results in **Table 1** of the original 1987 study, given the collection of data and modernization of computational power available in 2023. As an overview, using R code, this includes the main workflow steps of factorability, determining the correlation matrix, parallel analysis (PA), primary component analysis (PCA), exploratory factor analysis (EFA), and testing Cronbach's alpha. Aspects of data science and visualization were utilized as appropriate within the code.

3.7. Factorability

The data was tested for factorability. This initial assessment of the factor structure of the dataset included three main tests: the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test, the Bartlett's test of sphericity, and a test to ensure positivity for the determinant. The KMO test for the overall measure of sampling adequacy indicated that the dataset was appropriate in structure for factor analysis, with a $KMO = 0.77$. Bartlett's test of sphericity was conducted and suggested that there was sufficient correlation in the data for factor analysis, with Chi square = 847.79 with 120 degrees of freedom and $p < 0.001$ as results. The determinant did test positive, with 0.00051 as the result.

3.8. Correlation matrix

In an effort to examine the data from as many varied aspects as possible, it was determined to complete a correlation matrix as an artifact of the full dataset, which was not published in the original research. In the spirit of reproducibility, we provide our 2023 correlation matrix (see **Figure 3**), related to our simulated dataset with $n = 930$. Please see **Figure 3** below for the correlation of the replication study. The correlation matrix follows below.

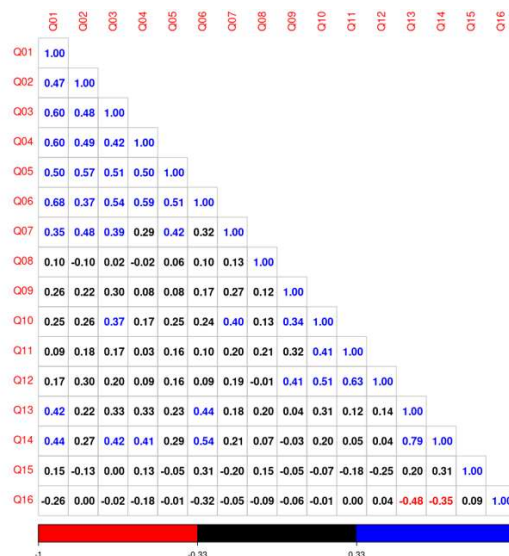


Figure 3. Correlation matrix (symmetrical) for 2023 replication study ($n = 930$).

3.9. Parallel analysis (PA)

More robust than a simple scree plot alone, the use of parallel analysis combines the concept of a scree plot with a parallel comparison of eigenvalues from principal components and also eigenvalues from factor analysis. This allows the results of the two plots to be compared, aiding in the determination of the number of factors that should be considered toward building a model from the data. One interesting computational aspect of running PA is that we had to set our options for only one core processor on our multi-core computer system for the function `fa.parallel()` to successfully run; `options(mc.cores = 1)`. The argument of 120 iterations was selected for the `fa.parallel()` function. The code was run to generate the plot and then commented out, and all cores were used for other coding steps, as prior, other than this one function and step of the workflow. Please see the Parallel Analysis Scree Plot in **Figure 4**. The parallel analysis scree plot is included below and indicates five factors as appropriate.

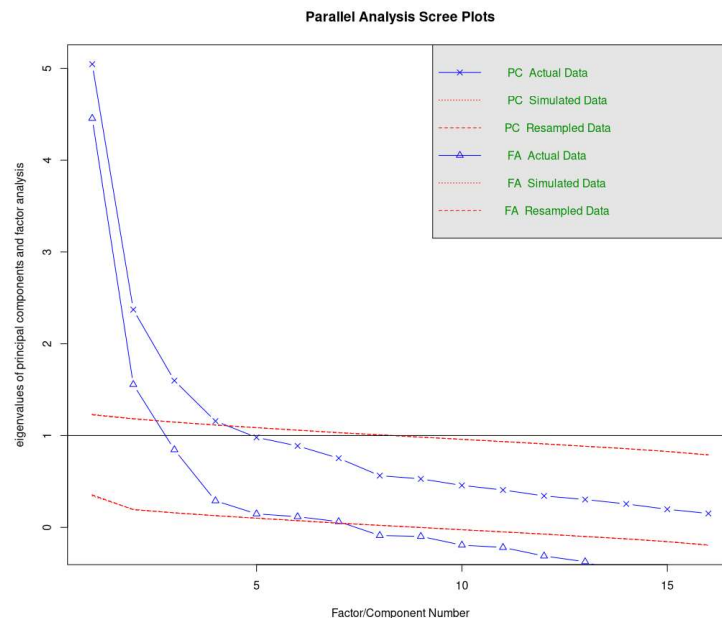


Figure 4. Parallel analysis scree plots.

3.10. Primary component analysis (PCA)

There were no missing values in our dataset. This is important to note, as PCA can be biased due to missing values in the data. PCA was conducted, as well as calculations using cosine squared, Cos^2 , to measure the contributions of each variable. A BiPlot was constructed to review, as vectors, each survey question in relation to its contribution. The BiPlot considered the first two primary components, as they had the most explainability of the dataset variation. Primary components (PCs) are listed in descending order of explainability, with PC1 being the most powerful in comparison, then PC2, and so forth. With the BiPlot, the Y-axis was PC1 (42.9% of the variance explained), and the X-axis was PC2 (24.7% of the variance explained). In this context, the question vectors are plotted in an X-Y graph that explains a total of 67.6 of the dataset variances. Color was then utilized as a scale for the plot, measuring the Cos^2 measurements of contribution for each of the variables.

The BiPlot, in **Figure 5**, is included for consideration. It is interesting to note that a line of 142 degrees, as measured from the positive X-axis, would perfectly split the vectors between positively voiced questions and negatively voiced questions from the survey instrument. Likewise, a line of 167 degrees, as measured from the positive X-axis, would perfectly split the vectors between those connected in the original study to participative justice and those of distributive justice, with the exception of the weak and unusual vector for question 8 (Q08). Also, there are groupings of interest, as related to the original study, that include vectors related to subset question sets.

Looking at the traditional quadrants, the upper right, or Quadrant 1, is primarily representative of the questions focused on participation (Q01–Q07). Quadrant 2, likewise, is primarily representative of questions focused on performance appraisal fairness (Q11, Q12). Quadrant 3, other than Q08 already mentioned, is nearly perfectly defined by Q16 on the negative X-axis and Q15 very close to the negative Y-axis, focused on the question set from the original study known as sanctions for poor performance. Quadrant 4 is representative of the question set on promotion-performance contingency (Q13, Q14). The positive Y-axis splits Q09 and Q10 between Quadrant 1 and Quadrant 2, on either side of the positive Y-axis, which has a grouping representative of the question set focused on appeals procedure fairness.

While it is difficult to parse out precise meaning for components, or PCs, from primary component analysis (PCA), it is interesting to note that the Y-axis measuring PC2 ranges from termination to remediation. There seems to be a pattern to that spectrum, related to the intensity of punishment, as an example. Likewise, PC1, measured along the X-axis, ranges from policy on the right to demotion on the left. While unfortunately that spectrum is less clear, going to the original full questions hints it might have aspects of control within the business work environment. Overall, the BiPlot groups the questions as vectors nearly exactly as the original 1987 study groupings, yet this plot is based on the 2023 data. Also, Q08 seems to be, in essence, an outlier in some way.

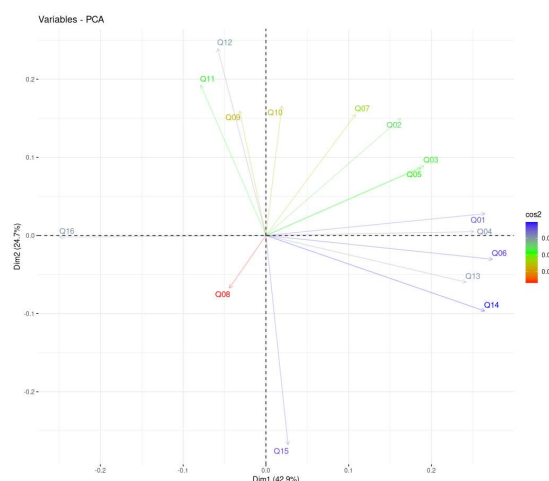


Figure 5. PCA BiPlot (PC1 and PC2) with Cos2 via color scale.

3.11. Exploratory factor analysis (EFA)

Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted using varimax rotation. The communality estimates were calculated with squared multiple correlations. No row

weights were used, as Kaiser normalization should only be utilized when communalities are high across all items, and in our data, this was not the case. Communalities range from 0.09 to 1.00 for items Q01 to Q16. The results of the EFA were the factor loadings and represent the 2023 data on the left side of **Table 1**. It should be noted that the EFA results represented Q08 with only an asterisk, meaning it in essence should be dropped from the model. The exact value for Q08 was 0.16, which was below the cutoff set for our study of 0.4 for factor loading. The original study had a cutoff of 0.3, which we determined was unusual after our literature review, as all items with a cutoff in our literature review used 0.4 as a cutoff. As can be observed in **Table 1**, both studies obtained factor loadings with no overlap, with each item loading on only one factor. For the replication study, the 5 factors explained 59 percent of the total dataset cumulative variation.

3.12. Cronbach's alpha

Cronbach's alpha was determined by each factor separately. This means each factor was correctly assigned its associated subset of question items. Q08 was retained for a proper comparison to the original study. The alpha for pay fairness was unable to be obtained due to an error in data collection for those three questions. The reliabilities for each fairness measure, as determined by Cronbach's alpha, are presented in **Table 1** above each set of factor loadings.

4. Results

In comparing the results found in the present versus the original study looking at the factor of employee participation, questions one through seven indicate very similar scores on how much involvement the employee has in controlling the work environment and those policies and processes that affect them at work. It should also be noted that the overall factor analysis indicates almost no significant difference in scores in overall employee participation. Therefore, little change in employee participation in the work environment has occurred between these two research study periods.

When looking at appeals procedures and the fairness of employee treatment, which was assessed using questions eight, nine, and ten, Question eight asked if personnel (discipline) actions were a waste of time. In our original study, that was considered a negative value since federal employees are covered by a union and collective bargaining agreement, appealing any corrective or disciplinary actions. This is one of the bases for having a union for employee protection against management abuses and disciplinary actions. This question was not assessed in the recent study, so it is not forecasted as to what the respondents might perceive about discipline and its relevance today. Question nine asked about stated policies relating to discipline and both factors are very similar in value. In question ten, the issue was about poor job performance and the ability to improve on that performance versus negative results placed on the employee. In the two sets of responses, we see employees today respond much more favorably to having the opportunity to improve performance than in 1987. This is also interesting given that the sample in 1987 consisted of federal employees in a heavily unionized environment. The overall impact of the factor analysis of

appeals procedures is skewed due to the lack of factor analysis of question eight in the 2023 study and the large negative impact of question eight in the 1987 study.

Questions eleven and twelve were used to assess the factor analysis of performance appraisal fairness. Question eleven asked about how “fair” the performance evaluations were. And question twelve asked if the most recent performance evaluation was what was expected by the respondent. There were large statistically significant differences in the scores from the original study on question eleven (0.41 to 0.73). These results indicate the respondents in the original study did not believe the evaluations they received were “fair.” The explanation for this could be that evaluations in unionized environments are rare, and usually there is animosity between management and union employees, so the concept of “fairness” may not exist in these types of work environments. In defense of modern management, research shows evaluations are a strategic tool to coach for better performance today, given the global competition. Question twelve also showed a statistically significant difference (0.33 to 0.80) from the original study to the present study. This question centered around the respondent’s perceived evaluation and its ability to meet that expectation. This could be explained by the fact by the fact that evaluations in unionized environments usually center around meeting expectations, and little time is spent on determining whether expectations exceed or fail. This could be defined more as a “paper exercise” versus a real evaluation process and could explain the huge differences in factor scores for this question in the two studies.

Questions thirteen and fourteen were used to assess the factor impact of the promotion-performance contingency. Question thirteen addresses favorable job performance and the potential for promotion within an organization. It was expected that the scores would be lower in the original study than in the present study due to union rules of promotion based on seniority versus qualifications. The scores held consistent with this belief (0.82 to 0.92) based on this union rule. Question fourteen is the same question in an effort to determine the reliability of this response. The respondents provided identical answers to both surveys. What should be noted are the high scores provided. This would be expected in the recent survey, but not in the original survey. It is possible respondents did not really note the similarity of questions thirteen and fourteen.

Factor analysis for sanctions for poor performance was analyzed using questions fifteen and sixteen. Question fifteen asked: If one performs poorly, this will lead to termination. The response from the original study reflected heavy union protections for poor job performance, as expected. In the present study, just the opposite was revealed. In fact, the responses actually have a 1.0 opposite response rate! This indicates that unions will and do spend extensive time and resources to protect their members from being terminated due to poor job performance. This has been held and supported in the research in numerous studies. The protections for poor job performance are lacking in the recent study. Employees have a high sense of fear that poor job performance will lead to their termination of employment. Question sixteen: We see a significant difference in how unionized employees perceive protections to be much greater than those of employees who may not be represented by unions in 2023. It should also be noted that unions in 1987 were much more powerful than in 2023.

The primary goal of creating a comparative study in 2023 by using a similar process presented in **Figure 6** from a study conducted 36 years ago was accomplished. The results of this study are presented in **Figure 6**, with the 2023 replication study on the left and the 1987 original study on the right. This is a visual comparison from item to item and factor to factor, as well as the overall pattern of the loadings. The replication was, in general, very similar, with a few exceptions. Pay fairness loadings and alpha were not possible to recreate and compare.

2023 Replication Study						1987 Original Study					
	f1	f2	f3	f4	f5		f1	f2	f3	f4	f5
Participation ($\alpha = .87$)						Participation ($\alpha = .88$)					
Q01	0.73					Q01	0.80				
Q02	0.65					Q02	0.76				
Q03	0.67					Q03	0.75				
Q04	0.68					Q04	0.74				
Q05	0.70					Q05	0.73				
Q06	0.73					Q06	0.67				
Q07	0.49					Q07	0.46				
Appeals Procedure Fairness ($\alpha = .40$)						Appeals Procedure Fairness ($\alpha = .67$)					
Q08		*				Q08		-0.57			
Q09		0.51				Q09		0.52			
Q10		0.58				Q10		0.47			
Performance Appraisal Fairness ($\alpha = .77$)						Performance Appraisal Fairness ($\alpha = .68$)					
Q11		0.73				Q11		0.41			
Q12		0.80				Q12		0.33			
Promotion-Performance Contingency ($\alpha = .88$)						Promotion-Performance Contingency ($\alpha = .80$)					
Q13			0.92			Q13			0.82		
Q14			0.75			Q14			0.75		
Sanctions for Poor Performance ($\alpha = .16$)						Sanctions for Poor Performance ($\alpha = .72$)					
Q15				0.72		Q15				-0.77	
Q16					0.96	Q16				-0.72	
Pay Fairness ($\alpha = \text{NA}$)						Pay Fairness ($\alpha = .83$)					
Q17					NA	Q17					0.86
Q18					NA	Q18					0.78
Q19					NA	Q19					0.67

Figure 6. Factor analysis of fairness items (2023 study vs. 1987 original study).

5. Implications for management

History has shown that employees who are not provided protection by their employers turn to outside sources of help and support. Unions have historically indicated they provide those protections companies don't, such as greater bargaining power to improve working conditions, wages, benefits, and pensions. They claim to reduce and minimize discrimination. Unions claim to provide a greater sense of job security. They indicate a higher sense of participation in and about one's job environment and workplace safety. They provide an increase in one's sense of belongingness. They offer a platform for self-expression. And they improve the betterment of relationships (AFL-CIO, 2023).

This research indicates employees seek a need for justice as a form of protection in their work environment. They want to be treated fairly. They want to have a "voice" in the jobs they perform and the work environment they exist in. They want to be heard and contribute to the success of the job and the organization. They desire to have positive working relationships with their management.

Managers and human resource professionals, especially, should take note of the findings of the most recent study. It provides clear evidence that, in the absence of strong union representation and the lack of either procedural or distributive justice systems in place in organizations today, employees will seek unionization to protect them from employers who are perceived to not be concerned about their welfare.

6. Limitations of the study

Similar to the original study, the statistical concept of “sampling” was used with replacement. There is a full field of study in statistics that focuses on robust methods under conditions of sparse datasets (Hastie et al., 2015).

One interesting item in this study was question Q08, which stated, “Appealing personnel actions is a waste of time.” While this study showed it was ineffective toward our model, it was determined to be effective toward the original model. This might have been due to the homogenized sample of civil service members working for government agencies having a strong, consistent answer to rating this statement on a 7-point scale. The current sample group was diverse, coming from many backgrounds of life as well as professions, and as such, they may have interpreted this statement in more diverse ways. The less consistent rating of this statement would have diffused the power of effectiveness toward modeling for this question. Further, it might be motivated by some confounding factor beyond the scope of this study that differentiated the time period of 1987 from the present of 2023. One possibility could be the birth of the modern internet in 1995. A pre-internet world might also tend toward homogeneity, while the current internet world, having more access online to divergent points of view, might also have a much more diverse perspective on a simple statement of judgment. Being human, meaning is continually open to interpretation.

7. Opportunities for future research

The next phase in the research plan will include collecting a completely new dataset from participants that has the goal of collecting a real-world participant based on no less than an actual sample of 930 participants. This will be the minimum goal. Additionally, this real-world data could then be considered a “holdout” group, to be tested against a training group for EFA and a test group for CFA, and then the holdout group could be a further final test of our developed model.

8. Conclusion

The collected data from the present study was compared to the original data collected by Anderson and Ruderman in 1987. The table displayed in **Figure 6** was successfully created, and a comparison between the 2023 study and the original 1987 study was possible.

Many of the elements of the results were consistent, to include the number of factors and the pattern of their groupings, with some slight deviation. This should be of particular interest as it was conducted without any access to the original dataset or their correlation matrix from over 36 years ago. This adds to the credibility of the 1987 study; their results have gained further support from a new independent dataset and modern computational methods, with similar results earned via this replication effort using a much more diverse sample of participants.

Further, this research has provided many new insights and possible methods that will be used in further research on the topics of procedural and distributive justice systems in the near future.

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Appendix

Major survey questionnaire for procedural justice

Adapted from “The role of procedural and distributive justice in organizational behavior Sheldon Alexander and Marian Ruderman (1987)”.

Survey questionnaire for procedural justice

We are conducting a study on human resources programs that might be in effect at your organization or possibly those you would like to see implemented that provided equal treatment for all employees and allow employees to have some influence on the treatment they receive.

We would like to know your experiences with how much input you might have on any new policies or procedures effecting employees. This would include decisions on promotions, corrective or disciplinary actions taken, input on how your job is designed and the tasks and work you do, how you are evaluated and how fair and equitable this system is. In general, we are interested in how effective your treatment is an employee.

Each question has a potential response of strongly agree to strongly disagree. Please circle that number that best corresponds with your responds with your level of agreement or disagreement with each of the following questions.

1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = somewhat disagree, 4 = neither disagree or agree, 5 = somewhat agree, 6 = agree, 7 = strongly agree.

We are asking you to please complete this survey. Your responses are anonymous, and we would ask that you do not skip any questions. Thank you for your participation.

Survey questionnaire

(1) How much say do you have in developing new work rules and procedures?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
SD	D	SWD	N	SWA	A	SA

(2) How much say do you have in setting priorities among tasks to be done?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
SD	D	SWD	N	SWA	A	SA

(3) How much say do you have in deciding how work will be divided among people?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
SD	D	SWD	N	SWA	A	SA

(4) How much say do you have in developing organization policies?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
SD	D	SWD	N	SWA	A	SA

(5) How much say do you have in deciding what you will do day to day?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
SD	D	SWD	N	SWA	A	SA

(6) How much say do you have in buying new equipment?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
SD	D	SWD	N	SWA	A	SA

(7) How much freedom do you have on your job?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
SD	D	SWD	N	SWA	A	SA

(8) Appealing personnel actions is a waste of time.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
SD	D	SWD	N	SWA	A	SA

(9) The employee handbook provides for negotiated grievance or complaint procedures to protect employees if they have a formal personnel action against them for poor performance.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
SD	D	SWD	N	SWA	A	SA

(10) When people perform poorly here, they're given a chance to improve their work?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
SD	D	SWD	N	SWA	A	SA

(11) Generally speaking annual performance appraisals are done fairly here.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
SD	D	SWD	N	SWA	A	SA

(12) My last annual performance appraisal rating was about what it ought to have been.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
SD	D	SWD	N	SWA	A	SA

(13) If you performed your job especially well, how likely is it that you will be promoted or get a better job?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
SD	D	SWD	N	SWA	A	SA

(14) If you performed your job satisfactorily, how likely is it that you will be promoted or get a better job?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
SD	D	SWD	N	SWA	A	SA

(15) If I performs poorly, I will lose my job.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
SD	D	SWD	N	SWA	A	SA

(16) I will be demoted or transferred from my position, if I perform my job poorly.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
SD	D	SWD	N	SWA	A	SA

Now, please tell us something about yourself.

Which of the following best describes your gender?

- Male
- Female
- I don't identify as either

Question title

Which race or ethnicity best describes you? (Please choose only one.)

- American Indian or Alaskan Native
- Asian/Pacific Islander
- Black or African American
- Hispanic
- White/Caucasian
- Multiple ethnicity/other (please specify)

Question title

What is your marital status?

- Single
- Married
- Other

Question title

In which of the following age ranges do you currently fall?

- Under 18
- 18–25
- 26–30
- 31–35
- 36–40
- 41–45
- 46–55
- 56–60
- 61–65
- 66 or older

Question title

Which of the following best describes the highest level of education you have received?

- Less than high school
- High school graduate
- Some college or technical school
- Associate degree in college (2 years)
- Bachelor's degree in college (4 years)
- Master's degree
- Doctorate

—Professional degree (MD, JD, CPA)

Question title

Below are some income categories. Please choose the category that best describes the total annual income of the household. Please include your personal income, as well as the income of others living in the household.

- Less than \$14,999
- Between \$15,000 and \$34,999
- Between \$35,000 and \$59,999
- Between \$60,000 and \$99,999
- Between \$100,000 and \$199,999
- Above \$200,000

Thank you again for your time in completing this survey.

Article

Exploring the employees' behavioral intention towards disruptive technologies: A study in Malaysia

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Abstract: The study focuses on the employees' behavioral intentions towards the usage of disruptive technology in the industry. The digital technology application in consumer, retail, and hospitality, education and training, financial services, the health sector, infrastructure, government, and airports. The study objectives were to explore the possible adoption of innovation and creativity changes and their acceptance by the employees in the organization. To identify the variables impacting behavioral intention and analyze how these variables relate to perceived usefulness, attitude, perceived ease of use, facilitating conditions, and technology optimism. A structured questionnaire was used to collect data from 335 respondents, who were selected based on their relevance to the study objectives. The questionnaires were distributed through the Google Forms application, and the data were collected and analyzed periodically. The findings of the study provide valuable insights into the behavioral intention towards disruptive technologies in Kuala Lumpur and Putrajaya locations in Malaysia and highlight the significance of factors such as perceived usefulness, attitude, perceived ease of use, facilitating conditions, and technology optimism. The research contributes to the existing body of knowledge on Industry 4.0 by providing empirical evidence and practical implications for organizations seeking to leverage disruptive technologies in their operations management.

Keywords: disruptive technologies; operation management; human resource management; employees' welfare; digital transformation

1. Introduction

The advent of the Industry 4.0 era has brought about significant advancements in technology, reshaping industries and business operations worldwide. Disruptive technologies such as artificial intelligence, big data analytics, robotics, and the Internet of Things (IoT) have revolutionized the way businesses operate, presenting both opportunities and challenges. These technologies have the potential to enhance productivity, efficiency, and competitiveness in various sectors, including manufacturing, logistics, and services. However, the successful implementation and adoption of disruptive technologies heavily depends on individuals' behavioral intentions to embrace and utilize these technologies. Understanding the factors that influence individuals' intention to adopt disruptive technologies and integrate them into operations management is crucial for organizations and policymakers in Malaysia as they strive to navigate the Industry 4.0 landscape. There are issues in this research that include behavioral intention. It seeks to understand whether individuals are willing to adopt and use these technologies in their daily operations. Many social, ethical, and environmental considerations should be considered while investigating behavioral intentions toward disruptive technologies in the Industry 4.0 period and

beyond. As disruptive technologies continue to transform sectors and enterprises, it is critical to investigate the larger implications and repercussions of their use.

According to the article published in The Star Newspaper on 12 January 2023 stated problems have arisen in the local construction sector due to several factors, including a lack of available workers, inflationary pressures, increased material costs, and more frequent interruptions in the supply chain. As a result, projects have run behind schedule, teams have been operating in silos, time is being wasted, and the environment has suffered. The construction industry, which has historically been slow to embrace digital technologies, is now leading the way in terms of investment and ambition, which bodes well for future economic development. The government is also actively pursuing digitalization, as shown in **Figure 1**, for better competitiveness, productivity, and sustainable building practices through programmes like the National 4IR Policy and the National Construction Policy 2030. In line with national goals, the Public Works Department (JKR) has been leading the charge to revolutionize Malaysia's construction sector through the implementation of innovative technology. Roads, buildings, airports, ports, and jetties are just some of the infrastructure that JKR has been developing and maintaining since its founding in 1872 for a wide range of federal and state agencies. Through a partnership with Autodesk, JKR is spearheading the digital transformation of the construction industry on a national scale. Building Information Modelling (BIM) has been utilized in more than 200 projects since 2010 by the department. One of these projects was the Health Ministry's clinic in Maran, Pahang. In contrast to earlier projects that did not use BIM, the JKR team was able to carry out its end-to-end construction without a hitch, saving money and avoiding the build faults that plagued such endeavors. With an annual increase of 10%, JKR aims to have 50% of projects valued at RM10 million or more using BIM by 2021. The introduction of building information modelling has yielded various benefits, according to JKR deputy director general Amran Mohd Majid. "By using 3D model visualizations during design review and value engineering sessions, stakeholders can better understand the design intent. Comprehensive asset information records can be used for reference by facility managers. And clash detection processes can help minimize the risk of project cost increases."

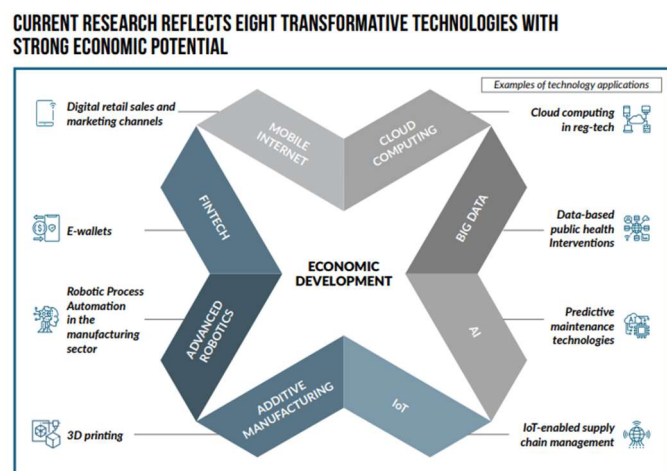


Figure 1. Transformative technologies with economic potential.

Source: accesspartnershop.com- alpha beta strategy x economics (2021).

Building: A sector perfect for going digital— The digitization of information and processes represents a giant leap forward in lowering rework, increasing productivity, and boosting bottom lines, all of which are crucial in meeting the fast-growing building and infrastructure demands of Malaysia. Globally and locally, construction companies have been collaborating with Autodesk to optimize resources, achieve economic and productivity savings, and promote sustainable impact via the use of sophisticated technologies including building information modelling (BIM), generative design (GD), and digital twins (DT). The national construction sector is about to undergo digital transformation, and the JKR and Autodesk MoU is going to make that happen by strengthening strategic partnerships. A thriving national construction sector that embraces innovation will be born out of this partnership between building information modelling (BIM) and new technologies like the internet of things (IoT) and artificial intelligence.

Employees' advancement towards disruptive technology for activities happening in healthcare organizations' HR information systems can be categorized as either operational or strategic, depending on their impact on HR management. Technologies pertaining to human resources administration, tracking of time and absence, scheduling and rostering, employee benefits, and expenditure management make up the first group. The second group focuses on enhancing the department's top-notch HR practices, such as hiring, performance evaluation, L&D management, and workforce and succession planning. As an example, applicant tracking technologies have revolutionized the way healthcare HR recruits' new employees. By automating the process of collecting, sorting, and evaluating job applications, these technologies greatly alleviate the workload of HR workers. Taleo and Greenhouse are just two examples of software that streamlines the hiring process for human resources departments. Human resources experts are free to concentrate on other important duties thanks to this technology, which swiftly identifies the most suitable individuals. Additionally, we might think about how VR is becoming an effective tool for teaching healthcare workers, especially HR personnel. Human resources workers may learn essential skills in a risk-free setting with the help of virtual reality (VR) simulations, which offer realistic and immersive settings. One use case for virtual reality is in emergency response training; HR teams may also use it to practice having tough discussions and resolving conflicts. When it comes to healthcare HR, employee engagement systems have completely changed the game when it comes to communicating with staff, creating a more pleasant workplace, and increasing happiness on the job. These systems allow HR staff to interact with workers successfully by providing a centralized location for communication, recognition, and feedback. Big data analytics may be used to study HRH from the perspective of the phases and effects on people management. Planning, organizing, staffing, directing, regulating, recruiting, placement, salesforce size, performance evaluation, assessment, remuneration, and training are the components of HRH that comprise the phases. People management, on the other hand, is primarily concerned with HR planning, business strategy development, management information systems, talent analysis and management, information management, knowledge management, retention attrition, and workforce analysis. New academic publications containing HRIS that might be

developed and used to aid HRM surfaced during the COVID-19 epidemic. The human resources and personnel management communities are also more invested in HRIS for HRM. To limit the dangers of infection that might decimate healthcare practitioners or raise their turnover due to fear of infections, veterans and some co-researchers advocated a robot-assisted HRM system that integrates robots in workforce management. However, Vahdat emphasized that HRM must maintain a human-centered approach even as it embraces HRIS such as teleworking, cloud computing, and information and communications technologies (ICT). According to Yao and Azma, HR productivity is still an important part of HRM for healthcare organizations, even during the epidemic. For that reason, they doubt that ERP software hosted in the cloud can boost HR efficiency during COVID-19. In the end, they concluded that HRH's HRIS will rely on ERP in the cloud for HR administration in the future. Based on their findings, Wu, Pi, and Chen recommend that HRM invest in innovative technologies like blockchain and AI to better safeguard consumers' personal information when they utilize healthcare products. By bringing in medical device builders from HR, the author alludes to HR's involvement in the blockchain application. Creative and Innovative Health Information Systems in Healthcare Organizations, Discussions revolve around the ethical and legal aspects of utilizing HRIS in HRH. Some academics would rather debate the pros and cons of different HRIS systems, considering factors like production feasibility and the effects on HRM responsibilities. Some healthcare providers may still wonder if it's worthwhile to invest in HRIS for HRH because of the benefits and drawbacks of using them. Some scholars focus on theoretical concerns, while others examine how healthcare organizations use HRIS systems within intricate HRM frameworks. Innovation, efficiency, productivity, respect for ethical, legal, and compliance concerns, and HR happiness and well-being are hotly debated topics. Other scholars addressed the difficulties HR professionals have when trying to determine which large data sets are the most useful for making informed judgments. Concerns about building accessibility and their interactions with healthcare professionals and patients arise when considering the integration of robot-assisted staff in staffing management. Staffing and human resource managers' responsibilities within a healthcare organization may be altered or diminished because of changes brought about by HRIS. This is because technology has the potential to take over their everyday activities. Given the current situation, it is a good time to weigh the pros and cons of HRIS for HRM in HO, paying special attention to the issues of acquisition cost and the training of HR managers about these technologies. Additionally, due to the necessity of reducing implementation costs with an excessive number of stakeholders, privacy protection remains a top priority, even with the ideal combination of blockchain and AI. Most of the industries in Malaysia are transforming to the digital economy and disruptive technology. For example, AirAsia Airlines is adopting FACE technology for check-in and processing security checks at KLIA1 Airport.

2. Literature review

Behavioral intention towards disruptive technologies in Industry 4.0 in Malaysia:

The dependent variables in this context are influenced by various independent variables. Specifically, the behavioral intention to adopt disruptive technologies represents an individual's behavioral inclination towards Industry 4.0 (Hubert et al., 2019). Behavioral intention is a manifestation of an individual's attraction and motivation to engage in specific behaviors. The stronger the determination to adopt a particular behavior and the greater the influence of motivating factors, the higher the likelihood of actual implementation. Moreover, the perception of social norms and the support of the broader population play a role in shaping behavioral intentions. This includes considering the opinions and expectations of others, such as close relationships, regarding the individual's engagement in certain behaviors. Gupta et al. (2020) offered another way to Industry 4.0 adoption, using institutional theory to examine coercive, mimetic, and normative pressure. Yu and Schweisfurth (2020) investigated crucial elements influencing the obstacles and potential of Industry 4.0 adoption. Srivastava et al. (2022) employed a technology-organizational-Environmental (TOE) paradigm to study Industry 4.0 adoption since sophisticated digital technologies are exceedingly complicated. While extensive research has explored users' preferences and desires regarding the utilization of technology in Industry 4.0, this work makes a unique contribution by focusing on specific behavioral intentions and investigating the independent variables influencing them in the context of Industry 4.0. To facilitate a realistic and comprehensive discussion, this paper conducts an exploratory study on the purposeful utilization of Industry 4.0 technologies.

Relationship between perceived usefulness and behavioral intention towards disruptive technologies in Industry 4.0

The perceived usefulness of a system is related to its productivity and efficacy, as well as its overall benefits for improving user performance (Haron et al., 2022). Exploring factors influencing the perceived usefulness and ease of use of virtual reality in education. Conducted a study that focused on exploring the factors that influence the perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use of virtual reality (VR) in the field of education. The researchers aimed to identify the key factors that affect users' perceptions of the usefulness and ease of use of VR technology in an educational context. The study employed a quantitative research approach and collected data from participants (Akgün et al., 2021). Investigating the factors influencing perceived usefulness and user satisfaction in technology acceptance. The research aimed to explore how various factors impact users' perceptions of the usefulness of technology and their satisfaction with its usage. The study employed a quantitative approach and collected data from a sample of participants. The authors utilized structural equation modeling (SEM) to analyze the collected data and identify the significant factors. It emphasizes the importance of understanding the relationship between perceived usefulness and behavioral intention in the adoption and implementation of disruptive technologies in operations management, particularly in the Malaysian industrial sector. It examines research conducted in Malaysia or similar industrial settings to understand how perceived usefulness influences the intention to adopt and implement disruptive technologies in operations management. When individuals perceive Industry 4.0 technologies as more useful in improving their operations and processes,

they are more likely to have a stronger intention to adopt and implement disruptive technologies.

3. Hypothesis statements

Hypotheses 1: The higher perceived usefulness of Industry 4.0 will lead to a greater influence on behavioral intention towards disruptive technologies in the Industry 4.0 era.

Relationship between attitude towards using and behavioral intention towards disruptive technologies of Industry 4.0 in Malaysia: Attitude towards using refers to an individual's overall evaluation, perception, or disposition towards the act of using a particular technology, product, or service. This influential paper presents the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT), which includes the construct of "attitude towards using" as a key determinant of technology acceptance and usage. It provides a comprehensive overview of the theory and its components, including attitude, and offers insights into understanding and predicting users' acceptance and usage of technology (Venkatesh et al., 2019). This recent study develops an integrated framework to understand the antecedents and consequences of attitudes towards using disruptive technologies. It examines the impact of various factors, including perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and subjective norms, on users' attitudes towards using disruptive technologies. Additionally, social factors, including social norms and social influence, also play a significant role in shaping managers' behavioral intentions to use Industry 4.0. (Liaw and Ting, 2019). When individuals have a favorable perception and positive beliefs about the benefits and advantages of Industry 4.0, they are more inclined to have a stronger intention to engage with disruptive technologies in their operations management.

Hypotheses 2: The more positive attitude towards using Industry 4.0 will have a significant effect on behavioral intention towards disruptive technologies in the Industry 4.0 era.

Relationship between perceived ease of use and behavioral intention towards disruptive technologies in Industry 4.0: Perceived ease of use refers to the subjective perception or belief held by an individual regarding the level of effort required to use a particular technology and the degree of complexity associated with its use. It represents the individual's assessment of how easy or difficult it would be to learn and operate the technology effectively. A higher perceived ease of use implies that the technology is perceived as intuitive, user-friendly, and requires minimal cognitive and physical effort to use. The paper provides a theoretical framework for understanding the factors influencing users' perceptions of ease of use and its impact on technology acceptance (Nayanajith et al., 2019). Technology Acceptance Model 3 (TAM3), which extends the original TAM by incorporating additional factors, including perceived ease of use, It examines the role of perceived ease of use in users' acceptance and usage of technology, highlighting its importance as a determinant of users' attitudes and intentions towards using technology (Venkatesh and Bala, 2021). When individuals perceive Industry 4.0 technologies as easy to understand, learn, and use in their operations management, they are more likely to develop a stronger intention to adopt and integrate disruptive technologies.

Hypothesis 3: The higher perceived ease of use of Industry 4.0 will influence behavioral intention towards disruptive technologies in the Industry 4.0 era.

Relationship between facilitating conditions and behavioral intention towards disruptive technologies in Industry 4.0: The Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) includes the construct of “facilitating conditions” as one of the key determinants of technology acceptance and usage (Venkatesh et al., 2021). Facilitating conditions refer to the extent to which an individual believes that the necessary resources, support, and infrastructure are available to use a particular technology effectively. The paper provides a comprehensive overview of the UTAUT and its components, including facilitating conditions. The antecedents and consequences of attitude towards using disruptive technologies include facilitating conditions as a relevant construct (Al-Ajlouni et al., 2019). It contributes to the understanding of facilitating conditions and their implications for technology acceptance and adoption. When individuals perceive the availability of necessary resources, support systems, and infrastructure to effectively use Industry 4.0 technologies in their operations management, they are more likely to have a stronger intention to embrace disruptive technologies.

Hypotheses 4: The presence of facilitating conditions in using Industry 4.0 will have a positive impact on behavioral intention towards disruptive technologies in the Industry 4.0 era.

Relationship between technology optimism and behavioral intention towards disruptive technologies in Industry 4.0: Technology optimism refers to an individual’s positive beliefs, attitudes, and expectations towards technology, including their confidence in its benefits, potential, and impact (Vrontis, 2022). Technology optimism is a belief system that assesses individuals’ beliefs about the extent of technical change and the impact of technological developments. It discusses the various dimensions of technology optimism and its influence on individuals’ attitudes and behaviors towards technology adoption and usage (Solberg et al., 2020). This study examines the effects of technology optimism and technology resistance on individuals’ continued intention to use mobile payment services (Shen et al., 2022). When consumers have a sense of optimism and positive expectations about the potential of Industry 4.0 technologies, they are more likely to have a positive attitude towards adopting disruptive technologies in their operations management.

4. Research objectives

The goal of this study is to identify the factors that influence consumers’ evaluations of industry products and services and to examine the interplay between purpose to utilize and attitude towards Industry 4.0.

Examining the connection between perceived usability and future conduct in industrial activity 4.0 and identifying the factors that influence a person’s decision to engage in industrial activity 4.0.

To identify the factors that influence technological optimism and subsequent intent to utilize 4.0.

5. Research problem statement

The issue that is being addressed in this paper is a lack of complete knowledge of employee behavioral intentions toward disruptive technologies and operations management in the Industry 4.0 era and beyond, especially in the context of Malaysia. As industries in Malaysia undergo digital transformation, it is essential to investigate how individuals perceive and intend to engage with disruptive technologies in their daily operations. Artificial intelligence, the Internet of Things, robots, and big data analytics are examples of technology breakthroughs that have the potential to transform existing business structures and operations because of the Industry 4.0 revolution. However, the successful implementation and adoption of these disruptive technologies depend on individuals' willingness to embrace and utilize them effectively. To date, limited research has focused on exploring the behavioral intentions of individuals in Malaysia towards disruptive technologies and their integration into operations management. Understanding the factors influencing behavioral intention, including adoption barriers and enablers, is crucial for organizations and policymakers in Malaysia to formulate effective strategies that promote successful implementation and utilization of disruptive technologies. By addressing this research problem, the study aims to provide valuable insights into the behavioral intention towards disruptive technologies and operations management in Malaysia, facilitating informed decision-making and enabling organizations to navigate the challenges and opportunities of the Industry 4.0 era and beyond.

6. Research method

The systematic processes and techniques used to collect, analyze, and interpret data in a research project are referred to as research methodologies. These approaches provide a framework for performing rigorous and organized research that ensures the findings are trustworthy, valid, and relevant to the study objectives. Researchers use research methodologies to collect information and answer research questions in a methodical and structured manner.

6.1. Research design

The study aimed to explore the most suitable research methods and procedures for investigation, with a focus on generating research ideas and selecting appropriate techniques. Quantitative research was chosen for its objectivity and its ability to investigate and comprehend the correlation between the independent variables (perceived usefulness, attitude towards using, perceived ease of use, facilitating condition, and technology optimism) and the dependent variable (behavioral intention). To ensure comprehensive data collection, both primary and secondary sources were utilized. In addition, secondary data was gathered from various sources, such as websites and relevant journal articles, to support the main research findings. The questionnaire was thoughtfully designed to facilitate the collection of respondents' observations. Section A of the questionnaire includes essential information about the respondents, such as age, gender, employment status, education level, and income. Section B of the questionnaire is the dependent variable. Section C

of the questionnaire assesses users' perspectives on perceived usefulness, attitude towards using, perceived ease of use, facilitating conditions, and technology optimism. To score all attitude items, a five-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree" was employed.

6.2. Scale of measurement

a) Nominal scale

In this research, the use of a nominal scale provides a means for categorizing and organizing specific topics, allowing researchers to group responses into distinct classes or categories. To capture demographic information, five questions were included in the study, focusing on variables such as age, gender, race (Silva et al., 2019), faculty, and program. These variables are measured on a nominal scale, enabling respondents to select their responses from predefined groups or categories.

b) Ordinal scale

Section A of the study questionnaire collects data using a five-item ordinal scale. This scale allows respondents' data to be placed in a hierarchical order, reflecting the relative differences or positions of individuals in relation to others. By utilizing an ordinal scale, the research captures the varying degrees or levels of agreement, satisfaction, or preferences among respondents.

c) Interval scale

To assess respondents' perspectives, a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5 is employed in the questionnaire. This interval scale provides respondents with the opportunity to express their degree of agreement or disagreement, ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree". The use of this scale ensures that respondents can effectively answer the questions, as it offers a balanced range of response options while minimizing ambiguity and respondent burden.

6.3. Data collection

In this research, the primary data collection tool utilized was structured questionnaires, which were distributed to 335 respondents who were relevant to the study's objectives. The target group of people are employees' working in advanced technology industries like health care, airports, banking's, and many more located in Malaysia. To streamline the data collection process, the questionnaires were administered through the Google Forms application. It is worth noting that gathering information through this method necessitates a significant investment of time and effort. As respondents completed the questionnaires, the researcher regularly collected and analysed the data to ensure a timely and comprehensive analysis.

Sampling

- **Population of the study:** In this research, the population of the study is people who are practically using Industry 4.0 in their behavioural intentions.
- **Sample size:** The sample consisted of 335 respondents, which is considered a statistically significant representation of the entire population in Malaysia. According to **Table 1** and Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) calculations, a sample size of 335 is adequate and can be considered equivalent to the estimated population of 2600.

Table 1. Krejcie and Morgan table.

N	S	N	S	N	S	N	S	N	S
10	10	100	50	280	162	800	260	2800	338
15	14	110	86	290	165	850	265	3000	341
20	19	120	92	300	169	900	269	3500	246
25	24	130	97	320	175	950	274	4000	351
30	26	140	103	340	181	1000	276	4500	351
35	32	150	108	360	186	1100	285	5000	357
40	36	160	113	380	181	1200	291	6000	361
45	40	180	118	400	196	1300	297	7000	364
50	44	190	123	420	201	1400	302	8000	367
55	48	200	127	440	202	1500	306	9000	368
60	52	210	132	460	210	1600	310	10,000	373
65	56	220	136	480	214	1700	313	15,000	375
70	59	230	140	500	217	1800	317	20,000	377
75	63	240	144	550	225	1900	320	30,000	379
80	66	250	148	600	234	2000	322	40,000	380
85	70	260	152	650	242	2200	327	50,000	381
90	73	270	155	700	248	2400	331	75,000	382
95	76	270	159	750	256	2600	335	100,000	384

N = Population size, S = Sample size.

7. Analysis

Analysis in research refers to the systematic examination, interpretation, and evaluation of data or information collected during a research study. It involves organizing, categorizing, and making sense of the data to identify patterns, relationships, and trends. The purpose of analysis is to derive meaningful insights and draw conclusions that address the research objectives or research questions. Before conducting the analysis, researchers typically organize and prepare the data for analysis. This may involve cleaning and validating the data, transforming variables, and ensuring data quality and integrity. In this stage, researchers examine the data to gain a preliminary understanding of its characteristics and distribution. They may use descriptive statistics, data visualization techniques, or exploratory data analysis methods to explore patterns, trends, and outliers in the data. Researchers employ specific data analysis techniques depending on the research design and research questions. These techniques can include statistical analysis, qualitative analysis, content analysis, thematic analysis, regression analysis, factor analysis, or other relevant methods. The choice of analysis technique depends on the type of data, the research objectives, and the research field. After conducting the analysis, researchers interpret the findings in the context of the research objectives and relevant theoretical frameworks.

Table 2 shows the age groups of the respondents who participated in completing and answering the questionnaire. In this questionnaire, the ages of the respondents were divided into three age groups: the first group was 18–21 years old, the second

group was 22–25 years old, and the third group was 26–29 years old. The second age group was the largest, with 195 respondents, accounting for 58.2% of the total 335 respondents. The age group of 26–29 is the second most respondents, with 68 respondents and 20.3% of the total 335 respondents. The age group 18–21 years was the third most likely to respond, with 65 respondents, accounting for 19.4% of the total 335 respondents. The option for those over 29 years old is the less-responding option, which is only 7 respondents, or 2.1% of the total 335 respondents.

Table 2. Age.

Age	Respondents	Percent
18–21	65	19.4
22–25	195	58.2
26–29	68	20.3
Above 29	7	2.1
Total	335	100

Table 3 shows the gender of the respondents who participated in completing and answering the questionnaire. 194 of the respondents who participated in this study were female with 57.9% of the total 335 respondents. Otherwise, there were only 141 of the respondents who participated in this study were male with 42.1% of the total 335.

Table 3. Gender.

Gender	Respondents	Percentage
Male	141	42.1
Female	194	57.9
Total	335	100

Table 4 shows the current education level of all the respondents. The highest education level for completing the questionnaire was a degree, with 192 respondents (57.3%), followed by a STPM, a Matric, and a Diploma, with 88 respondents (26.3%). Next is Spm with 23 respondents (6.9%), Master with 22 respondents (6.6%), and the other with 6 respondents (1.8%). The fewest respondents by education level are PhDs, with 4 respondents (1.2%) of 335 respondents.

Table 4. Current education level.

Education	Respondents	Percentage
SPM	23	6.9
STPM	88	26.3
Degree	192	57.3
Masters	22	6.6
PhD	4	1.2
Other	6	1.6
Total	335	100

Table 5 shows that in the research, people who had their income below RM1500 were the highest respondents, with 239 respondents (71.3%), followed by group incomes of RM1500–RM3000 with 61 respondents (18.2%), and group incomes of RM3000–RM7000 with 28 respondents (8.4%). The fewer respondents are the above 7000 with 7 respondents (2.1%) of 335 respondents.

Table 5. Income.

Income	Respondents	Percentage
<RM1500	239	71.3
RM1500–RM3000	61	18.2
RM3000–RM7000	28	8.4
Above 7000	7	2.1
Total	335	100

In **Table 6**, the mean age of the respondents was 2.05. The mean gender of the respondents was 1.58. The mean employment status of the respondents was 1.43. The mean education level of the respondents was 2.74. The mean income of respondents is 1.41.

Table 6. Mean of variables.

Variables	Mean
Age	2.05
Gender	1.58
Employment status	1.43
Current education level	2.74
Income	1.41

In **Table 7**, the mean age of the respondents was 2.05. The mean gender of the respondents was 1.58. The mean employment status of the respondents was 1.43. The mean education level of the respondents was 2.74. The mean income of respondents is 1.41. The median age of the respondents was 2. The median gender of the respondents was 2. The median employment status of the respondents was 1. The median education level of the respondents was 3. The median income of respondents is 1. The mode age of the respondents was 2. The mode gender of the respondents was 2. The mode of employment status of the respondents was 1. The mode education level of the respondents was 3. The median income of respondents is 1.

Table 7. Statistics.

Statistics	Age	Gender	Employment status	Education level	Income
Mean	2.05	1.58	1.43	2.74	1.41
Median	2.00	2.00	1.00	3.00	1.00
Mode	2	2	1	3	1
Std. deviation	0.692	0.494	0.629	0.865	0.732
Sum	687	529	479	919	473

Table 8 shows that the independent variables are statistically significant predictors of the dependent variable, $F(5, 1670) = 6.412, p < 0.05$. In this case, the H_0 is rejected because the p -value $< \alpha$.

Table 8. ANOVA between dependent variable and independent variable.

	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	<i>F</i>	Sig
Between people	418	334	1.252		
Within people-between items	1.872	5	0.374	6.412	0.000

Hypothesis: There is a significant positive relationship between perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness, attitude towards using, technology optimism, and facilitating conditions in Industry 4.0.

In **Table 9**, the correlation between disruptive technology, perceived usefulness, and behavioral intention has a positive correlation with a value of 0.752. With attitude towards using and behavioral intentions having a positive correlation with the value 0.728, perceived ease of use and behavioral intention have a positive correlation with the value 0.706. With facilitating conditions and behavioral intention, there is a positive correlation of 0.780; with technology optimism and behavioral intention, there is a positive correlation of 0.669. Hence, the hypothesis statement is accepted or significant.

Table 9. Correlations.

DT	DT	PUIV	ATUIV	PEOUIV	FCIV	TOIV
Pearson correlation	1	0.752	0.728	0.706	0.780	0.669
Sig (2-tailed)		0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
<i>N</i>	335	335	335	335	335	335

Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed); Note: DT: Disruptive technology, PUIV: Perceived usefulness and behavioural intention, ATUIV: Attitude towards using and behavioural intention, PEOUIV: Perceived ease of use and behavioural intention, FCIV: Facilitating conditions and behavioural intentions, TOIV: Technology optimism and behavioural intentions.

8. Conclusions and recommendation

Based on the research findings, there are several recommendations that can be made, one of which is that organizations should first focus on promoting the perceived usefulness of Industry 4.0 technologies. This can be achieved through effective communication and training programs that highlight the benefits and advantages of adopting disruptive technologies in operations management. Develop a clear and compelling communication strategy to educate employees about the benefits and advantages of Industry 4.0 technologies. Highlight how these technologies can improve operational efficiency, increase productivity, enable data-driven decision-making, and drive innovation. Utilize various communication channels, such as workshops, seminars, newsletters, and intranet platforms, to disseminate this

information effectively. Provide comprehensive training programs to equip employees with the necessary skills and knowledge to utilize Industry 4.0 technologies effectively.

Secondly, efforts should be made to create a positive attitude towards Industry 4.0. Organizations can conduct awareness campaigns, provide incentives, and offer support to employees to foster a positive perception and belief about the potential of disruptive technologies. Provide incentives and rewards to employees who actively engage with Industry 4.0 technologies and showcase innovative uses or successful implementations. Recognize and celebrate individuals or teams that embrace disruptive technologies and contribute to operational improvements. This not only motivates employees but also fosters a positive attitude towards Industry 4.0. Offer training programs that not only focus on technical skills but also emphasize the benefits and potential of Industry 4.0 technologies. Help employees develop a deep understanding of how these technologies can enhance their work and contribute to the organization's success. By enhancing their skills and knowledge, employees are more likely to develop a positive attitude towards Industry 4.0. This positive perception will drive enthusiasm, a willingness to adopt new technologies, and a proactive mindset toward exploring innovative ways to leverage disruptive technologies in operations management.

Next, to enhance behavioral intention, organizations should strive to make Industry 4.0 technologies user-friendly and easy to understand. User training, user-friendly interfaces, and clear documentation can facilitate the adoption and integration of disruptive technologies. Provide clear and concise documentation, user guides, and operating procedures for Industry 4.0 technologies. This documentation should be easily accessible and readily available to users. It should include step-by-step instructions, troubleshooting tips, and frequently asked questions to address common user concerns and facilitate smooth adoption and integration. This, in turn, enhances the behavioral intention of employees to adopt and integrate these technologies in their day-to-day operations. It facilitates a smoother transition and promotes a positive user experience, ultimately leading to higher acceptance and successful implementation of disruptive technologies.

Lastly, providing facilitating conditions is crucial for successful implementation. Organizations should invest in the necessary resources, infrastructure, and support systems to ensure that employees have the means to effectively use Industry 4.0 technologies in their operations management. Develop the required physical and digital infrastructure to support the integration of Industry 4.0 technologies. This may include upgrading manufacturing facilities, implementing IoT-enabled devices, establishing data centers, and ensuring robust network connectivity. The infrastructure should be designed to accommodate the specific requirements of the technologies and provide a stable and secure environment for their implementation. Providing the necessary resources, infrastructure, training, support systems, and leadership support ensures that employees have the means and support to effectively leverage the technologies, leading to enhanced operational efficiency and improved outcomes.

In the context of Industry 4.0, this study examined the link between perceived usefulness and behavioral intention toward disruptive technologies and operations management. The theories claimed that in the Industry 4.0 age, perceived usefulness,

attitude, perceived ease of use, enabling circumstances, and technology optimism have substantial influence on behavioral intention. This study's findings add to a better understanding of the elements that determine behavioral intentions toward disruptive technology. The results suggest that when individuals perceive Industry 4.0 technologies as useful, have a positive attitude, perceive them as easy to use, have access to facilitating conditions, and feel technology optimism, they are more likely to exhibit a stronger intention to adopt and integrate disruptive technologies in their operation management.

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Article

Articulating a model to enhance the effect of e-HRM on sustainable competitive advantage

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Abstract: Purpose: This paper articulates a model that maximizes the use of e-HRM to achieve sustainable competitive advantage. It examines the indirect effects of e-HRM use on sustainable competitive advantage, through job satisfaction, employee performance, and perceived organizational politics. **Design/methodology/approach:** A survey approach was used to collect data from 30 organizations. A purposive sampling technique was used to select the study sample. The SPSS PROCESS Macro for running mediation analysis was used to analyze data. **Findings:** The findings show the indirect effect of e-HRM on sustainable competitive advantage through job satisfaction, employee performance, and perceived organizational politics. Job satisfaction has the biggest effect on achieving strategic outcomes. For organizational excellence, e-HRM use should complement other HRM practices. **Practical implications:** Management should pay attention to employee outcomes during the implementation of e-HRM. This study broadens the scope of the interaction between e-HRM use and sustainable competitive advantage. This study was conducted in a developing economy and demonstrated that the effects of e-HRM use on sustainable competitive advantage are not limited to developed economies. **Originality/value:** This study is one of the pioneering efforts to develop a model that maximizes organizational outcomes in developing countries. In addition, this study contributes to the understanding of intervening variables necessary to enhance information technology's potential within the HR function.

Keywords: e-HRM use; sustainable competitive advantage; job satisfaction; employee performance; perception of organizational politics

1. Introduction

The adoption of electronic-human resource management (e-HRM) in organizations is premised on delivering value-adding organizational performance (Bondarouk et al., 2009; Obeidat, 2016; Parry, 2011; Strohmeier and Kabst, 2014). The effects of implementing e-HRM have yielded more favorable results at the organizational micro-level than at the macro-level. Both favorable and unfavorable effects have been consistently documented. Considering the cost of operationalizing e-HRM, these discrepancies are harmful to its adoption and implementation.

The need for variables that mediate the effect of e-HRM on organizational competitiveness has been suggested but not explored (Obeidat, 2016; Strohmeier and Kabst, 2014). To date, studies on the effect of e-HRM on sustainable competitive advantage (SCA) have focused on the explanatory role of technology (Strohmeier, 2007). Such an approach does not explain the contradictions of this phenomenon in organizations. This study seeks to model the effect of utilizing e-HRM on SCA by focusing on the mediating effect of job satisfaction, employee performance, and perceived organizational politics. This paper recommends a model that delivers the full potential of this phenomenon.

2. Literature review

Over the last three decades, “tried and tested” business strategies have offered limited success in helping organizations achieve sustainable competitive advantage. The resource-based view considers the distinctive capabilities of organizations as the basis for achieving sustainable competitive advantage (Armstrong, 2008). Several studies have confirmed the positive impact of strategic human resource management (SHRM) on sustainable competitive advantage (Bondarouk and Ruel, 2013; Obeidat, 2016; Parry, 2011). Human resource (HR) practices and systems influence organizational effectiveness through individual behaviors (performance outcomes) (Marler and Fisher, 2013; Manzoor et al., 2019).

“Organizations do not start from nowhere when they embark on the e-HRM path” (Nyathi, 2021). Human resource management (HRM) practices are a starting point. The implementation of HRM practices that pave the way to the effective use of information technology is a prerequisite to the adoption of e-HRM. These practices equip employees with the capabilities needed to use e-HRM systems (Bondarouk and Ruel, 2009). An effective talent management system creates value for organizations (Wahyudi and Park, 2014). When treated as an independent variable, e-HRM is a causal agent for business process improvements.

e-HRM use: E-HRM is defined as “the implementation and delivery of HR functionality enabled by a human resource information system (HRIS) that connects employees, applicants, managers and the decisions they make” (Johnson et al., 2016). Bondarouk (2014) defines e-HRM as “a field of scholarly inquiry that focuses on all integration mechanisms and all HRM content shared via IT that aim to make HRM processes distinctive and consistent, more efficient, high in quality and which create long-term opportunities within and across organizations for targeted users.”

Employee performance: Employee performance is the total expected value that an individual adds to an organization over a defined period of time (Diamantidis and Chatzoglou, 2019). There are two aspects to this definition. First, employee performance is indexed by behavior. The second implication is that employee performance contributes to organizational value addition (Robbins and Judge, 2017).

Job satisfaction: Job satisfaction refers to the extent to which a worker is satisfied with the rewards s/he receives from his job, particularly in terms of intrinsic motivation (Judge et al., 2020). It contributes to the achievement of recognition, better rewards, and promotion. Job satisfaction also refers to how employees feel about their work. It is therefore a representation of employees’ beliefs, feelings, and perceptions about their work.

Perception of organizational politics: Organizational politics refers to the premeditated use of power by individuals to satisfy their personal interests and goals within the workplace. However, this phenomenon is not a concrete and objective concept. Employee behavior is therefore a response to perceptions of organizational politics (Bouckennooghe et al., 2015). Perception of organizational politics (POPs) is a process by which employees assign meaning to workplace practices after undergoing organization and interpretation of their sensory process (Landells and Albrecht, 2017).

Sustainable competitive advantage: Sustainable competitive advantage (SCA) is a condition in which an organization implements a value-creating corporate strategy

unrivaled by current or potential competitors. In addition, competitors cannot duplicate the benefits of such a strategy due to the rarity, inimitability, and valuableness of its dynamic capabilities (Abideen, 2018; Eisenhardt and Martin, 2000). The internal and external strategic resources of an organization are the basis of SCA (Armstrong, 2007; Barney et al., 1991; Haseeb et al., 2019).

e-HRM and sustainable competitive advantage link: The transaction cost theory (1991) provided the framework for understanding this link. According to this theory, organizations are motivated by a desire to reduce costs. This desire explains organizational arrangements. Poisat and Mey (2017) argue that “cost saving is the driving force behind organizations’ complex, partially outsourced, partially decentralized, and partially delegated e-HRM systems.” The use of information technology (IT) is a process enabler, allowing efficiency gains to be realized (Cordella, 2006).

e-HRM complements SHRM initiatives (Marler and Fisher, 2013; Obeidat, 2016). The adoption and implementation of e-HRM is aimed at maximizing the strategic capabilities of the HR function, by allowing HR professionals to focus on strategic initiatives such as talent management.

Empirical research shows the existence of a positive relationship between e-HRM use and value creation in organizations (Bondarouk et al., 2017; Panos and Bellou, 2015; Ruel and der Kaap, 2012). There is however a lack of consistency in the manner in which e-HRM creates value for organizations. e-HRM use “is only one aspect generating HR value; contextual facilitating factors are of great importance as well” (Ruel and der Kaap, 2012). This study is based on the presupposition that organizations need to invest in e-HRM systems in order to create operational, relational, and transformational value (Ruel and der Kaap, 2012). Therefore, the first hypothesis is as follows:

H₁: The use of e-HRM has a direct and positive effect on sustainable competitive advantage (path c in **Figure 1**).

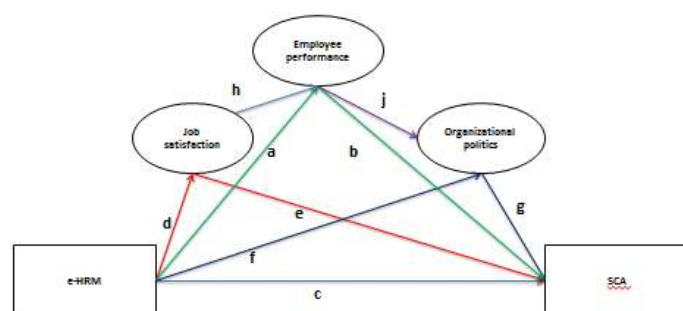


Figure 1. Study model.

e-HRM and employee performance: Some studies posit that e-HRM has an indirect effect on employee performance. The utilization approach (1975), task-technology fit (1995), and technology-performance chain (1995) models represent early attempts to link information technology to employee performance. The utilization approach is based on the assumption that the performance of employees should improve if information technology is used extensively. There is therefore a positive correlation between increased use of IT and employee performance. However,

this approach has been criticized because it assumes that all IT systems are voluntary and accepted by users. Involuntary systems demotivate employees, thereby lowering their performance.

The task-technology fit model (1995) states that performance impacts will result if information technology provides “features and support that fit the requirements of a task, performance impacts will result” (Goodhue and Thompson, 1995). However, because it is based mainly on the use of the system itself, the fit alone does not lead to an increase in performance. The technology-to-performance chain model, which integrates the other models, better explains the relationship between the use of IT and employee performance (Goodhue and Thompson, 1995).

The Autor-Levy-Murnane (ALM) model/task model (2003) identifies routine and non-routine tasks. “Routine jobs have a higher probability of being automated whereas non-routine jobs are more difficult for technology to absorb” (Melian-Gonzalez and Bulchand-Gidumal, 2016). Programmable tasks are easier to perform, resulting in improved employee performance. Therefore, the second hypothesis is as follows:

H₂: The use of e-HRM has an indirect and positive effect on sustainable competitive advantage through employee performance (path ab in **Figure 1**).

e-HRM and job satisfaction: Many studies have confirmed the positive effect of SHRM on job satisfaction (Armstrong, 2008; Kulkarni, 2014; Poisat and Mey, 2017). Vertical and horizontal integration of HR practices allows HR professionals’ jobs to have skill variety, task identity, task significance, feedback, and autonomy. Tasks with these characteristics exhibit high levels of intrinsic motivation. The adoption and implementation of e-HRM positively affect job satisfaction.

The JCM theoretical proposition was used to explain the association of e-HRM with job satisfaction. Bravo et al. (2016) presented two views on the effect of IT on employee behavior. First, automating technology deskills jobs, leading to employee dissatisfaction. Demotivation sets in and job dissatisfaction levels increase when employees lack the skills and abilities to manage requisite e-HRM technology (Sykes et al., 2014). Acquiring new routines and competencies creates more challenges and stress, leading to job dissatisfaction (Sykes et al., 2014; Tafti et al., 2007). Second, information technology liberates employees, removes monotony, and enriches jobs, leading to increased job satisfaction (Bravo et al., 2016). If employees evaluate the use of e-HRM positively, positive employee behavior such as commitment and job satisfaction should result. Therefore, the third hypothesis is as follows:

H₃: The use of e-HRM has an indirect and positive effect on sustainable competitive advantage through job satisfaction (path de in **Figure 1**).

e-HRM and perception of organizational politics: The use of e-HRM on perceived organizational politics can be viewed from the ‘institutional theory with sensemaking theory’ lens. The adoption of any new practices in an organization presents anxiety among employees. In an effort to reduce this anxiety, employees begin a process in which they make sense of proposed changes. In this sense-making process, they develop specific assumptions, attitudes, and expectations of the new practices. This sensemaking shapes subsequent attitudes and actions towards it. On the basis of perception, they can either resist or support the implementation of information systems. Resistance partly explains the unintended consequences of the use of e-HRM.

Most organizational studies show organizational politics as an organizational

stressor that negatively affects employee and organizational performance (Bodla et al., 2014; Perrewe et al., 2012). Few studies have focused on the positive effect of organizational politics on the performance of project team members (Saeed et al., 2013). According to Khalid and Ishaq (2015), perceived organizational politics constitutes an important aspect of organizational life that affects employee and organizational performance in one way or the other.

All information systems redistribute power: They empower one group of employees whilst disempowering another. Those who are disempowered are more likely to resist its adoption, while those who are empowered are more likely to support such organizational change (Gonzalez and Geovany, 2021). This power distribution affects employee and organizational performance. Therefore, the fourth hypothesis is as follows:

H₄: The use of e-HRM has an indirect and positive effect on sustainable competitive advantage through perceived organizational politics (path fg in **Figure 1**).

Assuming causality amongst the three mediators, serial mediation analyses were carried out. The fifth hypothesis is as follows:

H₅: The use of e-HRM has an indirect and positive effect on sustainable competitive advantage through job satisfaction, employee performance, and perception of organizational politics in serial (path ahjg in **Figure 1**).

3. Study model

The use of e-HRM is depicted as directly affecting sustainable competitive advantage. It also indirectly affects sustainable competitive advantage through job satisfaction, employee performance, and organizational politics. Job satisfaction, employee performance, and perceived organizational politics are hypothesized to play mediating roles, as presented in **Figure 1**.

4. Methodology

Sampling procedures: The data used in this study are from 30 organizations in Zimbabwe using e-HRM systems. The survey targeted companies from 12 sectors of the economy. Two inclusion criteria were used to select the participating companies:

- 1) The participating companies should have had a minimum staff establishment of 100;
- 2) At the time of sample determination, they should have implemented e-HRM systems for a minimum period of three years.

The key informants were HR managers, line managers, other HR professionals, and IT employees.

The inclusion criteria were based on the significant resource requirements of e-HRM systems. The use and maintenance of e-HRM systems are partly determined by the size of an organization (Haines and Lafleur, 2008; Strohmeier and Kabst, 2009). Three years have been considered long enough for e-HRM systems to be entrenched in organizations (Bondarouk and Ruel, 2013; Parry and Tyson, 2011). Using a stratified convenience sampling method, 510 respondents were drawn from the population.

A “drop and pick” method was chosen to administer the instrument. This method

was preferred for its relatively higher response rate (Baruch and Holton, 2008). In total, 325 responses were received, constituting a 64% response rate.

Measures: Measures of e-HRM use, sustainable competitive advantage, job satisfaction, employee performance and perception of organizational politics were necessary to assess the direct and indirect effects of e-HRM use on sustainable competitive advantage. All variables were measured on a 5-point Likert scale.

e-HRM use scale: A two dimensions instrument, with “strongly agree” and “strongly disagree” anchors measured e-HRM use. The scale has been used in studies carried out by Wahyudi and Park (2014) and Obedait (2016). The two dimensions are system usefulness and perceived ease of use.

Employee performance: Employee performance was measured using a three-dimensional instrument (Goodman and Svyantek, 1999). The three dimensions are contextual performance, conscientiousness, and task performance. Some studies have established the instrument to be reliable and valid Yusoff et al. (2014).

Job satisfaction scale: A Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire, with “strongly satisfied” and “strongly dissatisfied” anchors was used. The dimensions were intrinsic and extrinsic job satisfaction.

Perception of organizational politics scale: A Kacmar and Carlson (1997) scale was used. It has two dimensions “supervisor behavior” and “pay and promotion policies.” The instrument is reliable as well as high on concurrent validity across cultures (Brubaker, 2012).

Sustainable competitive advantage: A 9-item scale, based on the resource-based value theory was used. These items were originally developed by Ruel et al. (2007) and Panos and Bellou (2016). They focus on the transformational outcomes of using e-HRM. This study treats the construct as a dependent variable.

5. Results

Demographic profile of respondents: 50.5% of the respondents were female, and 49.5% were male. The respondents were drawn from the following sectors: Beverages (16%), mining (15.1%), banking (8.3%), insurance (3.4%), tertiary education (9.5%), retail (2.2%), agriculture (7.1%) agro-industrial (6.8%), food (7.1%), building (5.5%), industrial (5.5%) and technology (8%).

Descriptive statistics: **Table 1** presents the mean scores, standard deviations, and Pearson correlations for the five variables. The table shows that e-HRM use is positively related to job satisfaction, employee performance, perceived organizational politics, and sustainable competitive advantage ($r = 0.227, P \leq 0.01$; $r = 0.179, P \leq 0.01$; $r = 0.244, P \leq 0.01$, and $r = 0.549, P \leq 0.01$ respectively). Job satisfaction, employee performance, and perceived organizational politics were positively related to SCA ($r = 0.588, P \leq 0.01$; $r = 0.304, P \leq 0.01$; $r = 0.315, P \leq 0.01$ respectively). Employee performance positively correlates with perceived organizational politics and job satisfaction ($r = 0.271, P \leq 0.01$; $r = 0.275, P \leq 0.01$, respectively). Job satisfaction was positively related to perceived organizational politics ($r = 0.181, P \leq 0.01$). These findings support the direct and indirect effects of e-HRM use on SCA.

Table 1. Means, standard deviations, and correlations for variables under study.

	Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	Age	46 yrs.	0.911	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2	Experience (Tenure)	12 yrs.	1.16	0.820**	-	-	-	-	-	-
3	Position	-	-	-0.238**	-0.186**	-	-	-	-	-
4	Perceived politics	4.08	0.511	0.093	0.067	-0.010	-	-	-	-
5	SCA	4.26	0.482	0.109	0.028	-0.097	0.315**	-	-	-
6	Job satisfaction	3.80	0.560	0.054	0.018	-0.055	0.181**	0.588**	-	-
7	e-HRM use	4.45	0.525	0.110*	0.041	-0.151**	0.244**	0.549**	0.227**	-
8	Employee performance	4.10	0.450	0.189**	0.170**	-0.120*	0.271**	0.304**	0.275**	0.179**

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). *Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). $N = 325$.

Assessing the structural model: To test the five hypotheses, regression analyses were performed using PROCESS macro in SPSS. The lower and upper levels of the regression coefficients were calculated based on a 95% level of confidence. A mediation hypothesis is insignificant if the confidence interval (95%) spans “0”. The mediation hypothesis is significant if it fails to span “0”.

Regression analyses:

Hypothesis 1: There exists a direct effect of e-HRM use on sustainable competitive advantage.

e-HRM use has a positive and statistically significant effect on sustainable competitive advantage ($\beta = 0.5254$, $se = 0.0448$, $P < 0.05$). This model is significant, explaining 29.9% of the variance in sustainable competitive advantage as a result of e-HRM use. Hypothesis 1 is accepted. An increase in the use of e-HRM should see improved sustainable competitive advantage (see **Table 2**).

Table 2. Serial mediation.

Path	coeff	P	LLCI	ULCI	Decision
e-HRM $\rightarrow$ SCA $R - sq = 0.2987$	0.5254	0.0000	0.4373	0.6136	Supported
	Indirect Effect	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI	Decision
TOTAL	0.1387	0.0276	0.0879	0.1955	-
e-HRM $\rightarrow js \rightarrow$ SCA	0.0799	0.0238	0.0362	0.1295	Supported
e-HRM $\rightarrow ep \rightarrow$ SCA	0.0131	0.0099	-0.0041	0.0353	Unsupported
e-HRM $\rightarrow op \rightarrow$ SCA	0.0206	0.0105	0.0032	0.0438	Supported
e-HRM $\rightarrow js \rightarrow ep \rightarrow op \rightarrow$ SCA	0.0004	0.0004	-0.0003	0.0014	Unsupported
e-HRM $\rightarrow js \rightarrow ep \rightarrow$ SCA	0.0189	0.0076	0.0062	0.0357	Supported
e-HRM $\rightarrow ep \rightarrow op \rightarrow$ SCA	0.0042	0.0030	0.0003	0.0119	Supported
e-HRM $\rightarrow js \rightarrow op \rightarrow$ SCA	0.0016	0.0016	-0.0011	0.0054	Unsupported

Key: *ep*, employee performance; *js*, job satisfaction; *op*, perception of organizational politics; e-HRM, e-HRM use; SCA, sustainable competitive advantage.

Hypothesis 2: There exists an indirect effect of e-HRM use on sustainable competitive advantage through employee performance.

The indirect effect of e-HRM use on sustainable competitive advantage in serial is positive but statistically insignificant. ($\beta = 0.0131$, $BootSE = 0.0099$). Zero is

sandwiched by the confidence interval (−0.0041 to 0.0353). The mediation model fails to identify partial mediation linked to employee performance. Hypothesis 2 is therefore rejected (see **Table 2**)

Hypothesis 3: There exists an indirect effect of e-HRM use on sustainable competitive advantage through job satisfaction.

The indirect effect of e-HRM use on sustainable competitive advantage (**Table 2**) is positive and statistically significant ($\beta = 0.0799$, $BootSE = 0.0238$). Zero is outside the confidence interval (0.0362 to 0.1295). The mediation effects model identifies partial mediation linked to job satisfaction. Hypothesis 3 is therefore accepted.

Hypothesis 4: There exists an indirect effect of e-HRM use on sustainable competitive advantage through organizational politics.

The indirect effect of e-HRM use on sustainable competitive advantage is positive and statistically significant ($\beta = 0.0206$, $BootSE = 0.0105$). Zero lies outside the confidence interval (0.0032 to 0.0238). Partial mediation linked to organizational politics is identified in the mediation effect model. Hypothesis 4 is therefore accepted (see **Table 2**).

Hypothesis 5: There exists an indirect effect of e-HRM use on organizational performance through job satisfaction, employee performance, and organizational politics in serial.

The indirect effect of e-HRM use on sustainable competitive advantage through job satisfaction, employee performance, and perceived organizational politics is positive but insignificant ($\beta = 0.0004$, $BootSE = 0.0004$). Zero is within the confidence interval (−0.0003 to 0.0014) (**Table 2**). The fifth hypothesis is rejected. The finding does not support serial mediation involving the three mediators.

However, there are three paths resulting from the mediation of any of the following two intervening variables. First, there is serial mediation involving job satisfaction and employee performance. The indirect effect of job satisfaction and employee performance is positive and statistically significant ($\beta = 0.0189$, $BootSE = 0.0076$). Zero lies outside the confidence interval (0.0062 to 0.0357). There is support for partial mediation linked to job satisfaction and employee performance. Second, the indirect effect of employee performance and organizational politics is positive and statistically significant ($\beta = 0.0042$, $BootSE = 0.0030$). Zero lies outside the confidence interval (0.0003 to 0.0119). There is support for partial mediation linked to these two mediators (employee performance and organizational politics). Third, the indirect effect of job satisfaction and organizational politics is positive but statistically insignificant ($\beta = 0.0016$, $BootSE = 0.0016$). Zero is within the confidence interval (−0.0011 to 0.0054) (**Table 2**). There is no support for partial mediation linked to job satisfaction and organizational politics.

6. Discussion

The key question directing this study was whether the variables of job satisfaction, employee performance, and perceived organizational politics enhance the effect of e-HRM on sustainable competitive advantage.

H₁: There is a positive direct effect of e-HRM use on sustainable competitive

advantage.

This finding has been corroborated by previous studies (Bondarouk and Ruel, 2013; Obeidat, 2016; Ruel and Kaap, 2012; Wahyudi and Park, 2014). Using e-HRM enhances corporate sustainable competitive advantage. Investing in an e-HRM system is justified based on organizational gains, such as strategic planning, increased organizational effectiveness, and enhanced innovativeness. However, Parry and Tyson (2011) argue that the introduction of e-HRM systems alone is not a sufficient condition for the attainment of desired organizational outcomes. In order to enhance this effect, intervening variables are needed.

H₂: There is a positive indirect effect of e-HRM use on sustainable competitive advantage through employee performance.

These results indicate that employee performance is not a statistically significant mediating variable between e-HRM use and sustainable competitive advantage. Therefore, hypothesis 1 is rejected. This finding implies that management should examine other employee outcomes to achieve a position of sustainable competitive advantage. No known study has looked at the mediating role of employee outcomes (Obeidat, 2016).

H₃: There is a positive indirect effect of e-HRM use on sustainable competitive advantage through job satisfaction.

The indirect effect of the use of e-HRM on sustainable competitive advantage is positive and statistically significant. The model shows partial medial mediation through job satisfaction. The importance of job satisfaction as a mediator is a new addition to the current knowledge. This study is the first attempt to explore the effects of mediation in this link. Bondarouk et al. (2017) suggested the need to explore such a role by stating that “future research should pay attention to potential mediators or moderators affecting adoption and consequences.” Successful communication during the use of e-HRM results in increased job satisfaction (Beulen, 2009). In order to achieve a sustainable competitive advantage, management should invest in HRM practices that maintain high job satisfaction.

H₄: There is a positive indirect effect of e-HRM use on sustainable competitive advantage through organizational politics.

The indirect effect of e-HRM on sustainable competitive advantage through perceived organizational politics is positive and significant. There is successful partial mediation. A few sources allude to the mediation role of perceived organizational politics (Chang et al., 2009; Miner, 2015). HRM practices, such as emotional intelligence training, can reduce the negative effect of perceived organizational politics, enhance work attitudes, and create sustainable competitive advantage (Meisler and Vigoda-Gadot, 2013).

H₅: There is a positive indirect effect of e-HRM use on sustainable competitive advantage through job satisfaction, employee performance, and organizational politics in serial.

This result does not support serial mediation involving the three variables. There is no known literature that has explored such joint mediation in serial. This finding is not supported nor refuted in the literature.

Theoretical implications: The findings of this study have several theoretical implications. First, the use of e-HRM positively contributes to sustainable competitive

advantage through job satisfaction. This finding is in line with previous studies that found that e-HRM use positively impacts job satisfaction (Morris and Venkatesh, 2010; Sykes et al., 2014; Tafti et al., 2007). The use of e-HRM positively affects autonomy, feedback, and skill variety. These job characteristics have a positive impact on job satisfaction. The implementation of e-HRM should be complemented by HR practices aimed at motivating employees.

Second, the use of e-HRM has a positive effect on sustainable competitive advantage through perceived organizational politics. These findings are in line with previous studies that found that e-HRM use positively impacts perceived organizational politics (Chang et al., 2009; Meisler and Vigoda-Gadot, 2013; Miner, 2015). The use of the phenomenon should be complemented by emotional intelligence training in order to change employees' perceptions of politics and increase job satisfaction.

Thirdly, the mediating effects of job satisfaction and employee performance are superior to the other effects. This study is the first to explore the mediation effects of employee outcomes. Job satisfaction and employee performance contribute to enhancing sustainable competitive advantage efforts in the context of complementary HR interventions.

Managerial implications: The findings of this study have implications for management practice. These results indicate that the use of e-HRM results in positive strategic organizational outcomes. The human resource function deserves a seat in the boardroom. In order to pursue and achieve organizational excellence, e-HRM should complement other HRM practices. In order to achieve sustainable competitive advantage, it is recommended that practitioners adopt e-HRM as one of the many available interventions.

Organizations enhance the effect of e-HRM use on job satisfaction by enhancing relevant cognitive skills required by employees to use e-HRM systems as intended. Management should monitor employee commitment and motivation during the implementation of e-HRM systems. An empowered and satisfied workforce enhances the achievement of sustainable competitive advantage.

7. Limitations and future research direction

Although this study has managed to achieve its objectives, the findings should be treated with caution. First, this study suffers from a 'single source bias'. Second, the study was cross-sectional. It is disadvantaged by the 'Neyman bias'. Cross-sectional studies fail to capture processes that evolve with time. Therefore, an in-depth understanding of the relationship between the use of e-HRM and sustainable competitive advantage is limited. Future research exploring the effect of organizational culture as a mediating variable should help advance theory development.

8. Conclusion

This study investigated the mediating role of job satisfaction, employee performance, and perceived organizational politics in enhancing the effect of e-HRM usage on sustainable competitive advantage. This study proposes an integrated model

in which job satisfaction and employee performance mediate the association. This model enhances e-HRM's impact on sustainable competitive advantage better than any other mediation effort of these three mediators.

Conflict of interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

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Article

Impact of corporate social responsibility on employees' attractiveness in hospitality industry

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Abstract: This study begins the conversation on the impact that applicant CSR orientation has on a major phase of workforce development—employer attractiveness. There is also virtually no research that investigates CSRO and workforce development. Meanwhile, this present research effort provides evidence that there is some basic relationship between CSRO and employer attractiveness. The data comes from 280 participants who are interested in joining the hospitality and tourism industries in Pakistan. Structural equation modeling was used to analyze the data. The results showed that all four dimensions are significant predictors of employers' attractiveness. More specifically, the ethical aspect of CSR has a stronger impact on employers' attractiveness, whereas discretionary behavior in CSR has the least impact. The implications for academicians, researchers, and managers in the hospitality industry are given in detail.

Keywords: corporate social responsibility; employer attractiveness; hospitality industry

1. Introduction

The researchers have described socially responsible behaviors, including philanthropy, ethical behavior, and voluntarism (Stump, 1999). Yet with this interest, only 13% of the 1738 empirical articles published in *Academy of Management* publications between 1958 and 2000 addressed social issues in management (Walsh et al., 2003). An abundance of recent researchers identify Carroll's work as a foundation and framework for their studies with respect to corporate social responsibility (Smith et al., 2001). In the past several years, the relationships between organizations' CSR and workforce development have been explored increasingly (Thorsteinson et al., 2004; Ishaq et al., 2023). The effects of CSR on employee satisfaction, leadership development, diversity, retention, employee relations, and performance have been investigated (Lee et al., 2013). Researchers have explored whether an organization's CSR positively stimulates recruiting efforts (Chaudhary, 2020). Much of this research involved researchers presenting students with vignettes with narrative descriptions, or rankings of employer behaviors and social performance evidence, and then measuring stakeholder reactions to the presented materials (Turker, 2009).

Reactions to organizations' CSR have some interesting implications for employers, especially those in tight labor markets (Albinger and Freeman, 2000). Employers are becoming conscious of the growing number of employees who opt for careers in firms that exhibit socially responsible behaviors, or at least in comparison to other employers that the candidates are considering (Backhouse, 2002). Corporate

social performance is positively related to the employment intentions of job seekers with high levels of job choice (Albinger and Freeman, 2000). Environmental factors and individual demographics such as minority status and gender are important in their decision-making process as well (Seara et al., 2023). Hinson et al. (2018) report that women and men are attracted to firms with more positive ratings on some social responsiveness issues and will seek employment with these firms over firms with lower ratings. The minority status of those surveyed may also be a factor in rating perceptions of CSR (Pinkston and Carroll, 1996), with minorities more positively viewing organizations when they exhibit higher levels of CSR.

An employer's efficacy at attracting and retaining employees will determine its survivability (Ma et al., 2023; Raza et al., 2023). Recent studies conducted by the Center for Effective Organizations using robust business analytics have provided a bleak picture of how organizations attract and retain human capital (Story et al., 2016). With changing demographics, employer needs, technology, and global competition, attracting employees will continue to be a major business requirement. Any advantage employers can leverage may determine success in the global market (Lis, 2018). During the same period, relationships between organizations and their environment, including relations to society at large, competitors, and other stakeholders, have been studied (Ma et al., 2023). Organizations have to consider that they operate in a larger environment that impacts their strategy and operations. Some suggest that organizations attempt to align internal operations with changes in the environment in order to exert influence over the circumstances in which they operate (Zaid et al., 2013).

A great number of studies, articles, and books attest to the value of leveraging CSR (Ma et al., 2022; Sarwar et al., 2023). Substantial evidence suggests employers who are aware of their social responsibility can use it to manage their reputations (Lee et al., 2023). With more positive reputations and corporate images, organizations can influence employee behaviors and some employment candidate actions (Ma et al., 2023). As early as the early 1980s, thoughtful leaders were beginning to question if CSR had an impact on workforce issues (Drucker, 1984).

The potential employees have served as subjects because they are in demand and usually a source for future managers (Sohn et al., 2015); they serve as a great pool of potential employees. They are also common research subjects. More research should be conducted to help understand why and how potential employees make job decisions (Handy et al., 2020). If researchers can assist employers in identifying organizational behaviors that potential employees find more attractive, employers may be able to develop socially responsible behaviors and communicate these as a strategy that will increase their competitiveness in the labor market (Ali et al., 2023). Researchers have discussed the importance of measuring potential employees' perceptions of employer social responsibility prior to entering the workforce (Albinger and Freeman, 2000).

Recent studies have attempted to investigate social responsibility and/or social performance in relation to employer selection (Albinger and Freeman, 2000; Ma et al., 2023). Typically, the CSR behaviors or attitudes of an organization are presented, or corporate social performance evidence is provided, and then stakeholders are prompted to rate the probability of engaging in employment actions with these

organizations (Albinger and Freeman, 2000; Sarwar et al., 2022). While corporate social responsibility orientation (CSRO) has been measured on a variety of stakeholder groups, such as chief executives and leaders, investors, and consumers, no identified research has explored the CSRO of subjects responding to corporate behaviors and then rating employer attractiveness. Therefore, the current study aims to determine the impact of CSRO on employees' attractiveness in the hospitality industry of Pakistan.

2. Literature review

2.1. Stakeholder theory

Businesses' roles are being redefined through partnerships with their stakeholders and philanthropy in their communities as they also create corporate wealth for their stockholders (Stuss, 2018). With this wealth, some would argue, comes a greater responsibility for how businesses interact with society (McWilliams and Siegel, 2001). The study of the relationship between organizations and their environments is not new (Davis and Powell, 1992). Specifically, researchers have studied stakeholders in depth (Wang et al., 2022). For decades, an interactionist perspective has been offered in those states where there is a balance between individual and organizational needs (Davis and Powell, 1992). What is new is the assessment that the organization-environment relationship has a critical impact on workforce development activities such as recruiting new employees (Ma et al., 2023). It even has an impact on retention and employee commitment. Organizational leaders must realize the rapidly changing and socioeconomic complexity of the environment (Biswas and Suar, 2016). Some companies view CSR as part of a general responsibility to society that permits them to operate (Biswas and Suar, 2016). Others view it more strategically, analyzing CSR's relationship to or impact on stakeholders in the interest of the firm (Carroll, 2016). Some scholars and businesspeople argue that businesses should serve society in exchange for using their resources (Sanchez, 2000), while others opine that the only responsibility of business is to be profitable (Ma et al., 2023). Still, others state that social responsibilities exist, but they must be better defined (Bharadwaj et al., 2022; Franzoni et al., 2021).

Stakeholder literature explains businesses' role in society, presenting CSR in relation to business performance, leader behaviors, customer perceptions, and community expectations. Stakeholder management literature provides insight into how organizations respond to the needs of other stakeholders, not just shareholders (Biswas and Suar, 2016). CSR becomes a significant lens for viewing stakeholder needs. It also impacts the image or reputation that these stakeholders have for organizations (Biswas and Suar, 2016). An organization's image and reputation may signal specific stakeholders. The perception that organizations have a lack of social responsibility or lack of concern for society may result in stakeholders, such as consumers and environmentalists, boycotting goods and services. More positive CSR behaviors or performance may signal stakeholders, such as investors and government agencies, to interact in a manner that benefits the organization.

2.2. Corporate social responsibility

A more humanistic approach to educating managers during the past 50 years has affected many leaders' perceptions of CSR (Biswas and Suar, 2016). Some of this resulted from successful businesses and their leaders realizing a more comprehensive view of business in society (Drucker, 1984). For instance, Sears Roebuck adopted the fledgling 4-H program due to its leadership's understanding that Sears' prosperity depended on its customers' growth and competency, many of whom were farmers. The 4-H program was a strategic way to help farmers increase productivity, therefore increasing the profitability of Sears. This and similar examples of intertwined business objectives and societal responsibilities have influenced modern social responsibilities. In the past, most social responsibility funding was not focused; it was managed at the discretion of the CEO. Funding came from community affairs budgets with no relationship to the bottom line (Agle et al., 1999). The new trend is for these same types of investments to come out of operations and/or marketing budgets with an expected ROI (Campbell et al., 1999). More and more companies are adjusting budgets to create win-win situations (Yu, 2003). Society benefits, as do organizations that are socially responsible. Business leaders from DuPont to Shell are now encouraging their peers to align business strategy, social investments, and societal needs. With this new direction, more emphasis will be placed on measuring the ROI and evaluating the social issues targeted.

Arguments in favor of CSR, particularly meeting discretionary needs, usually have ethical underpinnings (Younis and Hammad, 2020). One component begins with the position that the stakeholders of organizations should benefit from their productivity, not just the stockholders (Freeman, 1984). Some companies that view CSR and philanthropy more strategically analyze the impact on business performance and customer perceptions (Porter and van der Linde, 1995). Arguments against CSR are usually founded on managerial competency or property rights (Saini et al., 2022). Simply stated, most organizational leaders do not have the competency to make decisions in the social arena or the right to give away stockholder value.

Carroll's approach to CSR is a framework others have used in order to acquire some consistency in operational definitions (Albinger and Freeman, 2000). Wood (1991) suggests that these four types of needs that society are also domains of responsibility in which managers can operate. Other researchers have established that managers can use Carroll's four-component model to frame firms' roles in society, as well (Raj, 2020). Before an organization can help multiple stakeholders in society, however, it must first ensure its economic viability. In fact, Carroll (1999) states that securing economic viability is one way that organizations provide for society, even though many do not share this view. Many leaders believe that if their organizations follow a successful profit ethic, they will maximize social welfare and promote the best interests of society without a conscious effort (Hoppe et al., 2022). There have been critics of the four-domain model that Carroll presented in 1979, however, so many researchers have still used it as the basis for their research. Some of the criticism comes from research that demonstrated that respondents could not clearly distinguish between economic and legal responsibilities (Ma et al., 2023).

Using frameworks and models, some researchers have attempted to develop

instrumentation to measure social performance and the CSR orientation of key stakeholders (Biswas and Suar, 2016). Carroll (1999) suggests that multiple probes of the organization must be attempted to gain a full understanding of an organization's social responsibility. This is supported by Zhang et al. (2020), who suggest that it is beneficial to measure multiple stakeholders to gain a better understanding of social responsibility, not just one respondent group. Corporate social performance should not be measured on one isolated issue or stakeholder group. Rather, it should be a comprehensive assessment of at least four or five issues (Carroll, 1999). Researchers are calling for the field to reconsider how social responsibility is defined for research (Silva and Dias, 2022). The present research relied on Carroll's four faces of CSR as the basis for this exploration. It uses CSR orientation research that used Carroll's original four-component model of CSR (Catano et al., 2016). While Carroll has revisited his four-component CSR construct, the present research is intentionally scoped using the four responsibilities originally posited by Carroll (2016).

2.3. CSR, organizational fit, and individual values

The formal adoption and implementation of CSR by corporations could be associated with the personal values and CSRO of individual managers (Catano et al., 2016). Values have been defined as basic personal goals that people hold and aspire to achieve (Ma et al., 2023). They have also been defined as concepts and beliefs about desirable states of behavior that transcend situations and guide the evaluation of specific behaviors (Schwartz and Bilsky, 1987).

Organizations exist across the lifetimes of many generations of their members. There are many who believe an organization cannot be a moral actor (Ma et al., 2023). The debate on this issue will continue, however, the fact is that in order to determine organizational values regarding CSR, one has to consider the values, motives, and choices of those making decisions for the organization (Ma et al., 2023). The culture, personality, and values of these leaders shape the values of the organization (Freeman, 1984). Zhang et al.'s (2020) recent study provides clear evidence that individual managers' organizations' decisions are driven not only by their organizational objectives but also by a variety of personal values. Individuals' values as managers can shape the moral environments in which they work (Jakob et al., 2022). A new generation of managers is emerging that has been educated about the needs of society in terms of the planet and fellow citizens and is eager to act. Their value orientation, Concern for Economic Performance, and Concern for Society will influence organizations, and these values will be exhibited through organizational behavior. As they influence their organizations, other members will be expected to understand these values.

Individuals use values to manage their lives, including when they make decisions about occupations and organizations for which they will join (Catano et al., 2016). Lin et al. (2012) propose that individuals are attracted to organizations that they perceive as having similar values to themselves. Organizations attempt to recruit employees who share their values. Values act as a starting point for organization-people fit (Catano et al., 2016). Employees may have an intrinsic belief that organizations have a responsibility to engage in socially responsible behavior. In order to fulfill this

intrinsic value, a state of mind regarding social responsibility must be achieved. They must place instrumental value on activities that will lead to making their beliefs regarding social responsibility an intrinsic value. This intrinsic value will then impact the types of organizations that job candidates seek to “fit”. This does not mean, however, that the values of individuals and organizations are identical (Ma et al., 2022). It does mean that these values should “fit” with the majority of the organization’s members. Abell and Becker (2021) have shown that where there is an overlap between employee and organization values, employees tend to show a preference for and demonstrate commitment to the organization.

The notion of employee-organization fit has long been important to researchers in organizational behavior (Catano et al., 2016). Researchers have attempted to look at employee behavior and test stakeholder salience by comparing values, performance, and CSR; however, findings related to this relationship are not clear (Jones et al., 2014). Some research indicates that social performance directly affects the behaviors and attitudes of organizations’ present employees (Abraham et al., 2021). Few studies have examined the effect of organizations’ records of CSR on their ability to attract new employees (Caputo et al., 2023). The research that does exist varies. Defining employer attractiveness begins with understanding organizational entry, organizational choice, and recruiting in organizations.

2.4. Employee attractiveness

The quality of human capital and the role of knowledge are increasingly becoming competitive multipliers (Catano et al., 2016). Firms that will be successful must create, manage, and transfer knowledge that makes them competitive (Greening and Turban, 2000). Attracting new employees is a primary avenue to capture new knowledge. Organizations must recruit, hire, and develop employees to increase organizational capacity (Schneider, 1976). They must develop and activate staffing strategies that share information about the organizations and increase the likelihood that the best candidates will select them and stay as value-added employees.

Job applicants must acquire information about firms. Organizations must take steps to measure and influence familiarity with stakeholders and moderate information (Day et al., 2013). Different types of people are attracted to different types of organizations. The information provided should consider multiple stakeholder perspectives (Catano et al., 2016). Researchers have investigated information such as reward structure, centralization, organizational size (Ma et al., 2023), and geographical dispersion of locations in relation to organizational attractiveness (Turban and Keon, 1993). Attractiveness may be mediated by the applicant’s perception of the leader’s style or the environment and the degree to which intrinsic rewards are available (Schneider, 1976). Some candidates even choose to respond to employers based on corporate image or social responsibility (Lin et al., 2012).

It seems clear that relationships between social responsibility, image, and attractiveness are complex and are influenced by various other characteristics (Lin et al., 2012). Employers and their reputations are part of the equation; the individual characteristics of job seekers are another part. Individual characteristics also moderate the influence of organizational characteristics on attraction to firms (Turban and Keon,

1993). For instance, religion (applicant or organization) is a highly valued characteristic for some that may influence perceptions of organizations (Catano et al., 2016).

2.5. CSR & employee attractiveness

There are two views on organizational choice. The first, systemic rational, assumes that humans are rational and will act in systemic ways. They will seek out information about the organization and alternative organizations and attempt to maximize the likelihood that the organization will meet applicants' job wants. The second view, termed unprogrammed, occurs when individuals make choices with less information and planning about the organization. Applicants get data about their most important job wants and then rationalize once a decision is made that they have met a wider array of factors (Newburry et al., 2023). The way employees seek to make organizational choices is important for organizations to contemplate as they create recruiting strategies.

Companies invest considerable resources into recruiting and selecting employees (Dauth et al., 2023). This investment is frequently in the form of recruitment ads that must grab attention, capture interest, instill desire, and provoke action in order to be successful (Belt and Paolillo, 1982). Organizations attempt to hire employees who meet specific criteria, while members of the labor force look to have certain needs met. Catano et al. (2016) identify the population for recruitment as the labor force population. Members of the labor force who respond to recruitment advertisements and are elevated for selection are considered part of the applicant pool (Abraham et al., 2021). The quality of this applicant pool from the total workforce is increasingly becoming a competitive multiplier (Jones et al., 2014). Employers must compete for the scarce talent available in the workforce and should commit resources to attracting applicants.

Reactions to organizations' social responsibility have some interesting implications for employers in a tight labor market. Actions of organizations, that prompt positive reactions from external stakeholders, can have direct, positive effects on the organizations' employees (Abraham et al., 2021). Behaviors that prompt negative reactions can have corresponding detrimental effects on their employees (Koys, 2001; Riordan et al., 1997). The results indicate that corporate social performance is positively related to employer attractiveness for job seekers with high levels of job choice, but not related to seekers with fewer choices. Greening and Turban (2000) report that women and men are attracted to firms with more positive CSR. On some social responsiveness issues, they will seek employment with these firms rather than with firms with lower rates.

Some firms assume a relationship between social responsibility and attracting employees (Day et al. 2013). Some firms base their actions on the understanding that social responsibility correlates with maintaining a satisfied workforce (Raj, 2020). Zhang et al. (2020) demonstrated that organizations with higher social performance levels are more attractive as employers. Based on CSR research, it seems that firms that don't pollute, that provide employee support, and that show greater community responsibility can expect to engage applicants on much more favorable terms

(Greening and Turban, 2000). This may be why there has been an increase in advertising by Fortune 500 firms drawing attention to their CSR (Sen and Bhattacharya, 2001). Research on employee satisfaction, organizational citizenship behavior, and turnover suggests that corporate citizenship impacts employee satisfaction as well (Lin et al., 2012).

Stuss (2018) suggests that organizations should closely align their legal, marketing, and philanthropic efforts to establish themselves as organizations with humanistic orientations in order to attract stakeholders, including employees and stockholders. Greening and Turban (2000) and Wang et al. (2022) suggest that companies that wish to be competitive in attracting candidates should pay attention to their social responsibility. Organizations that do this consistently may have reduced employee turnover, greater levels of job satisfaction, and greater performance and innovation levels (Jackob et al., 2022).

Based on the above literature, we propose two hypotheses:

H1: CSRO has a significant impact on employees' attractiveness.

H2: The relationship between CSRO and employees' attractiveness is different for males and females.

The conceptual framework is presented in **Figure 1**.

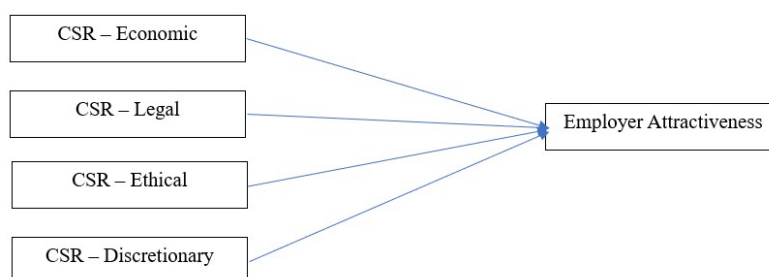


Figure 1. Conceptual framework.

3. Research methodology

3.1. Sample and data collection

The sample frame is intended to identify the sample units in a population. Dillman (2000) identifies the sample frame as the “list from which the sample is to be drawn in order to represent the survey population” (p. 194). For the present research, the sample frame was defined as business students at three regional universities. Identifying students for the sample was important. There is research that indicates that students respond differently to a variety of issues including ethics. There is also evidence that different types of students make employment decisions differently. Specifically, Master of Business Administration (MBA) students generally rate legal/ethical conduct relatively high compared to undergraduate students and social responsibility higher overall than undergraduates. Typically, critics charge that students are biased samples or populations when attempting to collect information and then generalize it to greater populations. Since the employer's target students are a valuable source for recruiting, this was not considered a limitation. Colleges are a key source of managerial and professional talent for organizations.

A total of 400 questionnaires were sent to MBA students at different universities in Pakistan. All these students are either enrolled in their last semesters or graduated within three months. The questionnaire includes a comprehensive cover letter that provides all the necessary information, such as the objectives of this research, consent for participation, surety for anonymous responses, and the right to withdraw at any point during the data collection phase. At the end of data collection, we received 297 questionnaires, of which 17 were deleted due to missing values or high/low responses on all responses. Therefore, 280 questionnaires were used in the final analyses.

3.2. Instrumentation

We used the Maignan and Ferrell (2000) scale to determine four dimensions of corporate social responsibility among potential employees. This scale has seventeen items with four dimensions, namely economic citizenship, legal citizenship, ethical citizenship, and discretionary citizenship. A sample item is “This company is recognized as trustworthy.”

We used a three-item scale to determine employer attractiveness. Research has indicated that multiple action scales can be used by subjects to identify their attractiveness to organizations. Researchers have asked applicants to rate their agreement and employment intent on scales as a means to investigate attractiveness. Consistent with this literature on employer attractiveness, respondent ratings of individual statements were collapsed into one mean score for each organization to represent the degree of perceived employer attractiveness.

All items were measured on a five-point Likert scale, where 1 = strongly disagree, and 5 = strongly agree.

4. Results

4.1. Measurement model

In the first phase of data analysis, the measurement model was tested using AMOS 22. The purpose of this model testing was to determine the reliability and validity of the variables under investigation. The model fitness shows adequate fit ($\chi^2/df = 685.69/232$, $p = 0.001$, CFI = 0.94, RMSEA = 0.057, SRMR = 0.046, NFI = 0.93). The convergent validity was determined using composite reliability (CR > 0.70), and average variance extraction (AVE 0.50), whereas reliability was checked using Cronbach’s alpha ($\alpha > 0.70$). **Table 1** indicates that all the values are well above the given threshold values, therefore, the data confirms its reliability and validity.

Table 1. Measurement model.

Variable	Items	Factor loading range	CR	AVE	Cronbach’s alpha
CSR—Economic	17	0.72–0.89	0.80	0.59	0.81
CSR—Legal					
CSR—Ethical					
CSR—Discretionary					
Employer attractiveness	3	0.76–0.84	0.86	0.61	0.85

4.2. Mean and correlation

Table 2 provides the descriptive statistics and correlations among the four dimensions of CSR, and employers' attractiveness among the potential employees who are interested in joining the hospitality sector. As indicated, all four dimensions are positively correlated with the dependent variable.

Table 2. Descriptive and correlation.

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5
CSR—Economic	4.01	0.57	1.00				
CSR—Legal	3.98	0.62	0.48***	1.00			
CSR—Ethical	4.25	0.66	0.39***	0.27***	1.00		
CSR—Discretionary	4.00	0.84	0.34***	0.31***	0.46***	1.00	
Employer attractiveness	4.10	0.53	0.53***	0.55***	0.32***	0.28***	1.00

*** $p = 0.001$.

4.3. Structural model

The hypotheses were tested using structural equation modeling via AMOS 22. As shown in **Table 3**, ethical citizenship has a stronger impact on employers' attractiveness (beta = 0.458, $p = 0.001$), followed by legal citizenship (beta = 0.392, $p = 0.001$), economic citizenship (beta = 0.380, $p = 0.001$), and discretionary citizenship (beta = 0.227, $p = 0.001$). These results support H1, which states that CSR dimensions have a positive impact on employers' attractiveness.

Table 3. Path analyses.

Path	Beta	SE	p
CSR—Economic → Employer attractiveness	0.380	0.047	0.000
CSR—Legal → Employer attractiveness	0.392	0.013	0.000
CSR—Ethical → Employer attractiveness	0.458	0.020	0.000
CSR—Discretionary → Employer attractiveness	0.227	0.064	0.000

A group analysis between males and females was performed to determine whether gender has a differential role in seeing the impact of CSR orientations on employers' attractiveness. **Table 4** shows the significant differences between males and females. For instance, male respondents are more focused on the ethical aspect of CSR, whereas females see a legal aspect of CSR.

Table 4. Group differences.

Path	Male			Female		
	Beta	SE	p	Beta	SE	p
CSR—Economic → Employer attractiveness	0.343	0.029	0.000	0.382	0.068	0.000
CSR—Legal → Employer attractiveness	0.280	0.036	0.000	0.579	0.015	0.000
CSR—Ethical → Employer attractiveness	0.501	0.042	0.000	0.331	0.043	0.000
CSR—Discretionary → Employer attractiveness	0.316	0.039	0.000	0.305	0.057	0.000

5. Discussion and implications

This study examined the relationship between corporate social responsibility orientation and employment attractiveness, as well as moderating variables. It was important to discover that students differentiate among employers with varying degrees of CSR; previous research has not clearly demonstrated this difference in a framework consistent with Carroll's nomenclature. Lin et al. (2012) and others established a relationship between organizational attractiveness and social performance. This research relied on measuring attractiveness in relation to organizational social performance based on factors such as the establishment of diversity programs, military contracting, community involvement, and employee relations (Lievens and Highhouse, 2003; Turban and Greening, 1997). While all of these may be components of what many perceive as ethical or discretionary behaviors, there is little research that looks at employer attractiveness as it relates to an aggregated corporate social responsibility orientation. For instance, the ten discretionary statements utilized in Aupperle's framework provide an aggregated view, while one specific behavior, such as an organization's behavior related to diversity programs, provides a less comprehensive indicator of social responsibility.

These findings here are important because 1) they validate the researcher's assumption that respondents will differentiate between organization descriptions required for this study, and 2) they add to the literature regarding the way in which degrees of CSR are measured. So, first, it was important to establish subject response consistency prior to testing this study's conceptual framework; if students could not differentiate among organizations with varying CSR behaviors, then CSR would not be considered a factor in student decision-making when selecting an employer. Second, prior CSR research assumes that individuals respond to differences in organizations' ethical, economic, and discretionary behaviors. Research furthermore indicates that people respond to certain aspects of these behaviors (e.g., stock performance, code of conduct, and philanthropy); but no empirical research investigating such CSR behaviors has examined them in the aggregate. This study provided evidence that job seekers will differentiate between varying degrees of aggregated organizational behaviors.

Although few previous studies have directly examined variations in CSR and their relationship to employer attractiveness, research has demonstrated that females tend to view social responsibility in the legal aspect as more important than males in determining organizational effectiveness (Carrol, 2016; Hoppe et al., 2022). Females also appear to identify economic responsibilities as less crucial than non-economic ones (Stuss, 2018), and generally express a greater interest in a firm's societal orientation (Backhaus et al., 2002). Given these previous findings, it is not surprising that this study showed female respondents to be more attracted to those organizations with greater behaviors associated with high CSR (e.g., high discretionary behaviors). Females clearly view CSR differently than males and place a similarly differential emphasis on its importance.

5.1. Implications for theory

Results from the present research both validated several previous theories and

research efforts as well as provided contrary evidence. By finding support for the relationship between individual corporate social responsibility orientation and perceptions of employer attractiveness, this study provided a quantitative examination of how individual orientation, as well as other individual characteristics, impact employer attractiveness ratings thus validating the usefulness of CSR. The present study presents the opportunity to revisit the original conceptual framework and suggest modifications. It also supports the construct of CSR advocated by Carroll (1999) and others (Handy et al., 2020), advances the role that individual CSRO plays in prospective employment decisions, supports the importance of examining demographic and other individual characteristics when considering influences on employer attractiveness, and therefore ultimately contributes to the body of literature concerning factors relating to workforce development and, more specifically, employer attractiveness.

This study provides implications for theories within both the CSR and workforce development disciplines. The first major implication is that Carroll's (1999) framework instrument is still relevant in guiding practitioners' and researchers' understanding of corporate social responsibility. Second, there is a need to understand both global conceptualizations of how people form perceptions of positive organizational social responsibility, as well as the way that they understand specific components of ethical, legal, and discretionary behavior. Third, this study implies that CSRO value orientation is an important factor with job seekers and can significantly impact perceptions of employer attractiveness, especially if job seekers perceive a lack of responsibility in the employers.

Researchers have often asked managers to identify the organizational perspective of espoused values and/or actual behaviors that describe corporate social responsibility (Sohn et al., 2015). In the past, board members and executives have used Aupperle's instrument to report on an organization's CSR (Ma et al., 2022). This study attempted to examine CSR from a very individual perspective, that of the prospective employee. This individualized perspective needs more theoretical consideration and study. In particular, the current study leaves open the question as to whether or not an individual's value orientation or other characteristics are more important in the job search process than organizational characteristics such as economic performance, treatment of minorities, organization image, or reputation. Prior research has established that corporate behaviors and images influence individual behaviors (Albinger and Freeman, 2000). One theoretical contribution of the present study is its finding that individual orientation toward CSRO is a factor in determining employer attractiveness. Consequently, more consideration should be given to the role that individual CSROs, along with other individual-level characteristics, play for employees and potential employees.

This study really focused on employer attractiveness and the individual perception of CSRO, not the espoused CSR that organizations share with their stakeholders. It adds to the literature by presenting that there are individual characteristics and value orientations that contribute to attractiveness, perhaps even more than the organizational behaviors that are presented by employers. There have been many studies that discuss individual value orientation in workforce development

(Ma et al., 2023). There have been studies of employer CSR behaviors and workforce development behaviors such as recruiting, employee satisfaction, and commitment (Lee et al., 2013). However, there has been no research until this study that investigates individual CSR orientation and the relationship it has with employer attractiveness.

5.2. Managerial implications

The first practice implication of the current study is that corporate social responsibility value orientations, in this study's instance, CSRO as defined by Aupperle, do make a difference in the way that candidates see employers. The key seems to be that individuals with different value orientations perceive the attractiveness of various organizational characteristics differently. In particular, an orientation toward concern for economic performance appears to have the greatest impact on whether or not a prospective job applicant will perceive an employer as attractive. This is particularly true for organizations with high economic performance. This is additional evidence that suggests there might be CSR thresholds or floors, that guide decision-making behavior. Furthermore, for those with a greater concern for social orientation, the perceived absence of ethical and discretionary behaviors seems to be more important than the exhibited presence of these same behaviors. Since reputation and image were controlled by using fabricated organizations instead of names and descriptions of well-known organizations, this could mean that sharing positive economic indicators with prospective job applicants may be as important as branding (reputation and familiarity).

Another implication for practice from the results of this study is that demographic characteristics may make a difference in prospective employee perceptions of employer attractiveness. This study indicated that females and males are different in the way that they identify desirable employers, or at least in the way that they process the economic, ethical, and discretionary characteristics of potential employers. This may be in part due to their relatively differentiated value orientations (males with greater economic orientations and females with greater orientations to societal factors). It has been clearly established in research that females and males respond differently in ethics studies.

5.3. Limitations and future research directions

There is very little research that considers differences in the CSR orientations of individuals as related to organizations' CSR. When this research is reviewed, it presents evidence that CSRO is being explored in relation to manager or consumer behaviors. The results of this present study provide evidence regarding CSRO and employer attractiveness. It also offers research streams that can be pursued by academicians and practitioners in the future, including 1) comparing business students' CSRO to non-business students; 2) comparing students from different geographical areas; 3) comparing graduate students to undergraduates; 4) investigating temporal differences in student responses in a longitudinal study; 5) investigating the impact of ethical training on CSRO orientations and employment decisions; 6) researching minority subpopulations and CSRO; and 7) creating instruments to measure other aspects of CSR. This present study provides specific implications for

future research related to the topics of CSRO and workforce development (particularly employer attractiveness and recruiting), CSRO and individual characteristics, as well as the core components of CSRO.

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Article

Age and job expectations—A study from the IT industry

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Abstract: In a time of a growingly age-diverse workforce, modern organizations are facing the challenge of simultaneously maintaining job satisfaction for both younger and older workers. In that regard, this study aims to analyse and further explore the difference in job expectations of employees from the IT industry who belong to different age groups. Based on the extant literature, an appropriate research model was designed, which was subsequently tested using the data gathered through the surveys conducted over the past fourteen years. The research results show that the main difference between younger and older employees within the IT industry is related to professional and personal growth. Specifically, younger employees primarily look for personal development and rapid professional advancement, which are of minor importance to their older counterparts. Intriguingly, the obtained results showed no difference between the younger and older employees regarding the work environment, including its competitiveness.

Keywords: aging; age-diverse workforce; knowledge workers; job expectations; job satisfaction

1. Introduction

Aside from the healthcare and social assistance industries, the IT industry is one of the fastest-growing industries in the current decade (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2020). Besides, the IT industry is omnipresent and enormously impacts the economy and society (CompTIA, 2021). Given these facts, modern IT companies face numerous challenges, both technological and managerial. To deal with all the challenges posed, today's IT companies must have a large and capable workforce. Furthermore, those companies acutely depend on their most talented employees, and thus, the employee retention issue is of utmost significance because of the high turnover rate (Booz, 2018). Consequently, to make and keep their employees satisfied and motivated and thence willing to stay in the company, IT companies must adopt sound human resource management (HRM) practices and processes (Allen et al., 2008; Korsakienė et al., 2014).

Using a widely exploited job satisfaction concept, many studies have shown that high job satisfaction positively relates to employee retention and loyalty (e.g., Chen et al., 2011; Kazakov et al., 2020). As initially proposed by Porter and Steers (1973) and later confirmed by many other studies (Wanous et al., 1992), an essential determinant of employees' job satisfaction is the extent to which their job expectations are met. A recent longitudinal study on job satisfaction among IT professionals (Bezdrob and Šunje, 2021) showed that employees' job expectations determine the principal intrinsic factor that differentiates job satisfaction from non-satisfaction. IT professionals are fully aware of the importance and value they possess in the labour market, as well as their ease of mobility between different companies. Therefore, HR managers of IT

companies need to properly identify their employees' specific job expectations and then devise and apply suitable mechanisms and processes to meet those expectations (Allen et al., 2008; Šajeva, 2007). In line with the previous reasoning, the following research question is posed:

RQ1: What are the most significant factors that underlie employees' job expectations within the IT industry?

As the IT industry matures, the industry's employees' age structure becomes equal to society's age structure in general. Not only are employees older on average, but they also belong to highly diverse age groups (Truxillo et al., 2014). Since employees' chronological age significantly affects their job attitudes (Ng and Feldman, 2010), the issue of job expectation differences between diverse employees' age groups has become increasingly significant. This issue leads to the second research question of this study:

RQ2: Do different age groups of technical staff in the IT industry have different job expectations?

These research questions determine the scope and purpose of this study. Specifically, this study aims to identify, explore, and analyse significant factors underlying employees' job expectations. Besides, the study primarily explores the variations in job expectations between different age groups of technical staff in the IT industry. Getting a deeper insight into the phenomenon of the differences in job expectations among the age-diverse workforce in the IT industry is the main motivation for this research.

To further investigate these issues, a relevant research design was prepared, and an appropriate research model was proposed. The research model was subsequently tested using the data gathered through the surveys conducted during the period of 14 years. For the purpose of data analysis, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) were employed.

Based on the job expectations theory, the study offers a rare insight into the issue of age-differentiated employees' job expectations. More specifically, the study shows that the main difference between the different groups of employees within the IT industry is related to professional and personal growth. At the same time, there are no differences related to the work environment or internal competitiveness. In addition, the study provides a few hints on human resources management practices that are directly related to the main study findings.

The following section provides insights into theoretical aspects related to the research topics, followed by a set of research hypotheses that delineate a conceptual model of employees' job expectations concerning their age. The third section describes the data and data analysis methods used in the study and ends with a detailed interpretation and discussion of the results. Finally, the paper finishes with several concluding remarks and the main implications of the study from both theoretical and practical standpoints.

2. Literature review

Job satisfaction, or how people feel about their job—more (higher satisfaction) or less (lower satisfaction) positive—has a critical impact on the employees'

contribution to business outcomes, such as productivity, profitability, customer satisfaction, and similar (Robbins and Judge, 2017). One of the classical theories that supports and further explains the job satisfaction concept, is the well-known “met expectations hypothesis” (Porter and Steers, 1973). According to this theory, the more the employee’s expectations about the job are met, the higher the employee’s satisfaction with the job.

As the general population ages, especially in developed and industrialized countries (United Nations, 2019), all theories related to organizational behaviour should arguably be expanded with the proper age-diverse workforce considerations. Hence, this study addresses the aging perspective related to the “met expectations hypothesis,” with a particular emphasis on the IT industry.

2.1. Employees’ job expectations—The concept

Several theories are used to explain the job satisfaction concept. Among them, one of the most often used is Vroom’s (1995) “Expectancy theory,” which is strongly supported by many subsequent studies (Robbins and Judge, 2017). According to this theory, expectancy is defined as employees’ belief that their high efforts will lead to a particular outcome that will fulfil their personal objectives. Vroom’s theory was primarily used to explain and predict employees’ job satisfaction (Banks, 2007). Namely, employees will be satisfied if their efforts are rewarded in accordance with their beliefs, which, in turn, would likely lead to higher levels of motivation and, subsequently, many positive organizational outcomes.

Porter’s and Steers’ “Met Expectations Hypothesis” can be considered a variation of Vroom’s expectancy theory. In their seminal work, Porter and Steers hypothesized that employees’ propensity to withdraw might be predicted by the difference between what employees encounter on their jobs and what they expected to encounter (Porter and Steers, 1973). The main finding of Porter’s and Steers’ study (1973) is that job satisfaction significantly impacts employees’ decisions on withdrawal and absenteeism. Furthermore, they saw the employees’ job satisfaction as a sum of their met expectations on the job. In other words, they claimed that when employees’ job expectations are not substantially met, their tendency to leave the job will increase. Following Porter’s and Steers’ seminal work (1973), numerous studies have confirmed that met job expectations are strongly connected with employees’ job satisfaction and intentions to stay (Irving and Montes, 2009).

According to Porter’s and Steers’ study (1973), the met expectations definition has several facets. Apart from the basic hypothesis definition mentioned above, one more aspect of this definition is significant for this research—the meaning of expectations. Only expectations related to the important job outcomes for a particular group of employees, organization, or industry should be considered when testing the met expectation hypothesis. All other expectations should be excluded from the test as irrelevant and inconsequential (Wanous et al., 1992).

2.2. Employees' job expectations—The age-diverse workforce considerations

Recent statistics show that employees' average age increases globally, not only in the most developed and industrialized countries but also in (almost) all other countries (United Nations, 2019). This demographic change profoundly affects all organizations because their employees become both older on average and progressively age-diverse (Truxillo et al., 2015). Consequently, to keep their age-diverse employees satisfied with their jobs, organizations should treat them in a more age-differentiated way (Thielgen et al., 2015). In other words, organizations should concentrate on creating and maintaining a flexible working environment that is equally tailored to the employees of different age groups (Kollmann et al., 2020).

Aging is associated with considerable changes in people's intellectual abilities, personalities, affect, and emotions. All these changes substantially impact employees' work outcomes and attitudes (Kanfer and Ackerman, 2004). In general, it is considered that age is (likely) positively correlated with physical security, job security, and skill utilization, while it is (likely) negatively correlated with job variety, external goals, and supervisors' feedback. At the same time, the value of control, role clarity, interpersonal contacts, and valued social position (likely) do not change with aging (Warr, 2001). Regarding job attitudes, older employees show more favourable attitudes toward work tasks, colleagues, supervisors, and organizations than their younger colleagues (Ng and Feldman, 2010). According to the socioemotional selectivity theory, as people get older, their time perception significantly changes, and that change has a decisive impact on their selection and pursuit of social goals (Carstensen et al., 1999). Namely, the time horizon seems unconstrained at a younger age, so the young employees are focused on the long-term goals (e.g., gaining skills, knowledge, and experience). In contrast, their older counterparts perceive time as more constrained and focus on short-term goals, such as physical and psychological welfare (Carstensen, 1998).

Another important aspect of age-diverse workforce considerations is ageism—mainly negative stereotypes and prejudices against older employees (Iversen et al., 2009). According to the stereotype content model (SCM), the stereotype tightly connected with older people states that they are kind but incompetent (Cuddy et al., 2008). Assertions suggesting the low value of older employees' contribution can only further confirm existing stereotypes and make them particularly dissatisfied with their job (Kollmann et al., 2020). Thus, any human resource policy that improves the value of employees' contributions would increase the job satisfaction of older employees (Visser et al., 2021).

All these age-related changes and stereotypes significantly impact employees' job-related motives and, consequently, their job expectations. Many studies confirm the positive correlation between age and intrinsic job-related motives. Simultaneously, a negative correlation exists between age and extrinsic job-related and personal growth motives (e.g., Kollmann et al., 2020; Kooij et al., 2011; Thielgen et al., 2015). Younger employees primarily seek personal and vocational growth (Ebner et al., 2006) and mainly expect good and increasing material rewards (Kollmann et al., 2020). Older employees primarily seek security and pleasurable job outcomes (Ebner et al., 2006;

Kooij et al., 2011) and expect to contribute more to the tasks in which they participate (Kollmann et al., 2020). Finally, employees' expectations vary with age for different vocations. Namely, employees performing jobs that require a high level of domain knowledge and experience (e.g., professors, doctors, lawyers) show greater job expectations stability during their lifespan (Kanfer and Ackerman, 2004).

2.3. Employees' job expectations—The IT industry specificities

Many studies show that high job satisfaction has positive work outcomes across various industries (e.g., Abbas et al., 2021; Al-Dalahmeh et al., 2018; Prockl et al., 2017). Industry specificities, however, have a considerable impact on job satisfaction antecedents and determinants, particularly their importance. More specifically, in any sector, industry, and profession, some job satisfaction determinants outweigh others (e.g., Prockl et al., 2017). The same applies to the IT industry, i.e., the IT industry specificities have a considerable effect on the most important antecedents and determinants of employees' job satisfaction and, for that matter, on their job expectations.

The information technology (IT) industry is one of the fastest-growing industries in the world, with 5%–6% growth year over year (YoY) and a projected output in 2022 of \$5.3 trillion (CompTIA, 2021), and with annual employment growth of 4% (Statista, 2022). Rapid technological and environmental change and continuous and persistent product and service innovation are the main characteristics of the IT industry. In addition, the IT industry is highly attractive for both investors and employees, causing the most required jobs and skills to belong to the IT domain. Consequently, IT experts feel highly confident about their professional futures (CompTIA, 2021).

Because worldwide natural population growth is in constant decline—from 1.79% in 1950 to 1.06% in 2019 (Roser et al., 2019), it becomes clear that the “age issue” is of exceptional importance in the IT industry. Obviously, there exists a gap between available and needed workers in the IT industry, with good prospects of further deepening. The employment challenge that today's IT companies face is twofold. First, a considerable number of older employees (Baby Boomers) retire every year. At the same time, the total number of work positions in the IT industry increases (4% annual increase worldwide). Such developments create a workforce demand in the IT industry that cannot be met only with the natural ingress of young people (Millennials and Zoomers) into the workforce (McMullin and Marshall, 2010). To cope with this issue successfully, IT companies ought to develop and implement several related HR practices, all of which should be adjusted to the particular traits of their existing and future employees of different ages. Namely, hiring processes should be adapted to candidates of different ages (van Selm and van den Heijkant, 2021), formal training should be offered to and adjusted for employees across all age groups (Visser et al., 2021), and proper HR policies for work transitions across the life course should be designed and operationalized to support workers' flexibility (Cooke and Platman, 2010).

The mentioned IT industry specificities and general demographic trends considerably influence the employees' traits and behaviour and, consequently, their

job expectations. The majority of employees within the IT industry constitute the so-called “knowledge workers,” whose knowledge is their most potent asset (Drucker, 1974). That fact enables IT professionals to move freely and easily between various jobs and companies. Another notable characteristic of IT professionals is their high level of individualism (Sutherland and Jordaan, 2004). Thus, IT professionals mainly seek self-actualization, personal growth and progress, and work flexibility (Šajeva, 2007). Mobility and individualism, as IT professionals’ two most distinct traits, shape the antecedents and determinants of their job satisfaction and, consequently, their job expectations (e.g., Korsakienė et al., 2015).

2.4. Research model and hypotheses

The job expectations concept has often been used to explain different organizational behaviour phenomena. Following that approach, this study aims to create a suitable research design and a corresponding research model of employees’ job expectations capable of providing qualified answers to the research questions. The basis for this model design is the model from previous research on a similar topic, where three underlying constructs of employees’ job expectations were found to exist (Bezdrob and Bičo Čar, 2020).

It is generally considered that job satisfaction changes positively with age (Ng and Feldman, 2010), even though some studies have found that this relationship is not linear but U-shaped (Clark, 1996). This non-linear relationship is often explained by changes in employees’ job expectations. Namely, young employees are captivated by the novelty of their situation. They are more eager to gain work experience and advance in their careers, which results in higher work enthusiasm and job satisfaction. In contrast, older employees had more time to find a good job to their satisfaction (Clark et al., 1996). In addition, several studies (e.g., Park et al., 2019; Sutherland and Jordaan, 2004; Šajeva, 2007) have found that so-called „knowledge workers,” like IT professionals, primarily seek personal realization and professional development. Combining these two findings, the first hypothesis of the study can be posed as follows:

H₁: Personal realization and professional progress, as important constituents of the employees’ job expectations, are more important to younger engineering staff (juniors) than to their more senior counterparts (mediors and seniors). The term “medior” is used here to denote an intermediate age group. Even though it is not a “real” English word, the author decided to use it due to its habitual use in IT jargon (mainly to describe the mid-level expertise of software developers).

Younger workers significantly favour promotion opportunities more than older workers (Wright and Hamilton, 1978). Several studies confirm such findings, regardless of the generational cohort—Baby Boomers, Generation Xers, and Millennials. However, it is slightly more emphasized with Millennials (e.g., Magni and Manzoni, 2020; Ng et al., 2010; Terjesen et al., 2007). A further impetus for career advancement and rapid promotion is provided by the increased internal competitiveness of the modern work environment, which is especially noticeable in high-tech industries (Eisenhardt and Galunic, 2000). All of that leads to the second hypothesis of the study:

H₂: Career progress and promotion (through a competitive work environment), as an important constituent of the employees' job expectations, are more important to younger engineering staff (juniors) than to their more senior counterparts (mediors and seniors).

In accordance with Herzberg's two-factor theory (Herzberg et al., 1959), the general work environment factors (i.e., hygiene factors) need to be adequate so that employees are not dissatisfied. The adequacy of the general work environment, however, is something that knowledge workers not only expect but take for granted (CompTIA, 2021). Nevertheless, older workers were more likely to favour job security and organizational maturity (Tolbert and Moen, 1998). Then, the third hypothesis of the study is:

H₃: The maturity, organization, and stability of the work environment, as an important constituent of the employees' job expectations, are less important to younger engineering staff (juniors) than to their more senior counterparts (mediors and seniors).

These three hypotheses lay the foundation for the corresponding research design and the accompanying research model described in the following section. The proposed research design (**Figure 1**) comprises the most important facets of the job expectations concept for this research.

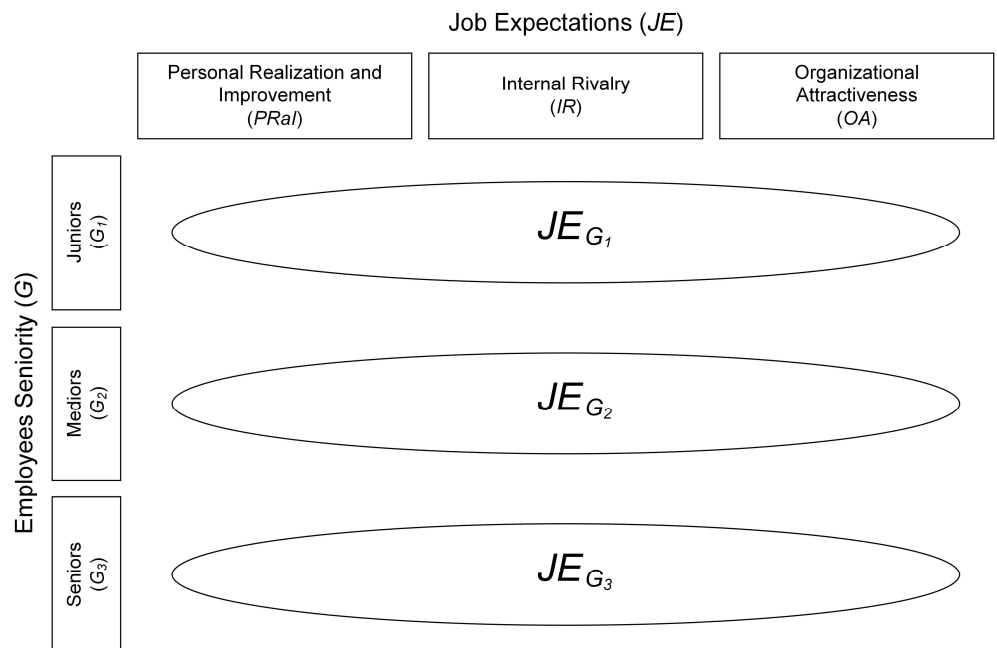


Figure 1. Layout of the research design.

3. Data and methodology

The research was conducted within an IT company (“*The Company*”) founded in 1997 in Bosnia and Herzegovina. For many years “*The Company*” has employed about 60 full-time employees, most of them highly qualified in the different IT fields. The employees' average length of service is nine years, with a relatively low attrition rate compared to the industry average.

To test the research hypotheses, a suitable questionnaire was developed and sent

to all technical staff, who were not members of the company's management, each year during the period from the year 2008 to the year 2021. A total of 441 responses were received, provided by 76 persons employed by "*The Company*" in the same period. To preserve data independence, the responses were averaged over different seniority levels for each respondent, thus reducing the data set to 139 cases.

3.1. Research design and measures

This study analyses the difference in job expectations between various age groups of technical staff that work within the IT industry. To that effect, the corresponding research design was prepared (**Figure 1**), while MANOVA was employed to conduct appropriate testing.

As can be seen from **Figure 1**, the dependent second-order latent variable—"Job Expectations" (JE), is reflected by three indicators, also latent variables, which are described in the following subsection. These indicators are measured with the three sets of employees' job expectation measures, designated as JE_{Gi} ($i = 1, 2, 3$). Each measure-set (JE_{Gi}) relates to the single data cell of the research design vector. The independent variable "*Employees Seniority*" (G) establishes the vector's dimensions and determines different age groups of employees:

- *Juniors* (G_1)—age under 31 years;
- *Mediors* (G_2)—age between 31 and 40 years;
- *Seniors* (G_3)—age above 40 years.

The age groups (categories) were defined somewhat arbitrarily. Namely, these groups are based on the birth-year categorization of generations, which is a generally accepted approach in the Western world. Even though this approach is very often used, the definitions of generations regarding the groups' boundary years vary among different studies (Parry and Urwin, 2011). Following such an approach, here, group G_3 (*Seniors*) coincides with Generation X (people born between 1965 and 1980), while groups G_1 (*Juniors*) and G_2 (*Mediors*), taken together, coincide with Generation Y (people born between 1981 and 1996). Further division of Generation Y members into two groups was made because young people in Bosnia and Herzegovina usually enter the workforce aged 23 to 25 years, so group G_1 represents true novices in the IT industry.

Dependent variables

Following the previous research approach (Bezdrob and Bičo Ćar, 2020), a questionnaire with nine questions was used. Each question measures a particular job trait related to the employees' job expectations. The exploratory factor analysis was applied to the collected data to discover latent variables that underlie the job expectations concept.

The extracting procedure and follow-up analysis revealed three factors with eigenvalues greater or equal to Kaiser's criterion of 1. Together, these three factors have explained 52.2% of the variance. These factors, corresponding loadings after rotation, and Cronbach's α are presented in **Table 1**. As can be seen from **Table 1**, all factors have good reliability, with Cronbach's $\alpha \geq 0.7$.

Table 1. The extracted factors, corresponding loadings, and Cronbach's α .

Indicator	(Relates to)	PRaI	IR	OA
X ₁ —"Creativity"	(job and work environment creativity)	0.70		
X ₂ —"Challenge"	(challenge that work poses)	0.68		
X ₃ —"Improvement"	(professional growth opportunities)	0.72		
X ₄ —"Rank Advancement"	(potential for career advancement)		0.78	
X ₅ —"Competitiveness"	(work environment competitiveness)		0.76	
X ₆ —"Stability"	(work stability and security)			0.49
X ₇ —"Empowerment"	(responsibilities and authorities balance)			0.58
X ₈ —"Appreciation & Confidence"	(work environment friendliness)			0.59
X ₉ —"Organization"	(work organization)			0.84
Cronbach's α		0.77	0.75	0.71

The clusters of indicators suggest that the first factor relates to personal realization and professional improvement (advancement). The second factor relates to the competitiveness of the work environment, and the third factor relates to the quality of the work environment. Consequently, they are named *Personal Realization and Improvement (PRaI)*, *Internal Rivalry (IR)*, and *Organizational Attractiveness (OA)*. The three revealed factors, which were treated as dependent variables in the subsequent main analysis, are described in detail below.

a) Personal Realization and Improvement (PRaI)

This factor mirrors the first facet of the job expectations concept, which relates to the employees' personal realizations and professional progress. More specifically, it reflects the perceived importance of the self-actualization and professional advancement of each individual. It is measured by three indicators: "Creativity," "Challenge," and "Improvement" (Table 1).

b) Internal Rivalry (IR)

The second facet of the job expectations concept—opportunities for upward progression in career and internal competition—is represented by this factor. It reflects the perceived importance of advancement opportunities, both horizontally and vertically. It is measured by two indicators: "Rank Advancement" and "Competitiveness" (Table 1).

c) Organizational Attractiveness (OA)

This factor corresponds to the third facet of the job expectations concept, which relates to the work environment's maturity and attractiveness. It reflects the perceived importance of the organizational structure, work processes, and interpersonal relationships. It is measured by four indicators: "Stability," "Empowerment," "Appreciation & Confidence," and "Organization" (Table 1).

3.2. Results

Table 2 contains the means and standard deviations of all dependent variables for all three groups of independent variables *G*. The same data are graphically presented in Figure 2. To test the differences between the three age groups of

employees, MANOVA was employed, which simultaneously examines three aspects of the employees' job expectations.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of dependent variables for groups of *G*.

Indicator	Group of <i>G</i>	N	Mean	Std. deviation
PraI—Personal realization and improvement	Juniors (<i>G</i> ₁)	59	0.355	0.933
	Mediors (<i>G</i> ₂)	48	−0.126	0.934
	Seniors (<i>G</i> ₃)	32	−0.467	1.004
IR—Internal rivalry	Juniors (<i>G</i> ₁)	59	0.151	0.893
	Mediors (<i>G</i> ₂)	48	−0.146	1.113
	Seniors (<i>G</i> ₃)	32	−0.059	1.001
OA—Organizational attractiveness	Juniors (<i>G</i> ₁)	59	−0.133	1.004
	Mediors (<i>G</i> ₂)	48	0.007	1.100
	Seniors (<i>G</i> ₃)	32	0.234	0.811



Figure 2. Graphical display of dependent variables for groups of *G*.

3.2.1. Assumptions

Assumptions for MANOVA are independence, multivariate normality, and homogeneity of covariance matrices. As previously mentioned, independence of observation is provided through averaging responses for each respondent.

There was only a slight deviation from a normal distribution for the third group of the *PRAI* variable. However, since the MANOVA analysis is robust to modest violations of normality (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007), it can be considered that the findings were not affected by the normality deviation.

Non-significant Box's test results [$M = 12.965$, $F(12, 52463) = 1.043$, $p = 0.405$] pointed out that there was no difference between the three groups on all variables collectively, so the homogeneity of covariance matrices was met. In addition, since Levene's tests are non-significant for all three variables [*PRAI*: $F(2, 136) = 0.113$, $p = 0.893$; *IR*: $F(2, 136) = 0.792$, $p = 0.455$; *OA*: $F(2, 136) = 0.441$, $p = 0.644$], the assumption of univariate homogeneity was also met.

3.2.2. The MANOVA model estimation

The next step in the MANOVA procedure was to assess whether there were significant differences for all job expectations variables across the three age groups, first all variables together and then each of them individually (Hair et al., 2009). All commonly used multivariate tests are statistically significant at $p < 0.01$, indicating that the job expectations variables have a significant difference between the three age

groups (**Table 3**). This result suggests that there is a difference in combined employees' job expectations indicators between the three age groups.

Table 3. Multivariate tests for group differences in job expectations.

Test	Value	<i>F</i>	<i>df</i> ₁	<i>df</i> ₂	Sig.	Power ^a
Pillai's trace	0.148	3.597	6	270	0.002	0.952
Wilks' lambda	0.853	3.695	6	268	0.002	0.958
Hotellings T ²	0.171	3.792	6	266	0.001	0.963
Roy's largest root	0.164	7.361	3	135	0.000	0.983

^a Computed using $\alpha = 0.05$.

Univariate ANOVA tests for all three dependent variables show that only variable *PRaI* (*Personal Realization and Improvement*) has a significant main effect [$F(2, 136) = 8.40, p < 0.001, \eta^2 = 0.11$]. These results show that the difference in job expectations between the three groups of employees is primarily indicated by the variable *PRaI* (*Personal Realization and Improvement*) and, possibly, some underlying combination of the three indicators.

Finally, the examination of simple effects for each dependent variable separately was conducted. For that purpose, linearly independent pairwise comparisons of the estimated marginal means were applied (**Table 4**). This post hoc analysis shows that the differences between juniors and the other two age groups are positive and statistically significant for the indicator *PRaI* (*Personal Realization and Improvement*), while the difference between mediors and seniors is non-significant for the same indicator. Likewise, the differences between all three age groups are non-significant for both *Internal Rivalry* (*IR*) and *Organizational Attractiveness* (*OA*) indicators. These tests' outcomes, along with the significant multivariate interaction effect, fully support the first study hypothesis (H_1), whereas they do not provide support for the second (H_2) and third (H_3) study hypotheses.

Table 4. Estimated marginal means of dependent variables—Pairwise comparisons.

Dependent variable	Group (A)	Group (B)	Mean diff. (A—B)	Std. err.	Sig. ^a
PraI—Personal realization and improvement	G ₁	G ₂	0.481	0.185	0.031
		G ₃	0.822	0.209	0.000
	G ₂	G ₁	−0.481	0.185	0.031
		G ₃	0.341	0.217	0.354
	G ₃	G ₁	−0.822	0.209	0.000
		G ₂	−0.341	0.217	0.354
IR—Internal rivalry	G ₁	G ₂	0.297	0.194	0.385
		G ₃	0.209	0.219	1.000
	G ₂	G ₁	−0.297	0.194	0.385
		G ₃	−0.088	0.228	1.000
	G ₃	G ₁	−0.209	0.219	1.000
		G ₂	0.088	0.228	1.000
OA—Organizational attractiveness	G ₁	G ₂	−0.140	0.194	1.000
		G ₃	−0.366	0.219	0.289
	G ₂	G ₁	0.140	0.194	1.000
		G ₃	−0.226	0.228	0.964
	G ₃	G ₁	0.366	0.219	0.289
		G ₂	0.226	0.228	0.964

^a Bonferroni adjustment for multiple comparisons.

3.3. Interpretation of the results and discussion

The strong support for the first research hypothesis points toward the main difference between the three age groups of employees within the IT industry. Namely, young employees from the IT industry mainly look for personal development, which is in full congruence with the existing literature (e.g., Ebner et al., 2006; Kooij et al., 2011). They value personal growth (Terjesen et al., 2007; Titko et al., 2020) and expect rapid professional advancement and skill development (Ng et al., 2010).

A well-organized, respectful, and empowering work environment is important to most people, regardless of their age, gender, or professional background. In accordance with highly influential Herzberg's two-factor theory (Herzberg et al., 1959; Robbins and Judge, 2017), extrinsic factors (i.e., "hygiene" factors—administration, work conditions, salary, relationships, security, and similar) are the necessary precondition for employees' job satisfaction or, more precisely, for no job dissatisfaction. That means a pleasant and attractive work environment is not only expected but also implied, especially in work-intensive industries such as the IT industry (CompTIA, 2021). Consequently, it is not unexpected that the third research hypothesis was not supported. When it comes to the work environment's general characteristics, there are no significant differences in expectations between the three age groups of employees within the IT industry. Such findings align well with existing literature (e.g., Clark, 1996; Kowske et al., 2010; Mackay, 2018).

The most intriguing research finding is the non-significant difference between the three age groups of employees regarding internal competition (rivalry). Young employees, in general, seek rapid career advancement and promotion (e.g., Ebner et al., 2006; Ng et al., 2010). Additionally, "knowledge workers" from high-tech industries strongly favour individualism (Sutherland and Jordaan, 2004). Bearing in mind these two traits, one might expect young employees in the IT industry to favour a competitive work environment more than their older colleagues. Indeed, many high-tech companies promote internal competition to achieve the synergetic effects of different teams, departments, or businesses (Eisenhardt and Galunic, 2000; Taylor, 2010). On the other side, one can find quite different managerial approaches and business models that do not favour internal competition, at least not in small or medium companies (Brown, 2011; Marino and Zábojník, 2004). Since this research finding is aligned with the literature that advocates against internal competition, a possible explanation may be the organizational strategy that inclines toward more collaborative behaviour. More specifically, if the organizational strategy of "*The Company*" favours collaboration, which is recommended for small and medium companies (Marino and Zábojník, 2004), then the propensity toward internal competition is highly influenced by such strategy and is the same for all employees regardless of their age.

Limitations of the research

Several limitations apply to this research, both design-related and technical. A restricted set of observed variables was used to make research feasible, which is the main research design limitation. A smaller number of observed variables decreases the latent variables' elaborateness, which reduces the quality of representation of the employees' job expectations concept (research model). That also reduces the

reliability of the extracted factors. Consequently, one of the recommendations for possible future research would be to seek additional indicators and, perhaps, additional factors, which would improve factors' reliability and research model explanatory power.

The data analysis was conducted on a single sample collected from a single company that runs its business within a particular set of economic and political conditions in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which is the main technical limitation of the research. Therefore, no confirmation of the findings has been done, and the research results have low generalization potential. Besides, the sample size used is just adequate for this research design and does not enable the detection of small effects in the underlying population. Some future research may remedy the described technical limitation by applying this (or similar) research design to different datasets (collected from other companies) or, better yet, to a completely different context.

4. Conclusion

According to Porter's and Steers' seminal work (1973) and many subsequent studies (Wanous et al., 1992), when employees' job expectations are met, their job satisfaction and organizational commitment are increased, which has numerous positive outcomes for any organization. On the other side, many studies show that employees' job attitudes, satisfaction, and expectations significantly change with their chronological age (Kowske et al., 2010; Ng and Feldman, 2010; Ng et al., 2010). Given the maturity of the IT industry, its rapid growth, and the continuous struggle for talent, this research aims to explore all the more important relationships between the employees' age and their job expectations. To achieve all research objectives, a suitable longitudinal research model was designed and tested using the data collected over 14 years from an IT company in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The study provides a deeper insight into the scarcely explored issue of age-differentiated employees' job expectations (within a highly attractive IT industry) and offers a few related hints on human resources management practices. Based on the main study findings, it is possible to draw a few theoretical and practical implications from the study, which are listed below.

4.1. Theoretical implications

This study emphasizes the importance of the aging factor within the job expectations theory and, subsequently, the broader job satisfaction theory. It supports previous findings that employee age is an important issue, whose further research significantly contributes to the theory's development (Grah et al., 2019; Kollmann et al., 2020).

The obtained research results strongly suggest that young employees in the IT industry primarily pursue the job's individualistic features, which dictate their main job expectations. Specifically, young employees seek rapid professional growth (Ng et al., 2010) and creative, dynamic, and challenging jobs (Terjesen et al., 2007). In other words, what they expect the most from the job is fast and gainful personal advancement.

Another important research finding is related to the characteristics of the working environment. Even though some extant research findings have revealed that older employees show higher job insecurity, work satisfaction, and satisfaction with coworkers (e.g., Kowske et al., 2010; Ng and Feldman, 2010), this study shows that employees from all three age groups value organization and comfort equally. A well-organized, stable, and empowering working environment is equally important to and expected by all employees, regardless of their age. At least, that is the case for the highly attractive and propulsive IT industry.

Finally, young employees are very enthusiastic about their work (Clark et al., 1996), eager to learn (Terjesen et al., 2007), and impatiently want to advance in a career (Ng et al., 2010). However, the obtained research results have shown that they do not want or expect a competitive environment any more than their older counterparts. This interesting and somewhat unexpected research finding may be an indirect consequence of the organization's collaborative strategy (Marino and Zábojník, 2004) or a direct consequence of more general IT professionals' awareness of their human capital value (Drucker, 1974). Whatever the reason may be, that could be a fruitful path to pursue in future research.

4.2. Practical implications

The “met expectations” hypothesis, initially proposed by Porter and Steers (1973), is arguably well known to most HRM practitioners. Namely, organizational managers should ensure that employees' expectations are continuously monitored and fulfilled, thus providing for a higher level of job satisfaction and, consequently, higher productivity and lower attrition. As the findings of this study confirm, such an assertion is also valid under quite specific market conditions in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Namely, the study results show that HR managers can rely on the best practices and insights related to talent management from highly developed business environments, regardless of their economic conditions.

The most important practical implication of this research, however, is related to employees' demographic characteristics. The obtained research results point out how job positions should be tailored to accommodate age-diverse employees. Namely, to attract, retain, and further develop its workforce, the responsible people from the IT companies—managers and HR experts—should clearly define HR policies that would strictly take into consideration ever more age-diverse employees. Such policies would bring about the appropriate procedures and practices that would comply with the differences in the job expectations of the employees from the different age groups.

More specifically, the study results show that HR managers and professionals need to design, develop, and carry out age-differentiated HR practices, which is well aligned with extant literature (e.g., Boehm et al., 2021; Truxillo et al., 2014). Combining all research findings, it can be concluded that personal advancement is just that particular job expectation that makes the difference between young and older employees within the IT industry. Therefore, to attract and retain the most wanted and valuable young talents, HR managers of IT companies should devise a highly creative and challenging working environment that provides an opportunity for fast and beneficial professional advancement. On the other hand, fulfilling the job expectations

of older employees and, consequently, increasing their job satisfaction is more complex. For them, a simple increase in pay or a higher position may not be enough or will even be counterproductive. They much more value meaningful and secure jobs (Kooij et al., 2011). Thus, HR managers (and managers in general) need to create an environment where (primarily) older employees will be engaged in tasks that provide a meaningful contribution to the whole organization and where they will feel appreciated as valuable team members. Besides, the study results show that such an environment certainly will not decrease the fulfilment of younger employees' expectations.

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Article

Leader ‘leadership’ perceptions within a luxury hotel environment

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Abstract: This study considers the role of leadership within the hospitality sector as a key tool in raising performance levels. Hospitality is unique in its service-based approach, which relies on employees to ensure effective service. Post-COVID-19 and Brexit, the hospitality sector has seen a shift in reliance towards a home workforce, and as such, retention has become an area of greater importance. This case study investigation adopted a qualitative approach to consider the perceptions of six managers within a UK-based luxury hotel. Semi-structured interviews were used to draw out their experience of approaches used to ensure effective delivery in their areas of responsibility. The research concludes that a shift in leadership approach (from autocratic to democratic) is a necessity to retain staff, particularly as the shift to a greater reliance on a home workforce due to COVID-19 and Brexit starts to impact the sector. There does, however, remain a need to be more autocratic in certain situations to ensure the quality of service. Subsequently, communication becomes critical in the building of relationships. The research considers leadership approaches from a managerial perspective and is based on individual perceptions. Traditionally, research has been conducted from an employee perspective.

Keywords: communication; hospitality; servant leadership; transformational leadership

1. Introduction

Leadership as a concept is a widely discussed area of debate. As such, Brownell (2010, p. 363) contends that “the history of leadership theory is a fascinating story of evolving views on... the ways individuals acquire power and influence in the workplace”, with differing approaches, models, and philosophies developing and changing over time, consisting of differing nuances (Najera-Sanchez et al., 2022). As such, leadership may be considered a toolbox of methods used to influence individuals (Haryanto et al., 2023). The one recurring theme that remains is the importance of leadership (Drucker, 1998). There remains a lack of consistency around the best approach, resulting from contextual factors (Anwar and Asrar-Ul-Haq, 2018). This is particularly true within service sectors, and most notably, in hospitality, ensuring a balance between satisfying business needs, consistency of service, and meeting employee expectations may be deemed impossible or at the very least challenging (Witelaw, 2013). Recent issues such as COVID-19 and Brexit have further raised leadership as an issue for concern as leaders within hospitality seek to adjust and reinterpret their approach (Clark, 2021).

Guchait et al. (2023) undertook a systematic literature review to identify leadership research within hospitality that had taken place since 2000. They identified a series of systematic reviews that focused specifically on the hospitality sector. In it, they identified different approaches to leadership, including differing forms such as abusive supervision, which they also referred to as dark leadership undertaken by Yu

et al. (2020). They also identified servant leadership (Bavik, 2020; Chon and Zoltan, 2019; Gui et al., 2021). In addition, Gui et al. (2020) have identified transformational leadership.

Al-Ababneh (2013) recognizes the large pool of leadership concepts; however, he found a lack of literature on leadership within hospitality. Ryan (2013) suggested that the hospitality sector needed more focused research. In particular, he recognised that trends in human resource management and the challenges faced as an area for development. Research has generally focused on the perception of employees of the approach taken by leaders (Najera-Sanchez et al., 2022), with little investigation from the perspective of leaders (Mishra et al., 2019). This paper therefore considers manager perceptions within a luxury-end UK-based hotel of their approach taken to leadership.

2. Literature review

2.1. Leadership

Leadership is a well-travelled concept that is not easily defined, and a plethora of models, frameworks, and theories exist with many definitions in existence, leading to many interpretations and viewpoints of what leadership is (Mullins and Dossor, 2013). Leaders gather greater importance as organisations operate in increasingly volatile and competitive environments with high levels of complexity (Higgs, 2003), where leaders are expected to be able to foster development and adapt to the challenges around them (Whittington et al., 2020). Contemporary approaches to leadership involve leaders providing thrust and push to help motivate staff to achieve excellence (Haryanto et al., 2024).

Leadership within the hospitality sector needs to be considered within the context of the uniqueness of the sector (Nickson, 2013; Partington, 2016), including the unpredictability and instability of the workplace and the environment in which it operates (Lo and Lamm, 2005). Likewise, hospitality is fundamentally a service reliant on the effective building of relationships with customers (Mishra et al., 2019). Ali et al. (2021) highlight the importance of service quality in relation to customer satisfaction. They suggest that a large portion of customer satisfaction is related to their experience dealing with individuals. Subsequently, the leader provides influence over the actions and behaviours of others (Northouse, 2020). As such, leadership is critical for the effectiveness of and within organisations (Hassanien, 2020). This is coupled with an industry that is associated with low pay and raised levels of pressure on employees and managers, leading to overwork and stress and high levels of turnover (Walker and Walker, 2014). Many of the current issues faced by the hospitality sector are long-standing. Blum (1997) highlighted some issues related to service quality, customer expectations, staffing levels, including qualification levels amongst staff, and sustainability. Costa et al. (1997) highlighted similar concerns. However, they focus more on the management of leadership within organisations and the management of people. Ward (1997), focuses particularly on hotel market trends in the UK, suggesting that increased demand for hotel space will impact staffing levels. This was supported by Duncan (2005).

The sector often requires high levels of consistency of both products and service levels enforced through an autocratic approach, reliant on adhering to rules and procedures, while at the same time embracing a democratic approach where employees are given greater levels of trust and autonomy in an attempt to empower (Muhammad et al., 2015). Contrastingly, how managers are expected to have democratic relationships with their direct reports while maintaining appropriate authoritarian control has become an area of focus (Witelaw, 2013). Managers can often find these somewhat contradictory approaches uncomfortable and a challenge in practice (Peterson et al., 2020). Arguably, consideration of McGregor, X, and Y provides some understanding of employee motivation and outlines potential attitudes toward work that may allow for some consideration (Davies et al., 2008). Theory X occupies the view that people are averse to work, resist responsibility, and are inherently in need of direction, whereas Theory Y assumes that people want responsibility in the workplace and are inherently self-motivated to work and do a good job. While Northouse (2020) suggests that no direct link to the leadership approach emerges specifically from McGregor, tentative associations can be made authoritarian (Pizzolitto et al., 2022), democratic (Bhatti et al., 2012), and laissez-faire (Chaudhry and Javed, 2009). Therefore, assumptions could be made that leaders adopt a style related to the core beliefs of human nature and their attitude to work, which may fundamentally be driven by their own attitudes to work.

Within hospitality, more contemporary approaches such as transformational leadership or servant leadership (Chon and Zoltan, 2019) may be present, coupled with characteristics related to approaches that may be considered autocratic, such as transactional and micromanagement (White, 2010). In practice, however, delineating and oversimplifying them may have difficulties (Muhammad et al., 2015). A key area of development by Guchait et al. (2023) also focused on authentic leadership and ethical leadership, highlighting the need for leadership behaviour to be prevalent in the approach taken. Most notably, it was felt that this had a significant impact on employees, particularly in the development of trust.

2.2. Leadership approaches and their applicability in hospitality

Irawanto et al. (2019) pose the suggestion that the primary function of servant leadership is serving the employee, placing focus on employee welfare and related issues with less organisational concern. Notably, Brownell (2010) highlights the increasing commonality of servant leadership and argues hospitality is a natural fit since it focuses on the leader-follower relationship having a positive influence on employee behaviour and work performance, leading to increased levels of organisational commitment and work engagement (Bussin et al., 2017; Dooley et al., 2020; Huang et al., 2015). Significantly, servant leadership encompasses a moral element, which other approaches appear to lack (McCann and Kohntopp, 2018). As such, values including respect may aid and influence employee decision-making alongside enhancing loyalty and may assist in building self-development through actively involving the organisation (Dennis and Mocarena, 2005; Huertas-Valdivia et al., 2018). While servant leadership is well conceptualised, applying it is challenging for managers. Although servant leadership may lead to the development of a positive

working culture in the long term, in the shorter term, the need for results may be a barrier (Gandolfi and Stone, 2016), as servant leadership requires development and embedding contrasts when quicker decision making or tighter deadlines are in place (McCann and Kohntopp, 2018). Time pressures and service quality pressures are common features of hospitality (Ali et al., 2021), and as such, managers are often unable to adopt this approach.

Transformational leadership is further discussed as suitable within hospitality (Escortell et al., 2020; Liang et al., 2017). While employee welfare remains a focal , the interest of the organisation is central for leaders (Tracey and Hinkin, 1996). As transformational leaders, they will portray a vision in which they inspire their teams to forfeit their own interests in order to achieve common goals (Najera-Sanchez et al., 2022; Shahbazi and Korejan, 2016). This allows transformational leaders to adapt quickly to meet the challenges of the internal and external environment (Coleman and Donohar, 2022). Following Brexit and COVID-19, hospitality in the UK suffers from a labour shortage (ONS, 2021; UK Hospitality, 2022a), due to migrants leaving the United Kingdom and either not being able to or wanting to return (Gardner, 2022; UK Hospitality, 2018a). Coupled with this, there remains a lack of interest in working in hospitality among the domestic workforce, with many not seeing it as a viable or attractive career option (Ferris et al., 2018). Transformational leaders, as such, thrive in identifying ways of making hospitality a viable career option, which may make recruitment and retention of staff easier (Coleman and Donohar, 2022). This may not be so easy to achieve as hospitality is littered with part-time staff, who are also often casual or supplied by agencies, many on short-term contracts. This results in the need for managers to lead teams that change regularly and lack cohesion (Harmer, 2014; Janta, 2011; Kusluvan et al., 2010). As such, leadership efforts in creating an environment fostering commitment and motivation with a drive for continuous improvement become vulnerable. As such, emphasis is likely to be placed on aspects such as customer care (Hemington, 2007), which may lead to adopting a transactional approach and short-termism (Tracey and Hinkin, 1996).

Adopting transactional leadership approaches will tend to prioritise the completion of duties and tasks to a specified level and, as such, may adopt a more autocratic approach, being reliant on transactional forms of reward (Allen and McCleskey, 2014). As such, the transactional approach will emphasize ongoing operational needs, perhaps at a daily level, as also discussed. While discussed separately, transactional and transformational need to be considered contextually and not in isolation, as they may need to coexist within the same toolbox depending on the situation (Bass and Avolio, 2007). Research by Sims et al. (2009) emphasised situational variables as key determiners of when to be directive or empowering. They suggested that a standardised approach in all circumstances was not ideal and that managers needed to adapt as the situation changed.

Arguably, an autocratic approach may lead to micromanagement. Micromanagement may be considered managing tasks using excessive control over the person or the situation (Mishra et al., 2019; Sidhu, 2012). Often, micromanagement is considered negative as it may result in employee detachment, leading to a reduction in productivity due to an inability to make their own contribution by adding value or taking responsibility (White, 2010). Although studies suggest that a key issue

surrounds trust and poor recruitment, there are difficulties in the availability of appropriate candidates to recruit. Several hospitality organisations have raised concerns that new hires do not always possess the required skill levels (Gardner, 2022), requiring high levels of support and guidance from managers. As such, micromanagement aids the learning process and may be seen as beneficial (White, 2010). In principle, taking this approach allows managers to gain knowledge of their team and may alleviate difficult situations through prompt interventions. However, Mishra et al. (2019, p. 2949) question leaders: “who are too worried about daily operational matters are missing the broader prospect and are unable to plan for the expansion of departments and organization”, asking whether they cannot avoid micromanagement to concentrate on other aspects of their role (Mullins and Dossor, 2013).

2.3. Forces influencing leaders’ choices of their approaches

A key area of development is to consider influences on managers in adopting their approaches and whether these are conscious or unconscious choices. Mullins and Dossor (2013) identified three key forces that need to be considered. Firstly, managerial forces manifest out of individual factors such as knowledge and background, social background, or personality traits (Sethuraman and Suresh, 2014). Central to this are value systems, self-confidence and security, confidence in their staff, and their natural leadership tendency (Kalma et al., 1993). Secondly, subordinate forces may dictate the choice of style by focusing on subordinate levels of independence and their willingness to engage in decision-making. Much of this relates to their confidence in their knowledge and experience and their expectation that they will perform at the desired level (Peterson et al., 2020). Within this, leaders need to appreciate the career aspirations of individual members of their teams while also appreciating the culture of the organisation. Knowing the strengths of individuals and teams is critical to the choice of approach (Mullins and Dossor, 2013). Thirdly, situational forces manifest from the values and vision of an organisation and feed into culture and climate. This is further driven by an organisation’s size, history, and ethos, along with the urgency at hand and time pressures (Sethuraman and Suresh, 2014), with a high degree of control. It must be recognised that these forces are not independent but instead coexist and are interchangeable in all contexts. Managers may need to change their approach several times throughout the day.

Central to the hospitality context is the service-based nature of the sector. It therefore becomes an arduous task to ensure that the correct approach is adopted to fit the correct situation, or at least the context of the situation. While McGregor seemingly suggests the importance of knowledge of people and their individual work ethic may dictate or at least influence the approach to leadership, others consider the need to find an appropriate balance between adopting democratic and autocratic approaches. Similarly, it is important to consider influencing forces that may dictate differing approaches influenced by their team, values, and situation.

3. Research methodology

The research adopted interpretivism (Quinlan et al., 2015) as a philosophical approach with the intention of investigating individual experiences using interpretations and developing meanings from individuals' own experiences and viewpoints (Saunders et al., 2018), thus exploring a complex environment that has been self-constructed through individual interpretations based on personal beliefs drawn through memories and the recant of stories (Sparkes and Smith, 2014). This allows for the collection of rich data collated from "opinions and narratives that can help to account for different social realities of different social actors" (Saunders et al., 2019, p. 135). Making use of inductive approaches, the researcher was able to understand the distinct nature of situations drawn from the revelations of each interviewee (White, 2014; Woceshyn and Daellenbach, 2018). The research followed qualitative principles in order to gain deeper insight from managers (Durbarry, 2018), using semi-structured interviews (Gronmo, 2016), and focusing on identifying leaders's rationales for adopting the approaches rather than analysing the decision-making process (Smith, 2018). To facilitate this, a single case study approach (Yin, 2014) was taken.

The adoption of the methodological approach, while not providing any statistical generalisability (Saunders et al., 2019), does provide theoretical generalisability (Tsang, 2014) and analytical generalisability (Yin, 2014) and allows similar people and organisations to consider the relevance of the research and how this applies in context (Ridder et al., 2014). Most notably, the theoretical conventions of the approach provide a firm ground for the approach taken and provide credibility to the process (Farquhar, 2012). This is further emphasised by Johnston (2014), who stresses the importance of management research to be both academically rigorous and practically relevant.

Participants were selected using purposive sampling (Saunders et al., 2019). As such, hotel managers were chosen based on the underlying principle of being most able to answer the questions and provide a 'typical case', (Hennik et al., 2020). Selected managers were the Director of Events {P1}; Food and Beverage Director {P2}; Food and Beverage Manager {P3}; General Manager {P4}; Executive Chef {P5}; and Director of Rooms {P6}. The respondents were considered representatives of managers; however, this provided no statistical relevance but may be deemed theoretically relevant if trying to generalise and compare to other luxury hotels (Tsang, 2014). The interviews made use of both closed and open-ended questions, allowing each participant the flexibility to express their views and opinions based on their experiences (Gray, 2020). Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data, allowing meaning to be considered and discussed. This assisted in the identification of patterns and contrasts, which allowed an in-depth investigation to find deeper interpretations (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

4. Findings and discussion

4.1. Self-perception of approach

4.1.1. Adapting to change

Each manager self-evidenced a combination of characteristics that pointed to their approach; however, it was within this self-selection that it became apparent that there was no definitive approach taken by any of them; instead, they displayed a combination of differing characteristics pointing to an array of differing styles. This was further complicated by the inability of some to narrow down their choices, while others were more able to be specific. This, they noted, was down to situational variables (Sims et al., 2013), which may influence the approach they adopt. P4 and P5 highlighted that all were crucial characteristics and could be relevant at some point during the day, depending on the people involved and the circumstances of the situation. Further to this, P5 explained that there is a need to change depending on the situation, and all should be able to adapt and change to fit the situation.

While P4 notes that

'You need to know your people, I spent a lot of time on trying to understand them, know what makes them tick, because then that changes your approach to them. I have to speak to 'Director of Rooms' differently to how I speak to 'Director of F&B', they are both leaders, senior in the business, but they both have different characters ... you really have to have an individualised approach to managing the team to get maximum engagement'.

As such, responses from P3, P4, and P5 align closely with the ideas highlighted by Mullins and Dossor (2013) and uphold the view of Peterson et al. (2020), suggesting the situation, including the role of the subordinates, influences a leader's approach. In contrast to Huertas-Valdivia et al. (2018), who suggest a clear distinction separating approaches into clearly defined groupings based on their characteristics, this research suggests a more integrated and blended set of characteristics with less clear boundaries. P2 is associated with the intervener based on his experience, recognising his ability to "step in" if required, solving the issue or providing guidance to those involved, and helping them come to the appropriate decision. P2 may appear to fit the 'box' of the micromanager, while at the same time demonstrating the traits of servant leadership through empowering others to make decisions, learn, and make effective use of resources, in line with Dennis and Mocarena (2005).

P5 contends that you "probably need a little bit of all of them," suggesting, 'I'd like to think I'm a perfectionist, but I'm also a realist. I like to be in control, but life's full of the uncontrollable, and I do like to empower the team', believing he has to give staff the opportunity to develop, and this is done through empowerment, allowing staff to make decisions and take responsibility for their personal development.

These comments suggest P5 combines micromanager (Mishra et al., 2019), transformational (Tracey and Hinkin, 1996), and servant (Irawanto et al., 2019) approaches. The notion of being a perfectionist while also being a controller may, on the face of it, appear to contradict the notion of being a good listener or having the ability to empower the staff, but it does not exclude them. It is possible for them to co-exist (Bavik, 2020; Hay, 2006).

Although subordinates and/or the situation play a major part in the choice of approach, it is also important to recognise that the manager will also be influential (Mullins and Dossor, 2013). P3 highlights how his personal values and experience may influence approaches, depending on the circumstances and the individuals concerned.

'My leadership style is my leadership style obviously. Every organisation that you work for has their different goals and different benchmarks and values that they set themselves to, but I'm not going to change who I am just for a company. I will obviously adhere to all the values, but most of the time, if you are in a leadership role and you've been hired into a leadership role, you have the values that the company is looking for and you personify so in those circumstances'.

In line with Kalma et al. (1993), managers lead depending on their values and backgrounds. Prior experience has a major influence on the approach they take. This may come about from experience with previous situations, managers, or colleagues that molded them. In addition, core values are intrinsic and central to behaviour and are not likely to change. Often, this is underpinned by integrity and authenticity, which should be a key part of why they are recruited {P5}.

4.1.2. It is all about people

All interviewees confirmed the need to be adaptable to be able to effectively influence team members (Northouse, 2020), taking into account individual characteristics and circumstances. As such, each identified the importance of the 'people' and sought a 'best approach' to bring together differing factors to get the best out of everyone, including appreciating differing needs and wants aligned to their own expectations and an understanding of individual potential. All interviewees recognised the centrality of people in being effective. Mishra et al. (2019) and Ford (2020) emphasise the importance of this within the context of hospitality. P3 acknowledged the positive link between contented employees and satisfied customers, who often repeat business due to the positive experience, in line with Azik (2017).

Although the literature may suggest that managers struggle to adopt an appropriate balance between service consistency, staff empowerment, and autonomy (Peterson et al., 2020; Witelaw, 2013), each of the interviewees appeared to demonstrate a clear understanding of their workplace context and strategies for action.

4.1.3. Challenge and the 'perfect storm'

The combination of the COVID-19 pandemic and Brexit significantly impacted the hospitality sector, creating a perfect storm (Gardner, 2022). While the pandemic significantly affected businesses generally, the easing of restrictions had a particular impact on the hospitality sector and led to unanticipated and unexpected circumstances and ultimately a crisis (Gursoy and Chi, 2020), which, coupled with Brexit, brought about a significant staffing issue within the sector (UK Hospitality 2018a). In addition, it must be remembered that the pandemic and subsequent lockdowns resulted in many individuals reflecting on what was important and their individual priorities. As they focused on this, individuals often leaned towards career changes, changes to the value system, and most notably, expectations in the workplace setting (Redazione, 2021).

Each interviewee acknowledged that society had changed post-pandemic, and as a result, the emphasis had shifted from recruiting employees to retaining them. As

such, adapting, or at least having the ability to adapt, was even more crucial. (Buchanan, 2018; Birkin, 2019). Walsh and Johnston (2023) emphasise the importance of leadership at a time of crisis and highlight this rotational need within the leadership crisis wheel.

4.2. Adopting democratic approaches

Although interviewees were from different backgrounds and had differing personalities, there remained a commonality of belief in the need to adopt a more democratic approach as the answer to retaining more staff. This is heavily influenced by the growing importance of domestic workforces coupled with a greater understanding of generational differences, which are at the forefront of leaders' thinking.

A worthwhile career

Partington (2016) notes that hospitality is still viewed negatively, with P2 identifying comments such as 'this is hospitality', while also referring to the 'ugly' side of the sector. This, according to Ferris et al. (2018) and Janta (2011), results from hospitality being associated with low pay, long hours, limited work-life balance, and the perception that it is often a temporary role that can be used to step into another career. Quite often, it is associated with younger workers, perhaps students, who tend to be more transient. P2, however, argues for changes to this—'But this should not happen', as the environment has changed and this perception needs to change; however, this can only be done through re-inventing the sector and making it more attractive. Elements of this rely on changes to the leadership adopted. P2 notes that changes are happening, particularly to working conditions, pointing to the need to attract the domestic workforce. This has meant seeking to attract graduates and university students on placement (Ghani et al., 2022).

As such, businesses are more conscious of individuals's needs, and attempts are made according to P6 to ensure 'their motivation to be part of a professional family' is supported. As such, successful accomplishment of this improves retention, reducing the costs of recruitment and developing people, as staff are retained for longer {P2}. This sense of supporting and perhaps nurturing students links with servant leadership approaches while also having linkage to transformational leadership. A better reputation will perhaps change the analogy of what 'this is hospitality' means. This is particularly relevant as Ghani et al. (2022) argue that although recruitment strategies may have changed with a focus on hiring graduates or taking students on placement, internal cultures have not changed, making roles more attractive and fitting needs and expectations (beyond the temporary job), and retention remains a key issue.

P3 notes the time to invest in people, particularly referring to the new generation of staff, acknowledging that this is not a quick fix but needs to be adopted as a long-term strategy. This will allow managers to better understand people and 'what makes them tick' {P4}.

4.3. Finding the right balance

4.3.1. Applicability of the autocratic approach

P2 acknowledges the challenges of recruiting people and then subsequently managing them. Adopting an autocratic approach is often a simpler strategy and perhaps more natural based on experience, as the organisation often gave legitimate power through hierarchical structures (Mullins and Dossor, 2013). Directing and instructing focused on what employees needed to do and how; however, this often leads to a lack of staff engagement and job satisfaction, ultimately leading to turnover. To retain staff, employees need to be people. This requires staff to be motivated, to be engaged with, and usually to be empowered and allowed to think. Additionally, employees need to be considered and cared for. The relationship becomes a partnership. What the organization does for them and what they do for the organisation. Further consideration could and should be given to the psychological contract (Rousseau, 1995). At a basic level, though, consideration needs to be given to development opportunities and a career (Agarwal and Vaghela, 2018).

Alongside this, the interviewees acknowledged the desire of individuals to value open dialogue and discussion, to know and understand their role, and in particular, the why of what they are being asked to do. P3 considers his 'open door' approach, which allows employees to know he is always available to discuss issues and concerns. Staff welfare is a key priority. P2 points to how things have changed in the past five years. 'I am on this bus; I am driving it; if you do not want to get on it, get off'. This is no longer the way; you will soon have a 'pretty empty' bus.

'You still need a vision, your own journey and goal, you need to be on few more detours and maybe you need to go on a scenic route, so that everyone is going on this bus for a lovely journey'. {P2}

Recent changes and the challenges within hospitality (UK Hospitality, 2018b, 2020a, 2020b, 2022b) have suggested that the old way cannot continue. Expectations have changed as generations have changed, but most significantly, the workplace environment has changed. Thus, managers need to be able to adapt to situations and better understand people, their needs, and, most importantly, their expectations. This requires them to understand their employees, consider factors affecting job satisfaction, and incorporate empowerment and career development opportunities. Al-Ababneh (2013) links the approach taken to leadership with job satisfaction. Servant leadership and, to some extent, transformational leadership assume that employees are at least listened to (Brownell, 2010; Coleman and Donohoe, 2022).

4.3.2. The grey area

While this paper argues for the adoption of a more democratic approach, and more specifically, the adoption of servant leadership, there should be some reflection as to whether an autocratic approach should be abandoned completely. This is legitimised by interviewee responses, which, although recognising the shift, still suggested that command and control still had a place. There is a need for balance {P4}. While there is value in employees expressing opinions, it remains the job of the leader to make decisions {P4}. It must also be recognised that hospitality relies on consistency of service (Witelaw, 2013) and does not, in many cases, allow for creativity and innovation. Management control measures will more likely ensure this,

alongside the need to check and reassure, particularly the need for short-term contracts, which are not likely to attract career-oriented people but instead perhaps Theory X people who may require higher levels of supervision {P2, P4}.

Again, not all micromanagement techniques are negative; often, they can help individuals and teams grow and can be used in a supportive manner. P6 suggests that

'It is important that employees know that I can jump in and assist the team that may need more support but also step back and watch them and tweak things to make sure that it is a very well-oiled ship and let them work on progression and development'.

And going deeper

'I would be like a football coach making sure that the team is getting the support and the drive that they need but also holding them accountable and making sure they provide that service to the guests and continue to evolve'.

This aligns with Mishra et al.'s (2019) view that micromanagement may be an appropriate approach in the correct circumstances, particularly within hospitality. Ultimately, hospitality needs to maintain standards and quality control. This notion of control needs to be actuated to ensure 'things are done properly' but 'it is how you switch it on and off' {P4}. It is important to know when to adopt an autocratic approach. This is clarified.

'I wouldn't necessarily hold the hand all the way but I will hold employees' hand up until they feel comfortable to branch out and be independent and I think it is better to empower your team, give them the right guidance and framework and make sure that they realise that there is a line that can't be crossed'. {P6}

The use of autocratic and democratic methods may therefore be viewed as tactical. Allowing independence and advocating empowerment when there is room, but adopting an autocratic approach when the situation is more rigid and requires it.

4.3.3. Communication

Central to the whole process is effective communication. Appreciating individual attitudes is central to this; commencing at the point of hire, employing the right person for the job counters any future issues. This can then be embedded over time to ensure individuals are settled and comfortable. Working in the right place will allow them to develop and reach their potential.

'You also look at people move them around and put them in the best slot for them. And then the whole thing is like an orchestra: it's no good having the cello player if he can't play, because he is better on drums ... and then the whole thing comes together, and you obviously make music better because you are utilising the team and their abilities and their qualities to the best of what we want'. {P4}

Recognising the importance of effective communication in tackling problems and/or achieving solutions can be deemed a strategic tool through the building of effective relations built on trust and understanding, particularly when there is a disparity between the needs of an employee and organisational needs. The use of effective communication may help to solve issues as they arise before they become more problematic situations. This may be particularly prevalent when dealing with casual staff, temporary staff, or staff employed through an agency. This may be heightened if staff are part-time. Finding out about an individual's experience and

background (P3) or explaining 'reasons why everything needs to be perfect' (P6), thus adhering to appropriate standards, has an impact on service quality. This potentially appears to be a time-consuming task and may at times be a challenge; however, adopting this approach in the short term may have benefits in the long term. Whether individuals fit neatly into the Theory X or Y box does not remove the fact that they still often want an explanation of what they are doing and why. Individuals still have needs and want to fulfil their expectations in their role. P3 emphasises 'It all needs to be tailored to the individual'.

5. Conclusion

The hospitality sector potentially has a bad reputation as a career choice. As such, leaders realise that in order to make the sector more attractive, changes in leadership approaches are necessary, and the adoption of democratic approaches would appear to be sought after. A key goal within the sector is the retention of high-quality staff, which many suggest can and should be achieved through empowering employees who feel listened to, understood, and appreciated. They need to be provided with training and development opportunities and be able to visualise future opportunities for themselves. Servant leadership and transformational leadership approaches would appear to value this. Although leaders may recognise themselves through adjectives such as mentoring and empowering and may associate themselves as a listener or being sensitive, they also recognise themselves the need to be controlling and demonstrate a willingness to intervene when necessary, which are more characterised within autocratic approaches. Micromanagement cannot be discarded entirely. The use of micromanagement techniques can achieve positive outcomes, particularly in the short term. As such, restricting hospitality managers to one approach becomes limiting, and it must be recognised that managers in hospitality need to make full use of the toolkit they have to hand and adopt a balanced approach. As a result, due to the nature of hospitality, managers need to embrace compromise, which allows them to adapt to the team, situation, and organisation demands in the pursuit of service excellence.

Central to this appears to be effective communication. Through this, coupled with open dialogue, managers should be able to build effective relationships with their teams based on understanding, empathy, and mutual trust, allowing challenging circumstances to be solved more readily. Critical may be empowering individuals, giving them responsibility, and allowing them to grow and develop. As such, employees who are happy in their workplace, feel part of it, and have high levels of fulfillment and satisfaction tend to remain and not seek alternative employment opportunities. The pandemic and Brexit have come and gone, and hospitality has faced unprecedented challenges. This is nothing new, and so hospitality needs to be ready for the next challenge. A key component of this rests with a manager's ability to understand people, adapt to change, and apply effective communication. The hospitality manager requires a toolkit that allows them to adapt between democratic and autocratic approaches as needed.

6. Limitations

The research undertaken was a single case study, within one hotel, and as such, the sample of both of organisations and individuals could have been expanded. This may allow for a broader perspective and take into account more varied situational variables. The subjective nature of qualitative research, associated with the lead researcher having previously worked at the organisation, elements of bias have tried to be avoided but, as always, may have been present.

7. Future research

Although there is a plethora of leadership research, this paper presents a viewpoint on the complexity within the hospitality sector, acknowledging the need to be both democratic and autocratic in leadership to meet individual and organisational needs. The research gives a voice to managers who are able to express their perception in contrast to the more commonly explored employee view and subsequently contributes to the literature base. Further research may also be conducted outside of the UK to allow for cross-cultural comparisons and perhaps identify different types of hotel environments.

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Review

Employability skills as perceived by hotel employees: An overview

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Abstract: Background: The hotel industry is labor-intensive. Both technical and behavioral aspects of quality are considered to ensure service quality and customer satisfaction among the internal and external customers as a whole, creating a competitive advantage. **Significance:** Recruiting and selecting the right people is paramount to the success of the hospitality industry in the sense that the best delivery will be enhanced if proper procedures are used and the right people are selected who can handle their tasks to the best satisfaction of the customer. **Method:** The goal of the research was to explore the recruiting and selection practices/methods used in the hotel industry, as well as their employability. The study aims to explore the differences in the mix of recruitment and selection methods implemented in 4- and 5-star and different category hotels. As an enterprise, HRD comprises change, learning, and performance. **Results:** Based on the findings, it is imperative to invest in human resources as a capital asset to boost staff entities in terms of knowledge and capabilities, thereby contributing to better service quality and enhanced customer satisfaction. This would help fulfil the organizations' objectives. **Conclusion:** The study concludes that the selected candidates are being analyzed properly and effectively. It is very important to note that the results of this study cannot be generalized as it deals with a restricted clientele, and this could only add on variables and instances to form a common standpoint for the other hotel managers.

Keywords: recruitment; selection; service quality; human resource; employees

1. Introduction

The majority of personnel management is hands-on in the manufacturing and commercial sectors, compared to the service and hotel industries. The hotel industry is labor-intensive. Both technical and behavioral aspects of quality are considered to ensure service quality and customer satisfaction among internal and external customers as a whole, creating a competitive advantage.

The hotel industry's specific characteristics, such as high turnover, skill shortages, flexible employment patterns, low wages, heterogeneity in firm size, ownership, and service class/category, make human resource management more critical in a specific context for the achievement of organizational goals. Attracting and selecting the right people is the starting point for the achievement of these goals by effectively managing the organizational workforce.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the recruiting and selecting practices/methods utilized in the hotel sector, specifically in the hotel brand, and their success. The study intends to investigate the differences in the mix of recruitment and selection strategies used by 4- and 5-star hotels of various sizes. Furthermore, the findings are likely to help fill a gap in HRM literature about the recruiting and selection processes used in the hotel business.

Talent acquisition (TA) is defined as "a strategic approach to identifying, attracting, and onboarding top talent to meet dynamic business needs efficiently and

effectively". Recruiting and selection is a subset of TA that encompasses sourcing, screening, interviewing, assessing, selecting, and hiring. The process's primary goals are to recruit bright individuals to work for the business, to complete the entire cycle from planning to deployment as quickly as possible, to place the right people in the right places, and to ensure a pool of readily available talent. The process of discovering and encouraging potential applicants to apply for current or anticipated employment openings is known as recruitment. Selection, on the other hand, is the process of selecting people with the necessary qualities to fill positions in an organization. In recent years, recruitment and selection processes have changed dramatically. Retaining staff has been a difficult issue for all firms, and they are taking extra precautions when hiring new employees. This is where the efficiency of recruitment and selection comes into play. Recruitment is now a process that is strategically aligned.

There is a visible imbalance between skilled labor supply and demand in the hospitality industry. Employees in this industry must have a wide range of skill sets to carry out organizational activities and functions. Employers want employees who are quick learners, versatile, adaptive, and transformable. More importantly, work in an independent manner involving minimal supervision.

According to a McKinsey Global Institute analysis, a global shortfall of approximately 38 million high-skilled and 45 million middle-skilled professionals is projected by 2020. As a result, the necessity of obtaining these necessary abilities is undeniable at the international, national, and institutional levels.

Some of the major concerns are high staff turnover and skill gaps, where there is a mismatch between market demand and the present capabilities provided by organizations.

Recruitment challenges in the hospitality industry will continue to be a matter of concern in finding the suitable applicant, retaining the best people, and addressing the lack of quality hospitality training or education. The wage in hospitality is appealing. Work pressure is a little greater and has more underlying gaps.

Human resource management has made improvements to performance management, resulting in the elimination of certain flaws in performance management. In this day and age of fierce competition, the organization must prioritize labor and position its needs at the top of the company's priority list. Human resource management has been critical in eradicating the practice of treating employees like machines.

The performance management industry is changing dramatically. According to this hotel brand study, 50% of employers intend to change their approach to performance management within the next year and a half. 48% of these firms want to make significant changes to their performance management systems. This is happening because the corporation recognizes that its personnel evaluation systems are not just traditional but also, to some extent, antiquated.

Organizations feel that fundamental changes in firms' performance management techniques are essential if they are to develop a culture of high performance. This is also important if they wish to remain relevant in the thoughts of present and prospective employees.

Hotels are beginning to respond to major trends in the performance management domain in their drive to make significant adjustments to this domain.

Some of the main trends are listed below:

- ongoing evaluation rather than an annual appraisal—continual Kaizen;
- Employees should not be labeled—no biased feedback/ appraisal;
- the evaluation of performance as a motivator.

The level of skill the staff possesses determines the fit statement of an employee. With a dedicated workforce, it is not only possible to create quality service but also helps to beat the competition. Every hotel organization or unit has its own set of rules and policies of operation that determine the existence and retention of employees and customers. Therefore, performance is directly proportional to skill acquisition. Lack of venue for training is also a barrier to unproductivity and the deteriorated dedication level of employees. Hotel employees should be trained appropriately to provide excellent customer service. Human resources (HR) continue to be an essential determinant of hospitality and tourism offerings, with implications for destination competitiveness. Human resources are a hospitality company's initial point of contact with its consumers. It is imperative to invest in human resources as capital to boost staff entities in terms of knowledge and capabilities, thereby contributing to better service quality and enhanced customer satisfaction. This would help fulfill the organization's objectives.

2. Literature review

Helm et al. (2007) said that PMS is an important tool to improve an organization's performance; it facilitates the organization to achieve its goals and objectives. It can develop a performance-oriented culture within the organization. It helps the individual employee to have clarity about what exactly is expected from him, as there will be proper performance planning for each employee. PMS can also identify talented individuals for promotion, and it also establishes a linkage between pay and performance. It means various important HR decisions can be accurately taken with the help of PMS.

Bhattacharjee and Sengupta (2011) emphasized in their study that employees are the most crucial and valuable assets of an organization. If an organization wants to gain competitive advantages, it is very important to bridge the gap between the actual competence of human resources working in the organization and the desired competence expected from them. With the help of an established performance management system, the organization can bridge this gap between actual performance and expected performance.

Pradhan and Chaudhury (2012) found that the main objective of the performance management system is to align the individual and organizational goals in such a way as to give the best possible platform for the employees to perform with 100% efficiency, which will lead to organizational development, employee satisfaction, and increased employee retention.

According to Azizi Rostam (2020), performance management can be considered a set of measures and information that is done to increase the level of optimal use of

facilities and resources to achieve goals in economic ways with efficiency and effectiveness.

The study of Muhammad et al. (2021) contributes to the body of knowledge by providing information about the relationship and effects of performance management on employee performance.

Successful human resources should recognize the organization's manpower requirements. It involves identifying a possible workforce for current or projected vacancies. It is a connection that brings together individuals who have positions to fill on one hand and who are looking for work on the other. A successful recruitment campaign will attract a significant number of qualified candidates who will accept the job if it is provided. This process takes care of rejected and waitlisted candidates for job consideration. An effective recruiting campaign should create a platform for deserving and fit candidates. This will lower the cost of screening the rejected candidates.

According to IvyPanda (2021), Mintzberg opines that "human resource manpower is the best asset a company will have if well managed." This indicates that if organizations hire the appropriate people, they will see upward growth. Management should also motivate employees as much as possible through frequent training and incentive programs. In this aspect, **Figure 1** tries to guide with the different variables used in the HR policies.

3. Research methodology

For relevant information on a certain issue, the research process is scientific and systematic. It is a thorough investigation or inquiry, a review of any field of expertise. Research is a systematic endeavor to gather knowledge and skills that a researcher generates and employs in researching his research challenge, as well as the logic behind them. The method of writing or carrying out research is critical since it has a large impact on the conclusions reached at the end of the investigation.

A hotel brand was chosen at random for a sample of hospitality professionals. In January 2023, 30 employees responded to an email with a link to the survey, obtaining a 100% response rate. To enhance response rates, the survey was conducted for three weeks, and weekly reminders were given to sample members.

Employees play critical roles in ensuring that firms have a competitive advantage over competitors around the world for them to be sustained. Using a descriptive survey research design, the study will investigate the recruiting and selection strategies for employee performance in the real sector. The functions of recruiting, selection, and placement are critical in the hospitality management sector. This industry's success is dependent on human resources, as portrayed by Muller et al. (2009).

Analysis: Throughout this report, we may presume that the hotel launched the recruitment process for its employees.

Differences: To evaluate if the observed differences were statistically significant, conventional statistical methods were applied.

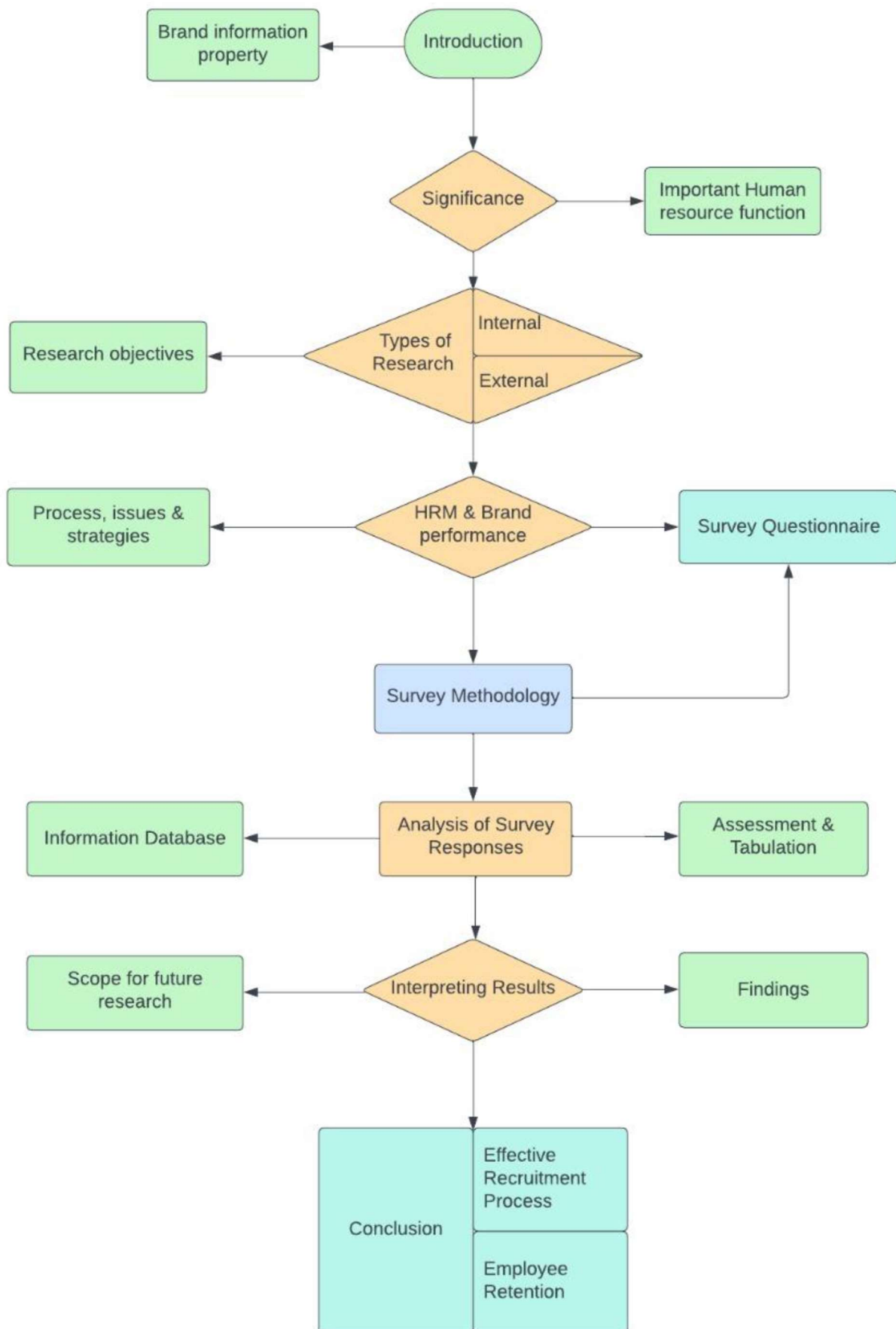


Figure 1. Conceptual framework/flowchart of variables.

Sources of data: The information is gathered from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data is obtained using a structured questionnaire. A well-structured questionnaire has been produced and distributed to hotel personnel.

Secondary data: Secondary data is collected using published data within the firm as well as the online media.

Sample size: The total sample size is thirty.

4. Significance

At the moment, the most difficult challenge is recognizing talent in the hotel industry. A clear and refined recruiting policy is needed in today's global candidate short market to achieve organizational objectives and command a large market share in the current competitive market. Recruiting and selecting the appropriate personnel is critical to the success of the hospitality sector in the sense that proper procedures are followed and the right people are chosen to handle their responsibilities to the best satisfaction of the customer.

The main aim of the study is to identify, encourage, measure, evaluate, improve, and reward. The study involves all the formal and informal measures adopted by the hotel to increase individual and team effectiveness. Management and employees should be enabled continuously, e.g., by being practiced by SAP Company (n.d.) in Walldorf, Germany, to develop knowledge, skills, and capabilities for employee performance at work.

The scope of the study covers the following parts, as also emphasized by Becker et al. (2001):

- Job performance: considers meeting goals and developing mutually decided standards.
- Working relationships: This aspect focuses on maintaining professional relationships with co-workers, subordinates, and managers.
- The need for the study is that human resources are the real resources for any organization. All other resources in the organization are utilized by human resources, and so the fullest utilization of all resources depends on the employee performance of the organization. Today, the globalization of the world economy and several other factors are again generating changes in how organizations organize, manage, and use their human resources. Technology is also changing the nature of work. Knowledge-intensive techniques, industrial automation, and reengineering with optimum utilization of resources set the current working environment. To add to this, the personal lives of individual employees also affect their professional work, aims and ambitions, and decisions. Hence, managing employee performance continuously is becoming critical to the policies and planning of top management.

Performance management has attracted the attention of all organizations as the information provided by PMS can be utilized for making various important HR decisions related to human resource planning, recruitment and selection, training and development, compensation management, career planning, talent management, performance-based pay, etc., according to a study by Sims (2002).

5. Tabulation & data analysis

According to the data derived from the structured questionnaire, the analysis is as under.

As is shown in **Figure 2**, mostly the response came from the 25–40 age group, which is 57.1%, followed by the 18–25 age group, which is approximately 28.6%.

Age Group
7 responses

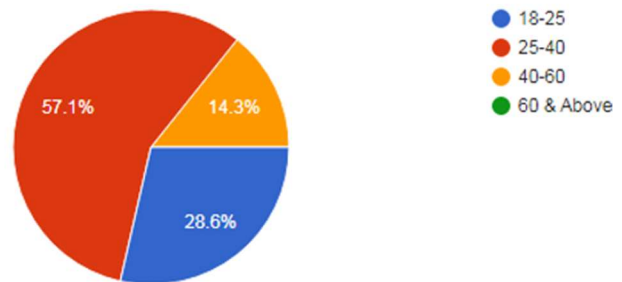


Figure 2. Age group of the respondents.

As is shown in **Figure 3**, 100% of respondents agreed that the performance management system is clearly defined in the organization.

1. Performance Management System is clearly defined in the organization?
7 responses

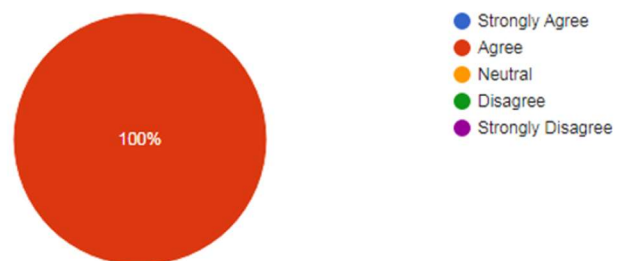


Figure 3. Organization's performance management system.

As is shown in **Figure 4**, 42% believe that the performance management system can be based on the skills of the person in the property.

2. How would you think performance management can be improved in the following individual factor?
7 responses

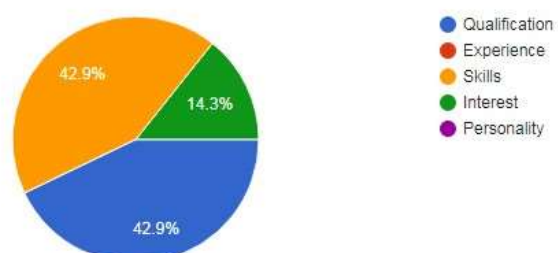


Figure 4. Individual positive factors of performance management system.

As is shown in **Figure 5**, 57.1% of respondents believe that through management support, the performance management system can be improved.

3. From which of the following organizational factor, do you think performance management system can get improved?

7 responses

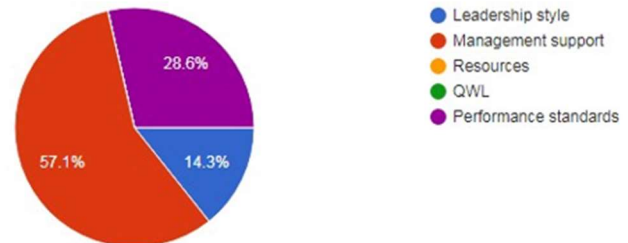


Figure 5. Organizational positive factors of performance management system.

As is shown in **Figure 6**, 100% of respondents agree that their formal feedback is given in their organization.

4. Formal feedback regarding your performance is given to you

7 responses

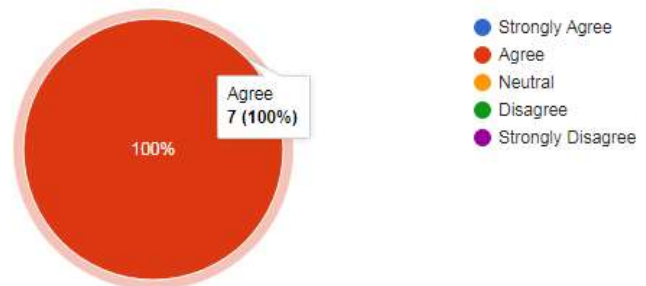


Figure 6. Formal performance feedback.

As is shown in **Figure 7**, 71.4% of employees say that their performance management system and performance appraisal system are satisfactory and 28.6% say it is neutral.

5. The existing performance management system and performance appraisal system is

7 responses

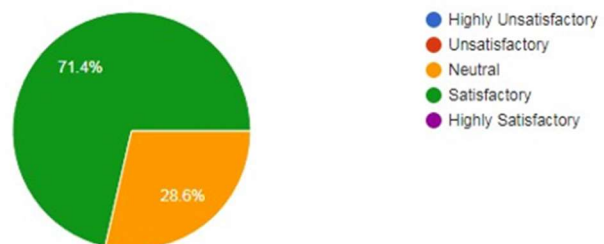


Figure 7. Performance appraisal system.

As is shown in **Figure 8**, 100% of respondents say that their company has a great future, and they would recommend the work culture and workplace to their family and friends as emphasized by Fatema (2018).

6.The company has a great future and I would you recommend this organization to friends or family members as a good place to work
7 responses



Figure 8. Recommend the current organization.

As is shown in **Figure 9**, 71.4% of respondents say that their performance management system helps them achieve meaningful goals, followed by 28.6% who say that it is neutral; they could not comment on any of the thoughts.

7.Performance Management System helps people set and achieve meaningful goals
7 responses

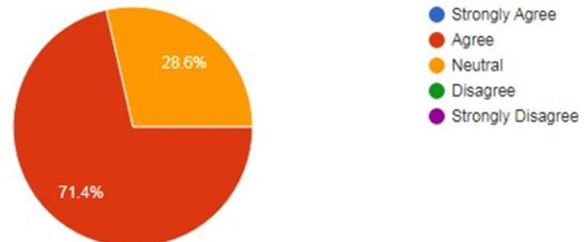


Figure 9. Goal oriented performance management system.

As is shown in **Figure 10**, 57.1% of respondents say that training is a barrier to effective performance, followed by 14.3% who say lack of resources, and 28.6% say that barriers are through constant monitoring.

8. What are the barriers to effective performance?
7 responses

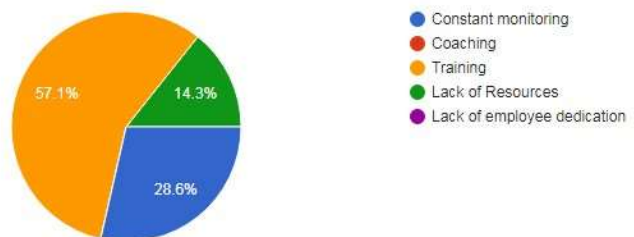


Figure 10. Barriers of effective performance.

As is shown in **Figure 11**, 100% of respondents agree that PMS implemented in their organization creates a participative environment as also concluded in a study by Kumar and Nirmala (2015).

9. PMS implemented in the organization creates a participative environment

7 responses



Figure 11. Participative nature of performance management system.

As is shown in **Figure 12**, 71.4% of people agree that their job responsibilities are clearly defined, whereas 14.3% have a neutral approach to them, and a mix of 14.3% strongly agree with the given statement.

10. The job responsibilities are clearly defined

7 responses

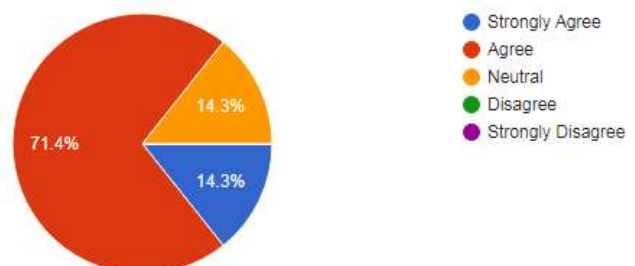


Figure 12. Job responsibilities defined.

As is shown in **Figure 13**, 85.7% of respondents agree that their performance and their achievements are rewarded in time, followed by 14.3% who strongly agree.

11. The excellence in performance and achievement of results are rewarded in time

7 responses

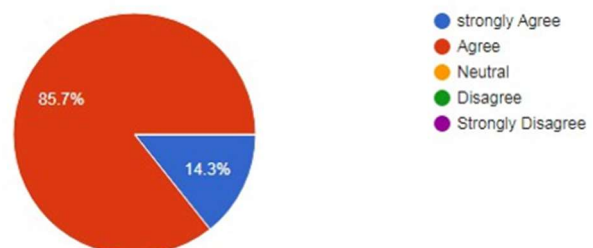


Figure 13. Rewarding nature of performance management system.

As is shown in **Figure 14**, 85.7% of respondents say that their company policies are good in terms of business needs and a positive work environment, followed by 14.3% saying they are very good.

12. How would you rate your companies policies and procedures are periodically reviewed to meet with the business needs and creates create a positive work environment?

7 responses

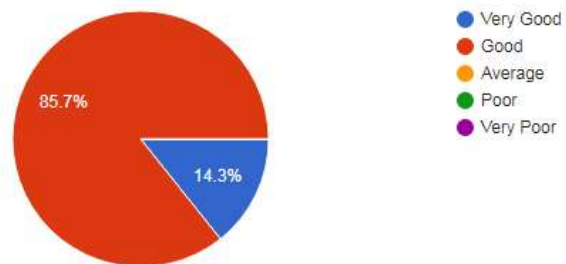


Figure 14. Review nature of organization's performance management system.

As is shown in **Figure 15**, 100% of respondents agree that steps are taken to improve performance management by the organization.

13. Are any steps taken to improve the performance if not upto the mark?

7 responses



Figure 15. Existence of improvement steps in performance management system.

As is shown in **Figure 16**, 100% of people agreed that their job description clearly defines the KRA on which performance is rated.

14. Does your Job Description clearly define KRA's on which your performance is rated?

7 responses

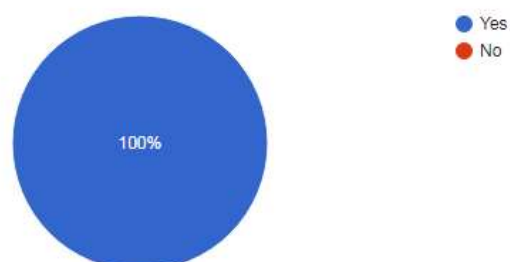


Figure 16. Job description defined.

As is shown in **Figure 17**, 85.7% of respondents say that the performance can be improved with the training factor, and 14.3% say by the reward systems.

15. How performance can be improved?

7 responses

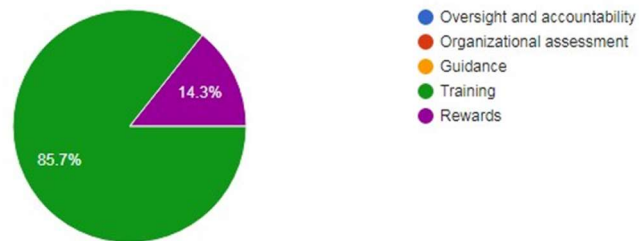


Figure 17. Improvement entities in performance management system.

As is shown in **Figure 18**, both 42.9% say that the performance of employees and motivation are performance appraisals. and the rest, 14.3%, say it is an evaluation of employees.

16. In your opinion what is Performance Appraisal?

7 responses

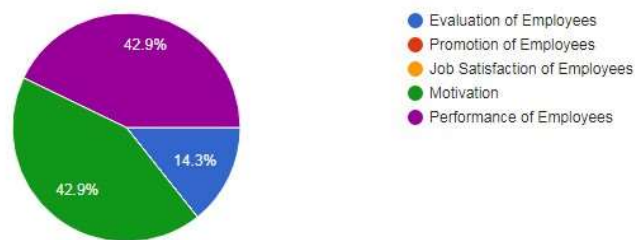


Figure 18. Performance appraisal defined by employees.

As shown in **Figure 19**, there are some feedbacks and suggestions in the given questionnaire.

17. Please kindly provide your valuable suggestions for further improvement

4 responses

Performance management system should be evolved according to the new generation of employees keeping in mind about various trends in Human Resource management

Performance management system process should be made very clear and the most important part is that it should be to the point .

Pms is an effective way for monitoring staffs performance
Pms should be made very precisely .

As an HR employee I would suggest that the PMS System should be language friendly so that most of the employees could participate in it .

Figure 19. Suggestions of improvement for management by employees.

6. Limitation

The analysis indicates that the majority reported that the outcomes of the research were difficult to generalize. The limitations include a sample drawn from only one or

specific contexts, a limited or small sample size, a cross-sectional or snapshot approach to data collection, self-selection bias or a convenience sampling approach, a lack of empirical research, a lack of more specific variables, and exploratory or ongoing research.

Future research can address the limitations, including a small sample size, limited empirical research, exploratory analysis, and a lack of suitable variables.

The limited extent of empirical research can be dealt with by using quantitative analysis to understand the turnover intention of talent using structured equation modeling. Moreover, as this research is based on a comprehensive review of the available literature on performance management, it can be said to have overcome the issue of identifying the most suitable variables.

The review indicates that none of the studies has systematically examined the variables of performance management based on the prior literature in the field concerned. Similarly, the design of the research model developed to evaluate how performance management influences employee commitment is based entirely on the random selection of variables, including the moderator (i.e., company type), with no theoretical underpinning, as concluded by Bratton and Gold (2007).

7. Findings and scope

The findings from the analysis are listed as follows:

- The company was proficient in hiring through portals.
- The mode of recommendation of an employee does well in any industry, especially hospitality, which authenticates the durability of the person.
- The recruitment process followed is customized to suit, but cross-analysis with other companies deems changes, improvements, and alterations in the interest of the company as a whole.
- The cost-benefit relationship is found to be acceptable for hiring employees.
- The selected candidates are being analyzed properly and effectively. It is very important to note that the results of this study cannot be generalized as it deals with a restricted clientele, and this could only add on variables and instances to form a common standpoint with the other hotel managers.
- The future scope could address internal and external recruitment as explained in his book by Pulakos (2004), intention to stay, and growth plans with the team for their survival and sustainable existence. The study could extend to two properties of the same chain or different hotels altogether. This kind of research could have a long-term impact.

8. Conclusion

The current pattern of the recruitment process being followed was studied, and a review was drawn accordingly. While the questionnaires to the hotel employees did the needful, other related information was sought from journals and articles available online.

More than mere hiring, it is an uphill task to ensure those selected stay at work, are happy, and continue to do so, as confirmed to us by the HR manager and HR office of the company.

The emphasis is on training, re-training, and upskilling. HR is no longer a back-of-the-house job; it has raised its standards to be the frontline manager, and it is all about talent acquisition.

Best fit and suitability are two important features of any recruit. This is the crux of planning policies for any company when they are varied, skilled, talented, and heterogeneous in nature.

Conflict of interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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Review

A review of human resource management practices and their impact on school performance (2012–2022)

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Abstract: The purpose of this study was to investigate the published literature on human resource management and school performance from January 2012 to December 2022. Numerous literature evaluations have been conducted on human resource management and organizational performance, but school or teacher performance has received less attention than organizational performance. The PICOC (population, intervention, comparison, outcome, and context) technique is integrated into each stage of the PSALSAR framework to assure the study's objective and comparability. This in-depth research is conducted in three stages: identifying pertinent keywords, screening pertinent papers, and selecting pertinent publications for review utilizing the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta Analysis) technique. This made a final database with 44 publications that met the study's requirements for inclusion. This study reveals that HRM practices and school performance are correlated. The results of the research identify the eight most essential HRM practices for improving school performance, which included planning, organizing, recruitment and selection, training and development, performance management, employee relations and involvement, reward and compensation, health, safety, and work-life balance. Leadership style, motivation, satisfaction, productivity and task performance, competency, culture and climate, empowerment, and commitment were among the performance-influencing elements.

Keywords: human resource management practices; school performance; recruitment and selection; training and development; reward and compensation; health and safety

1. Introduction

Human resource management (HRM) came into existence in the 1980s (O'Riordan, 2017). According to O'Riordan (2017), rebranding personnel management gained popularity rapidly, but few organizations understood the idea behind it. HRM is associated with all elements of the employment and management of people within an organization. HRM is a process by which management cultivates the organization's workforce and strives to achieve the necessary human performance (O'Riordan, 2017). Similarly, human resource management (HRM) is the activity of implementing the appropriate processes within the organization to achieve its goals of maximizing human skills throughout the process (Omebe, 2014). Griffin (1997) outlined HR management as the collection of organizational actions needed to attract, develop, and retain a competent workforce.

For organizational management to be successful, the organization must have effective and efficient HRM practices and procedures. HRM practices have three main roles: to establish vital organizational capabilities, to allow staff, customers, and the community to be satisfied, and to make employees happy and satisfied (Satyendra, 2020). HRM practices have a lasting and substantial effect on staff productivity. There

is no optimum HRM practice that applies to all organizations. Effective HRM procedures are always centered on eliciting the highest performance from staff (Satyendra, 2020).

Satyendra (2020) defined human resource management practises as a phenomenon and a set of resources that include ability, motivation, and opportunity. The contingency category is affected by organizational conditions. The resource category views HRM practices as providing value by strategically developing the specific human resources of the organization. The cornerstone of the ability-motivation-opportunity (AMO) category is to better address the primary concerns of employees. Among the objectives of the AMO subcategories are the enhancement of their employability, morale, and working conditions. Ability, motivation, and opportunity all impact an employee's productivity (Runhaar, 2017).

School performance, academic performance, or educational performance are distinct terminologies with the same meaning. School performance is the consequence of student learning fostered by the classroom instruction of teachers and developed by the students (Lamas, 2015). Academic achievement, or performance, can be measured by a student's cumulative grade point average (CGPA). It demonstrates the extent to which schools, students, and teachers have attained specified expectations over time (Tadese et al., 2022). Learning is the educational objective of education or school performance. Skills and experiences are determined by physiological and environmental variables, which influence performance (Lamas, 2015). Academic performance is influenced by factors such as skills, motivation, personality, interests, level of intelligence, self-esteem, study habits, and the teacher-student relationship, according to Lamas (2015). A school's performance is determined by the number of students who meet the required state-mandated proficiency standards. The progress of each student is impacted by school resources, such as school funds, students' learning climate, experienced and qualified teachers, and school infrastructure (Ames, 2020).

Ngotho (2018) investigated the correlation between HRM strategies and performance in Kenyan public schools. The study concluded that in-service professional development helped teachers utilize their skills and talents to improve student accomplishment and that the management styles of school administrators affected school success. Encourage instructors to work hard by assessing and improving their performance. Teachers offer extra rewards because rewards boost enthusiasm. Additionally, school principals needed strategies for including stakeholders (such as teachers, parents, and students) when making important policy decisions. Methods for assessing and formulating teachers' training needs are under review. Salary increase requests agreed upon by the Teachers' Service Commission should also be processed quickly.

Tensay and Singh (2020) investigated HRM and performance in Ethiopian public organizations using quantitative analysis. That study identified six high-commitment HRM practices, including training and development, recruitment and selection, compensation and reward, performance analysis, work engagement, and autonomy. Their findings also revealed that the appropriate application of HR practices inside an organization boosts employee engagement, which, in turn, boosts organizational performance.

Rafiei and Davari (2015) evaluated the impact of HR management on boosting the teaching abilities of Pakistani academic staff at Payam Noor University. In this case study, Rafiei and Davari (2015) highlight one aspect of human resources, namely continuous training and development. When the organization implements a professional development and training program, it increases the productivity of both its staff and the organization as a whole. Kabuuka (2022) discovered that development and training have an effect on teachers' quality and outcomes in cross-sectional research on HRM practice and teachers' performance in primary schools in Uganda. This study employed Herzberg's theory of motivation with two factors.

Mutuku (2022) investigates the relationship between school performance and HRM practices in Kenya's Machakos County secondary schools. This quantitative analysis discovered that the examined training and development staff recruitment and selection strategies had a favorable and statistically significant impact on academic achievement. This investigation employed the universalistic theory, the human capital theory, and the resource-based theory. In a study evaluating the influence of HR practice on academic outcomes in Bungoma, Kenya, Nduruchi et al. (2016) concluded that teacher professional development and training improve school academic achievement. This study focused on teacher development, promotion, student motivation, and performance appraisal. This quantitative descriptive research design targeted all secondary school teachers and principals in the sub-county of Bungoma North.

For her quantitative study, Gyimah (2020) surveyed 500 educators from a variety of public senior high schools in Ghana's Kumasi Metropolis to evaluate the extent to which different leadership styles are associated with teacher job satisfaction and academic achievement. The study revealed that transactional, transformational, and instructional leadership styles are the most commonly used by public senior high school principals within that range. Similarly, in the above study, the aforementioned leadership styles had direct, positive, and statistically significant benefits for teachers' work satisfaction and school performance.

HRM's potential advantages for students and educators According to research by Runhaar (2017), both teacher and school performance increase when HRM is viewed as unique, consistent, and consensus-based. Similarly, Runhaar (2017) noted that personnel and training, as well as performance evaluation and compensation, are frequently cited in the literature. AMO (ability, motivation, and opportunity) theory was utilized in the study.

The mixed approach of Siraj et al. (2022) to linking leadership and employee performance concluded that effective leadership seems to have a strong positive impact on job performance. Siraj et al. (2022) highlighted the practices of a distributed leadership style in that study.

1.1. Research gap

Existing literature evaluated in past studies on this topic revealed a lack of definitive evidence on the relationship between human resource management practice and school performance in various nations. In addition, most studies focused on recruiting, hiring, and training and development. Other tasks, including compensation,

performance management, leadership style, and planning, are less significant than recruitment and training. This review paper's research methodology section, which is mostly devoted to quantitative analysis, contains only some mixed-method studies. Since there was a lack of qualitative information on HRM practices and school performance, this report identifies almost no qualitative research. Consequently, there is a pressing need to investigate more HR practices in relation to school success. Similarly, a qualitative, in-depth, and knowledgeable investigation must be conducted to collect data from real-world scenarios. In addition, more HR practice models and theories pertaining to school performance demand intense analysis. In addition, the types of school performance, its purposes, the factors influencing school performance in relation to HR practices, and its roles are understudied and require further investigation. Taking into consideration the several factors that are outlined in the problem statement, the purpose of this study is to acquire more information regarding the mentioned matter.

This study addresses the gaps in the literature regarding the relationship between HR practices and school performance with its comprehensive scope. This study intends to explore the mediating influence between HR practices and school performance, considering the literature on the relationship between HR and school performance. The following research-based questions were formulated to get a thorough comprehension of the connection between academic performance and HRM practices.

- What HR practices are currently used to enhance the school's performance?
- Which nations or regions have produced the most and least research on HR and school performance?
- Which methodologies and theoretical frameworks are commonly used to assess HR and school performance?
- How have HR practices and school performance evolved, and where are the existing gaps?
- What are the primary challenges hindering the relationship between HR practices and school performance?
- What are the key findings to date, and what are the future directions for research on HR and school performance?
- What are the critical lessons learned and strategic recommendations for enhancing HR and school performance?

1.2. Materials and methods

Discovering new relevant literature is necessary for the investigation of any topic. In addition to advancing existing knowledge, it assists researchers in identifying and evaluating knowledge and information gaps relevant to specific issues. This systematic literature review facilitates the formation of a clear conclusion while reducing prejudice (Lame, 2019). This study adheres to the PSALSAR methodology. The PSALSAR framework included protocol, search, appraisal, synthesis, analysis, and reporting (Mengist et al., 2020). This research applied a nine-step procedure for a systematic review (Bearman et al., 2012) to accomplish its goals, including the following steps: identifying research questions; setting inclusion and exclusion

criteria; searching; screening; extracting; quality assessing; summarizing and evaluating search and screening; and drawing conclusions and making recommendations.

1.3. Search strategies

As illustrated in **Table 1**, a total of 148 publications relevant to the most dependable connection between human resources and school performance were discovered in various databases. The papers' authenticity and reliability were then examined. Then, 44 publications were analyzed to examine the correlation between human resources and school performance. The ultimate objective of this systematic review is to determine what research has been conducted and what literature has been published on the relationship between HR and school performance. This review's scope encompasses the search for journals and published research articles. In the literature reviews, "Scopus", "Web of Science", and "Google Scholar" were among the well-known search engines and publications that were examined. The literature was finalized on 5 January 2023, and the publications are from three data sources with peer review. Scopus, which is administered by a famous academic publisher, has proven to be the most massive database of abstracts and citations for scholarly works such as books, articles, conference proceedings, and peer-reviewed literature. Web of Science asserts to be the world's largest publisher-neutral citation database, which allows searching of publication titles, abstracts, etc. (Wanyama et al., 2022). To find completely free versions of publications, Google Scholar, the most widely used scholarly search engine, plays a crucial role (Jamali and Nabavi, 2015). Google Scholar's advanced search options, on the other hand, are valuable for discovering citations that are excluded from ordinary database searches.

Table 1. Search database and search strings.

Data base	Searching stream and terms	No. of articles	Date acquisition
Scopus	Relationship of HR and school performance	12	20/12/2022
	HR practice	7	21/12/2022
	School/education performance	5	23/12/2022
	HR and organizational performance	3	23/12/2022
	Performance	6	02/01/2023
	HR management	8	02/01/2023
Web of Science	Relationship of HR and school performance	10	20/12/2022
	HR practice	7	21/12/2022
	School/education performance	9	23/12/2022
	HR and organizational performance	7	23/12/2022
	Performance	6	02/01/2023
	HR management	9	02/01/2023
Google Scholar	Relationship of HR and school performance	20	20/12/2022
	HR practice	12	21/12/2022
	School/education performance	10	23/12/2022
	HR and organizational performance	7	23/12/2022
	Performance	4	02/01/2023
	HR management	6	02/01/2023
Total		148	

The search stage involves developing and implementing a search strategy. The search strategy phase requires a careful selection of databases to ensure that the collected material is of good quality and represents most of documents available in the topic of study (Shirokova et al., 2021). During the search delivery phase, the search

phrase will be utilized to get accessibility to the chosen databases to retrieve several associated items of literature (Mengist et al., 2020). The number of results obtained by entering the search term into the appropriate databases is displayed in **Table 1** located above. However, the quantity of publications selected in the analysis was influenced by the search parameters and the desired outcome (Martinez-Harms et al., 2015). Furthermore, the types and quality of databases used to locate the pertinent publication may impact the sample size employed for research (Mengist et al., 2020). As an extra complication, the amount and variety of databases utilized to search for relevant publications may impact the sample size for analysis (Howe et al., 2014). Before committing to a specific search engine and set of criteria, it is therefore essential to do a trial search. For instance, this experimental search across three databases yielded substantial results, indicating the existence of multiple relevant publications. This was due to the lengthy duration, the usage of more generic search phrases, and the independence of each database's results (Mengist et al., 2020).

Therefore, only articles published between 2012 and 2022 were included in the search. The reason for this is that HR has seen significant transformations in the past decade, and modern HR trends and new technologies have also grown tremendously. Therefore, to meet the goals of the review process, it was necessary to apply rigorous inclusion and exclusion criteria to the results (Mengist et al., 2020).

1.4. Appraisal

The appraisal process involves assessing the chosen articles, considering the study's aims. The studies were chosen after a thorough assessment of the relevant literature to find papers to be included in the review. The first is to establish inclusion and exclusion criteria, and the second is to evaluate study quality.

The inclusion criteria for this study are as follows (**Table 2**). (1) Since they are the primary source of empirical data, only journal articles are considered in the literature review. Therefore, this analysis did not include books, book chapters, conference papers, or theses. (2) To be eligible, English-language articles must have been published between 2012 and 2022. For the aim of the investigation, articles must concentrate on the relationship between Human Resources Management and school performance, as well as other relevant issues. In addition, publications focusing on HR practice and school performance were chosen to boost the likelihood of locating relevant content.

Table 2. Inclusion, and exclusion criteria.

Criteria	Inclusion or exclusion
When all of the predetermined keywords appear in the paper's title, keywords, or abstract.	Inclusion
The peer-reviewed scientific original publication journal	Scientific peer-reviewed journal articles that are not primary or original research
The language of the paper must be English.	The paper written in a language other than English
Evidence-based studies on synergistic or tradeoff correlations	Inclusion
A publication providing evidence from synergistically or tradeoff studies	Inclusion
When publications address a minimum of one IST indication	Exclusion
Duplicated papers found in the search documents	Exclusion
Inaccessible publications, review articles, and meta-data	Exclusion
Non-original or secondary research articles	Exclusion
Articles published prior to 2012	Exclusion

Table 1 presents the PRISMA method as well as the general screening procedure and flow of picking relevant material. During the initial stage, 148 records were discovered (Scopus had 46 records, Web of Science had 48 records, and using the advanced search technique, Google Scholar had 59 records). Grey literature, lengthy abstracts, speeches, keynotes, non-English language papers, book chapters, and unavailable publications were all eliminated, leaving only 148 items for title reading. At that point, just 108 of the original papers met the requirements for viewing the abstracts. Only 88 of the original articles were read in full after the abstracts were skimmed. 68 of these articles examined the connection between HR and school performance; these were downloaded for additional review. Duplicate papers and publications lacking fresh information about educational, organizational, and human resources techniques were manually eliminated throughout the main body of reading. Only 44 publications met all the inclusion criteria for this SLR study (**Figure 1**).

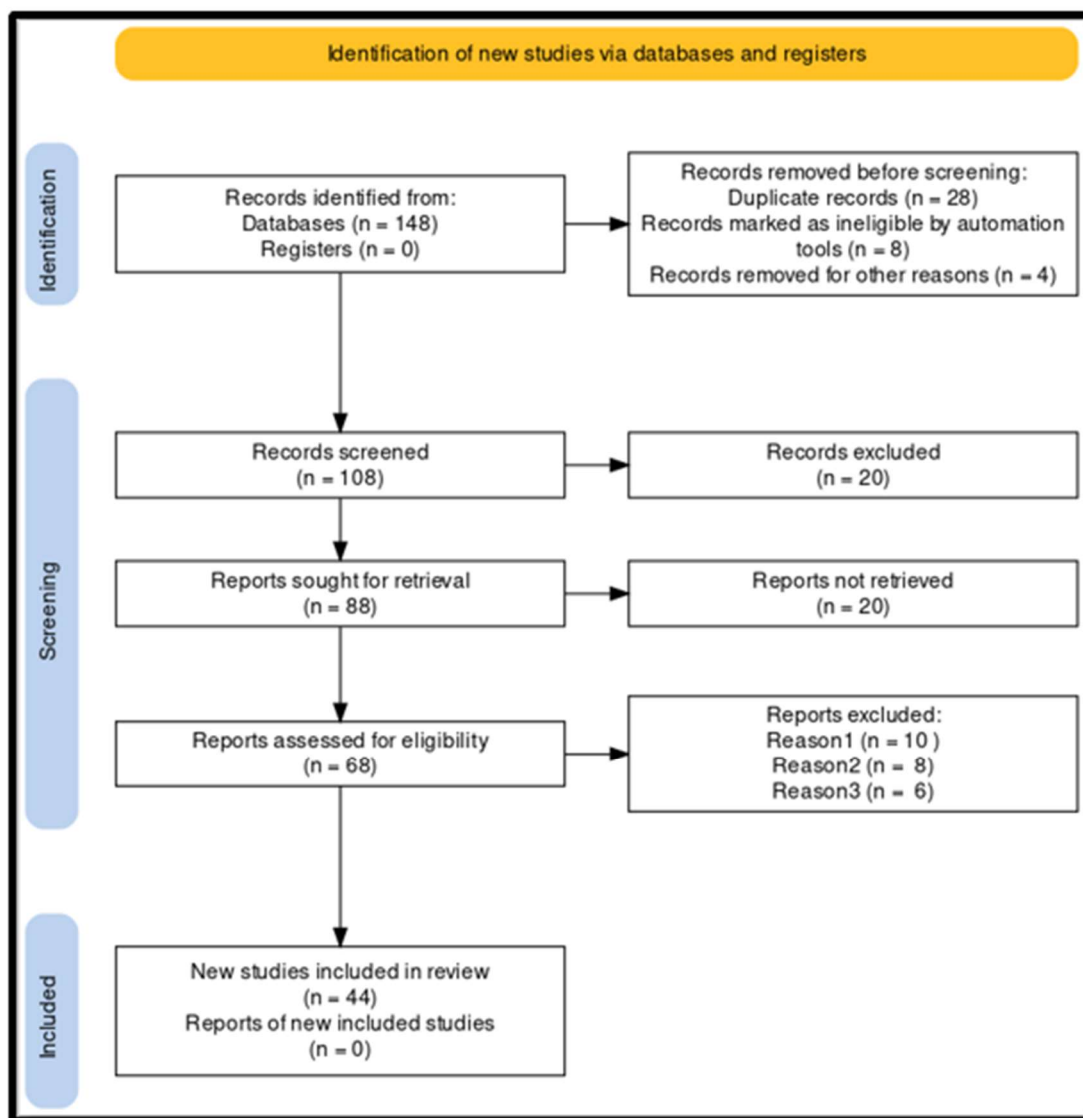


Figure 1. Flow diagram of systematic literature review.

After gathering all the necessary information, it was entered into a figure that had been created expressly for this review. The figure comprised columns for the year, the

first author, the title, the type of research, the country or region, the objective, the theory, and the result. This study is composed of a total of two concepts, with eight sub-themes for each. It was determined to devote special focus to addressing the research and quality assessment questions. The number of papers considered in the analysis will depend on the extent of the search and the study's objectives (Martinez-Harms et al., 2015). In similar terms, the quantity and diversity of databases used to search for articles determine the sample size. In addition, the majority of the relevant research articles were not freely available online, limiting the scope of the assessments that could be conducted.

1.5. Synthesis

This study sought solutions to the main subject by addressing the key research question and analyzing classified data. The stage of synthesis included both the extraction and classification of pertinent data from selected publications. When classifying and displaying each group of indicators, each group's purpose is considered. As a direct result, the exhaustive literature evaluation and synthesis included a total of 44 publications. To provide a full grasp of the conceptual parallels and contrasts, qualitative inductive content evaluation was applied to the articles'

contents in this systematic review. This strategy uses code sets to reduce the overload of information into manageable data so that the investigator can respond to study questions utilizing concepts, categorization, or themes that are coded and then utilized to provide content analysis based on similar characteristics (Kyngäs, 2020). This study selected the following criteria for coding extraction from the selected scientific publications: authors, publication year, resilience concept, and resilience stages (Mengist et al., 2020).

1.6. Analysis

In this literature review, descriptive statistics were utilized to determine publication patterns, the year of publication, the type of evaluations employed, and the study's scope. The study's findings, current knowledge gaps, and implications for resource conservation were summarized based on the criteria used. The review also examines how the status of research influences policy and its execution, as well as the types of scientific study that will be required soon from many fields that are motivated by and capable of doing research. Research was divided into four groups based on its geographical scope: local, regional, national, and international. Studies were organized by year of publication, country of origin, and area studied.

1.6.1. Current practices of HR and factors of school performance

According to **Table 3**, the most prevalent human resource practices in educational organizations are training and development, as well as organizing and managing administrative duties. Planning and health and safety are the least prevalent human resource practices in educational organizations. Other practices included recruitment, performance management, employee relations, selection and recruitment, compensation, and benefits. Similarly, **Table 4** indicates that the most prevalent performance factors are leadership, motivation, dedication, and empowerment. Task performance and satisfaction are the performance criteria that are least common.

Productivity, task performance, organizational environment, and culture were all included among the other performance factors (most and least publication regions and countries).

Table 3. Human resource practices.

#	First author	Year	Topic	Country/region	Type of research	HR practices							
						Organizing and administration	Recruitment and selection	Training and development	Performance management	Employee relation (involvement)	Compensation and benefit	Health and safety (work life balance)	Planning
1	Ngotho	2018	Human resource management practices and performance in public secondary schools in the Thika West Sub-County of Kenya	Kenya	Quan	✓		✓	✓		✓		
2	Mutuku	2022	Human resource management practices, school infrastructure and academic performance of secondary schools in Machakos County, Kenya	Kenya	Mix	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
3	Tensay	2020	The nexus between HRM, employee engagement, and organizational performance of federal public service organizations in Ethiopia	Ethiopia	Quan	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
4	Rafiei	2015	The role of human resources management on enhancing the teaching skills of faculty members	Pakistan	Quan			✓					✓
5	Mutuku	2021	Human resource management practices, and academic performance of secondary schools in Machakos County, Kenya	Kenya	Mixed	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓
6	Paracha	2014	The concept of HPWS-Performance relationship: Framework for education industry	Malaysia		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		
7	Omebe	2014	Human resource management in education: Issues and challenges	Nigeria		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
8	Intan Fazlin Fuzi	2019	The influence of human resource practices on teachers' job satisfaction	Malaysia	Quan			✓	✓		✓		
9	Garaika	2021	Optimization of human resources management in efforts to improve school quality	Indonesia		✓	✓		✓			✓	
10	Ibrahim Kuku	2022	Influence of human resource management on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Zone A Senatorial District of Benue State	Nigeria	Quan			✓			✓		
11	Beurden	2021	How employee perceptions of HR practices in schools relate to employee work engagement and job performance	Netherlands	Quan	✓		✓	✓	✓			
12	Ionescu	2022	Educational performance between the human resource's theoretical paradigm and the practical mentality. Analysis at the European level	Romania	Quan	✓				✓			✓
13	Ojebiyi	2013	Quality human resources management for effective educational system	Nigeria	Quan	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
14	Popescu	2018	The connection between human resource management and educational performance	Romania	Quan								✓
15	Sukawati	2020	Human resources management in basic education schools	Indonesia	Quan		✓	✓			✓		
16	Mella	2022	Effectiveness of human resource management practices on teachers' performance in public secondary schools in Arusha City Council	Tanzania	Quan	✓		✓	✓	✓			✓
17	Sultan	2020	Impact of HRM practices on teachers' job performance in private schools of Karachi	Pakistan	Quan	✓	✓	✓			✓		
18	Bryson	2020	Can HRM improve schools' performance?	British	Quan	✓		✓					
19	Chiedozie	2018	Relationship between staff human resource management and academic performance of accounting students in secondary schools in Akoko South-West, Ondo State	Nigeria	Quan		✓	✓	✓				

Table 3. (Continued).

#	First author	Year	Topic	Country/region	Type of research	HR practices							
						Organizing and administration	Recruitment and selection	Training and development	Performance management	Employee relation (involvement)	Compensation and benefit	Health and safety (work life balance)	Planning
20	Hashmi	2014	Human resource management strategies and teacher's efficiency within schools: A co-relational study	Pakistan	Quan	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		
21	Olaivar	2022	School heads' human resource management practices teachers' school engagement, and teaching performance	Philippines	Quan	✓				✓			✓
22	Waseem	2013	Impact of human resource management practices on teachers' performance: A mediating role of monitoring practices	Pakistan		✓		✓	✓				
23	Nduruchi	2016	Effects of human resource factors on student performance in Bungoma North Sub-County Kenya	Kenya									
24	Runhaar	2017	How can schools and teachers benefit from human resources management? Conceptualizing HRM from content and process perspectives			✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		
25	Dahle	2021	Magic muzzles? The silencing of teachers through HRM, performance appraisal and reputation concern	Norway	Quan	✓				✓			
26	Rofiaty	2019	The relational model of entrepreneurship and knowledge management toward innovation, strategy implementation and improving Islamic boarding school performance	Indonesia	Quan			✓					
27	Manoppo	2019	The effect of school head competency and motivation on teacher performance	Indonesia	Quan	✓				✓	✓		✓
28	Kabuuka	2022	Human resource management practices and teachers' performance in universal primary education schools of Kyankwanzi District, Uganda	Uganda	Quan	✓		✓					✓
29	Siraj	2022	Linking leadership to employees performance—The mediating role of human resource management	Hungary	Mixed	✓			✓				
30	Mohammed Saud Mira	2019	The effect of HRM practices and employees' job satisfaction on employee performance	Saudi Arabia	Quan			✓		✓	✓		
31	Jouda	2016	International review of management and marketing	Palestine			✓	✓	✓		✓		
Total						21	10	23	16	14	14	4	9

Table 4. Performance factors.

#	First author	Year	Topic	Country/region	Type of research	Performance factors						
						Leadership	Motivation	Productivity	Task performance	Competency	Satisfaction	Environment/Culture Commitment/Empowerment
1	Ngotho	2018	Human resource management practices and performance in public secondary schools in the Thika West Sub-County of Kenya	Kenya	Quan	✓	✓					✓
2	Mutuku	2022	Human resource management practices, school infrastructure and academic performance of secondary schools in Macbakos County, Kenya	Kenya	Mix	✓						✓
3	Tensay	2020	The nexus between HRM, employee engagement, and organizational performance of federal public service organizations in Ethiopia	Ethiopia	Quan	✓						✓

Table 4. (Continued).

#	First author	Year	Topic	Country/region	Type of research	Performance factors							
						Leadership	Motivation	Productivity	Task performance	Competency	Satisfaction	Environment/Culture	Commitment/Empowerment
4	Rafiei	2015	The role of human resources management on enhancing the teaching skills of faculty members	Pakistan	Quan	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓
5	Mutuku	2021	Human resource management practices, and academic performance of secondary schools in Machakos County, Kenya	Kenya	Mixed	✓						✓	✓
6	Paracha	2014	The concept of HPWS-Performance relationship: Framework for Education Industry	Malaysia		✓						✓	✓
7	Omebe	2014	Human resource management in education: Issues and challenges	Nigeria								✓	
8	Intan Fazlin Fuzi	2019	The influence of human resource practices on teachers' job satisfaction	Malaysia	Quan						✓		
9	Garaika	2021	Optimization of human resources management in efforts to improve school quality	Indonesia		✓							
10	Ibrahim Kuku	2022	Influence of human resource management on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Zone A Senatorial District of Benue State	Nigeria	Quan	✓	✓	✓					
11	Beurden	2021	How employee perceptions of HR practices in schools relate to employee work engagement and job performance	Netherlands	Quan		✓		✓				✓
12	Ionescu	2022	Educational performance between the human resource's theoretical paradigm and the practical mentality. Analysis at the European level	Romania	Quant		✓					✓	✓
13	Ojebiyi	2013	Quality human resources management for effective educational system	Nigeria	Quan		✓						
14	Popescu	2018	The connection between human resource management and educational performance	Romania	Quan		✓	✓		✓			✓
16	Mella	2022	Effectiveness of human resource management practices on teachers' performance in public secondary schools in Arusha City Council	Tanzania	Quan	✓	✓					✓	✓
17	Sultan	2020	Impact of HRM practices on teachers' job performance in private schools of Karachi	Pakistan	Quan		✓						✓
18	Bryson	2020	Can HRM improve schools' performance?	British	Quan			✓					
20	Hashmi	2014	Human resource management strategics and teacher's efficiency within schools: A co-relational study	Pakistan	Quan	✓		✓		✓		✓	
21	Olaivar	2022	School heads' human resource management practices, teachers' school engagement, and teaching performance	Philippines	Quan	✓		✓					✓
24	Runhaar	2017	How can schools and teachers benefit from human resources management? Conceptualizing HRM from content and process perspectives				✓	✓		✓			
25	Dahle	2021	Magic muzzles? The silencing of teachers through HRM, performance appraisal and reputation concern	Norway	Quan	✓							
26	Rofiaty	2019	The relational model of entrepreneurship and knowledge management toward innovation, strategy implementation and improving Islamic boarding school performance	Indonesia	Quan	✓				✓			
29	Siraj	2022	Linking leadership to employees performance: The mediating role of human resource management	Hungary	Mixed		✓		✓	✓	✓		✓
30	Mohammed Saud Mira	2019	The effect of HRM practices and employees' job satisfaction on employee performance	Saudi Arabia	Quan								
Total						11	12	9	3	8	3	7	13

According to tables, most publications available on this topic are in Asia, followed by Africa and Europe. South America and North America region publications are very rare or not available in this topic.

1.6.2. Theories mostly used in HR practices and school performance

Based on the review papers (Table 5 and Figure 2), human capital theory and resource-based theory are most commonly used in the relationship between HR and school performance. McGregor's two-factor theory, universalistic theory, and AMO theory are used second most in relation to HR and school performance.

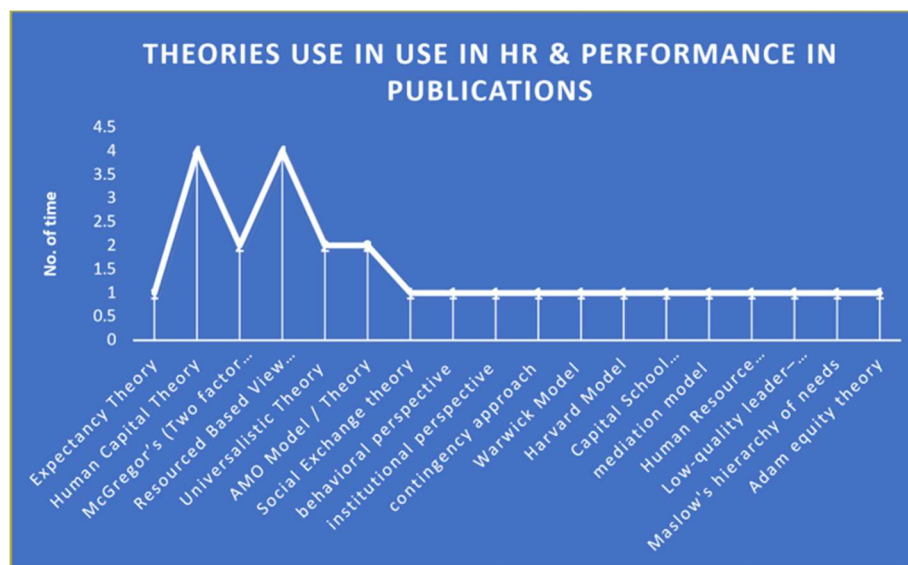


Figure 2. Theories use in HR and school performance in articles.

Table 5. The aims, theories, and models of findings.

#	First author	Year	Topic	Aim	Theory
1	Ngotho	2018	Human resource management practices and performance in public secondary schools in the Thika West Sub-County of Kenya	This research project aimed at investigating the relationship between human resource management practices and performance in public secondary schools in Kenya	This study is based on three theoretical foundations: Expectancy Theory, Human Capital Theory, and McGregor's Theory X and Theory Y
2	Mutuku	2022	Human resource management practices, school infrastructure and academic performance of secondary schools in Machakos County, Kenya	To examine the influence of human resource management practices, school infrastructure and academic performance of secondary schools in Machakos County, Kenya	• Resource-Based View Theory • Universalistic Theory and • Human Capital Theory
3	Tensay	2020	The nexus between HRM, employee engagement, and organizational performance of federal public service organizations in Ethiopia	His study tested the intervening effect of employee engagement in the HRM-performance link	• Drawing on the AMO Model and SET, the present study examined the effect of HRM System on Employee Engagement and Organizational Performance • Three-factor model using SEM
4	Mutuku	2021	Human resource management practices, and academic performance of secondary schools in Machakos County, Kenya	The aim of the study was to establish the influence of human resource management practices on academic performance of secondary schools in Machakos County	The Resource-Based Theory, Universalistic Theory and the Human Capital Theory informed this study.
5	Paracha	2014	The concept of HPWS-Performance relationship: Framework for education industry	To contribute towards a better understanding of HPWS-Performance link by focusing on its possible application in schools in education industry	• Resource-Based Theory • Behavioral Perspective • Institutional Perspective • Contingency Approach

Table 5. (Continued).

#	First author	Year	Topic	Aim	Theory
6	Ionescu	2022	Educational performance between the human resource's theoretical paradigm and the practical mentality. Analysis at the European level	This research aimed to identify the need for performance and assessed the theoretical and practical dimensions of the European gap in performance in education, given the impact of the global crisis	Distribution of the motivational model
7	Ojebiyi	2013	Quality human resources management for effective educational system		Warwick Model of HRM Context, The Harvard Model of HRM (the Fombrum, Tichy and Devana Model of HRM)
8	Mella	2022	Effectiveness of human resource management practices on teachers' performance in public secondary schools in Arusha City Council	The study purposed to assess the effectiveness of HRM practices on teacher's performance in public secondary schools in Arusha City	Capital School Effectiveness and Improvement Theory
9	Hashmi	2014	Human resource management strategies and teacher's efficiency within schools: A co-relational study	The aim of the paper is to study Human Resource Management and Development (HRMD) strategies and their effect on teachers' efficiency within the Catholic Board of Education (CBE) schools of Pakistan whose teachers are graduates in educational leadership courses from a private teacher education institutes in Karachi	HRMD implies a combination of theories dealing with the social, psychological and economic dimensions of the leadership and employees
10	Waseem	2013	Impact of human resource management practices on teachers' performance: A mediating role of monitoring practices	The purpose of this paper is to measure the impact of HRM on teachers' performance in the context of Pakistan	A mediation model in which monitoring acts as a mediating mechanism to transmit the positive effects of HR practices on teachers' performance
11	Runhaar	2017	How can schools and teachers benefit from human resources management? Conceptualizing HRM from content and process perspectives	Little empirical attention is paid to the ways in which different HRM practices could be bundled into a comprehensive HRM system (content) and how HRM could best be implemented to attain positive teacher and student outcomes (process)	The "AMO Theory of Performance", it is argued that HRM systems should comprise (A) ability-, (M) motivation- and (O) opportunity-enhancing HRM practices
12	Dahle	2021	Magic muzzles? The silencing of teachers through HRM, performance appraisal and reputation concern	The purpose of the present paper is to examine human resource management (HRM) approach, satisfaction with the performance appraisal (PA) system and concern for reputation as possible antecedents to voice restrictions	Low-Quality Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) LMX Theory
13	Rofiaty	2019	The relational model of entrepreneurship and knowledge management toward innovation, strategy implementation and improving Islamic boarding school performance	The influence of knowledge management on the implementation of strategies and the influence of entrepreneurial orientation, knowledge management, innovation, implementation of strategies to organizational performance, where the organization referred to is an Islamic boarding school	Theory of Resource-Based
14	Kabuuka	2022	Human resource management practices and teachers' performance in universal primary education schools of Kyankwanzi District, Uganda	This study examined the relationship between Human Resource Management (HRM) Practices and Teachers' Performance in universal primary education schools of Kyankwanzi District	Herzberg's Two Factors Theory of motivation (1959)
15	Mohammed Saud Mira	2019	The effect of HRM practices and employees' job satisfaction on employee performance	In other words, the current study explored to know whether HRM practices offer direct impact on the employee performance or through employees' job satisfaction on employee performance to solve the said problem	Maslow Theory and Adam Equity Theory that employees are satisfied when their needs are fulfilled (Adams, 1965; Maslow, 1965).

The different ways that HR practices and school performance have changed, and the gaps: there is a disconnect between real and implemented HR practices when HR strategies are not carried out as planned. Human resources uncertainty and employee involvement can help mitigate the harmful impact of this gap on organizational performance.

1.6.3. Existing obstacles hinders

Human resource planning, which can hinder internal productivity as well as organizational performance, represents the most significant existing obstacle to the connection between HR practice and school success. It will impact the organization's motivation, satisfaction, productivity, and performance.

1.6.4. The acquired lesson and the future of HR and school performance

The most essential lesson gained, as well as the way forward through HR practice and school success, is that the recruitment and retention phases, as well as the planning stages, must be extremely robust. An efficient recruitment and selection process guarantees that the organization will keep its commitment and treat its employees fairly, on top of achieving the standards of the role. If the organization follows this principle, it may be able to recruit the most qualified people. Smart recruitment, in which the right individuals are assigned to the right roles at the right times, can in turn reduce turnover.

After excluding some papers, 44 articles were examined for inclusion in this study. To evaluate and analyze these 44 publications, an integrated review process was applied. On each of the selected data points, a qualitative analysis was conducted. The use of thematic analysis allows for the formation of both themes and subthemes. The initial stage in constructing the theme was to collect the necessary data. Then, all 44 papers were subjected to a detailed analysis to obtain the data necessary to address the research question. The information was then categorized into usable groups, which included suggestions, concepts, or themes, and coded (Patton, 2002).

1.7. Finding and reporting

This study showed a significant correlation between HR, its practices, and school performance. Human resources can refer to either the employees in the organisation or the HR department that manages all employee-related matters. Human resources are essential to the educational system in its entirety (Omebe, 2014). HRM ensures the effective operation of an organization. HRM seeks to ensure that firms achieve success through their employees. The process begins with the formulation of appropriate policies for job qualifications and concludes with the promotion of business expansion. HRM considers that an organization's performance is enhanced through its employees (Mella, 2022).

This study showed a significant correlation between HR functions or practices and school performance. Some of the best practices found in this study are planning, organizing, and managing administration; recruiting and selection; training and development; performance management; compensation and reward benefits; and health and safety. Some of the organizational performance factors included leadership, motivation, productivity, task performance, competency, satisfaction, environment and culture, and commitment and empowerment.

1.8. Best practices of HR

1.8.1. Planning

Human resource planning (Rafiei and Davari, 2015; Mutuku, 2022; Mella and Mnjokava, 2022; Ionescu et al., 2022; Ojebiyi and Amos, 2013; Olaivar and Loayon, 2022; Mutuku et al., 2021; Manoppo et al., 2019; Popescu and Gogeanu, 2018) aligns workers with employment opportunities and prevents labor shortages. HR planning enables firms to maintain their productivity and performance. It involves evaluating labor supply, predicting demand, balancing supply, and demand, and supporting organizational objectives.

Human resource planning is the ongoing procedure through which an organization anticipates its future labor requirements and devises strategies to make the best use of its employees' abilities and talents. Succession planning and other HRM facets may also play a major effect on how well secondary schools do academically (Mutuku et al., 2021). Similarly, human resource management, according to Robbins (1991), as quoted by Ojebiyi and Amos (2013), is a body of knowledge and a set of practices with five functional areas, one of which is human resource planning (succession, turnover, and planning).

1.8.2. Organizing, and managing administration

Organizing and administering human resource tasks (Omebe, 2014; Runhaar, 2017; Ngotho, 2018; Tensay and Singh, 2020; Mutuku, 2022; Siraj et al., 2022; Mella and Mnjokava, 2022; Ionescu et al., 2022; Ojebiyi and Amos, 2013; Olaivar and Loayon, 2022; Mutuku et al., 2021; Manoppo et al., 2019; Van Beurden et al., 2021; Dahle, 2021; Helisia Margahana, 2021; Bryson et al., 2020; Sultan et al., 2020; Hashmi, 2014; Paracha et al., 2014; Wassem et al., 2013; Sukawati et al., 2020) enables the manager to spend less time looking for things and more time performing essential tasks. It can also improve communication between management and the organization's team, leading to increased productivity and performance.

Organizing will improve in completing organizational tasks effectively, reducing expensive mistakes. It also facilitates the development and management of staff, so they are more productive and efficient (Tensay and Singh, 2020). In addition, it will assist in directing efforts toward managing the human resource pool and ensuring that the resources are utilized to achieve organizational objectives (Mutuku, 2022).

1.8.3. Recruitment and selection

According to numerous authors (Runhaar, 2017; Tensay and Singh, 2020; Mutuku, 2022; Ojebiyi and Amos, 2013; Mutuku et al., 2021; Bryson et al., 2020; Hashmi, 2014; Sukawati et al., 2020; Chiedozie et al., 2018; Ibrahim Kuku, 2022), recruitment is the procedure by which potential employees are sought out and selected. Successful hiring depends on locating the ideal candidate at the ideal time (Runhaar, 2017). This strategy is quite methodical in its pursuit of high-caliber employees who can aid in the development and success of the company. According to research by Chiedozie et al. (2018), students' academic performance and their success in school are positively impacted by institutions' recruiting processes and the quality of the teachers they hire.

1.8.4. Training and development

Human resource management is important because it allows employees to develop personally while also contributing to the achievement of organizational goals. In contrast to development, which emphasizes improving and expanding existing skills, training (Runhaar, 2017; Ngotho, 2018; Tensay and Singh, 2020; Rafier and Davari, 2015; Mutuku, 2022; Mella and Mnjokava, 2022; Ojebiyi and Amos, 2013; Mutuku et al., 2021; Van Beurden et al., 2021; Bryson et al., 2020; Sultan et al., 2020; Hashimi, 2014; Paracha et al., 2014; Waseem et al., 2013; Sukavati et al., 2020; Chiedozi et al., 2018; Ibrahim Kuku, 2022; Fuzi and Fuzi, 2019) emphasizes acquiring new ones. It enhances the productivity and performance of the entire workforce, which benefits the organization's bottom line (Mella and Mnjokava, 2022). Hashmi (2014) stated that instructors must concentrate on their knowledge, values, and abilities through professional development to be more effective in the classroom.

1.8.5. Performance management

The success of an organization depends on effective performance management (Omebe, 2014; Runhaar, 2017; Ngotho, 2018; Tensay and Singh, 2020; Mutuku, 2022; Mella and Mnjokava, 2022; Ojebiyi and Amos, 2013; Van Beurden et al., 2021; Hashmi, 2014; Paracha et al., 2014; Waseem et al., 2013; Chiedozi et al., 2018; Ibrahim Kuku, 2022; Fuzi and Fuzi, 2019; Mira et al., 2019; Jouda et al., 2016). It helps them achieve their strategic objectives by coordinating their staff, assets, and infrastructure through several formally and informally structured methods (Van Beurden et al., 2021). In addition, it functions as a dashboard, warning leaders of oncoming problems and indicating when direction changes are required to keep running smoothly. Runhaar (2017) observed that in the literature on human resource management, performance evaluation is commonly described just like an HRM practise with the specific purpose of boosting motivation, and motivation contributes to the improvement of the organization's performance.

1.8.6. Employee relation and involvement

Employee relations (Omebe, 2014; Tensay and Singh, 2020; Mutuku, 2022; Mella and Mnjokava, 2022; Ionescu et al., 2022; Ojebiyi and Amos, 2013; Olaivar and Loayon, 2022; Mutuku et al., 2021; Manoppo et al., 2019; Van Beurden et al., 2021; Dahle, 2021; Hashmi, 2014; Paracha et al., 2014; Mira et al., 2019) are the foundation of trust among an organisation and its workforce. A solid relationship between employees and employers improves collaboration and communication. Staff involvement results in increased production, motivation, and job satisfaction. Highly engaged employees increase the performance of the organization. Van Beurden et al. (2021) stated that Dutch teachers found that available and appropriate HR practices enhance teacher work engagement and job performance.

1.8.7. Compensation and rewards

Reward and recognition programmes are beneficial for both businesses and employees. The compensation system (Omebe, 2014; Runhaar, 2017; Ngotho, 2018; Tensay and Singh, 2020; Mutuku, 2022; Manoppo et al., 2019; Sultan et al., 2020; Hashimi, 2014; Paracha et al., 2014; Ibrahim Kuku, 2022; Fuzi and Fuzi, 2019; Mira et al., 2019; Jouda et al., 2016) includes wages, salaries, bonuses, and commissions.

Employers who are astute understand that retaining quality employees requires a wage and benefits package that is competitive. Human resource practises, such as incentives and remuneration, have a significant impact on teachers' job happiness and performance, as found by Fuzi and Fuzi (2019). Organizations with efficient employee appreciation programmes might enjoy increased staff performance and lower attrition rates (Mira et al., 2019).

1.8.8. Health and safety (work-life balance)

The duration of time spent on a job correlates with a loss in productivity and efficiency. In addition to its obvious benefits for health and wellbeing (Omebe, 2014; Mutuku, 2022; Mutuku et al., 2021; Helisia Margahana, 2021), a balanced work life can boost an employee's productivity (Omebe, 2014). Mutuku (2022) discovered that HR initiatives that promote work or life balance in schools are significant because they increase employee productivity, decrease employee turnover, and improve their mental and physical health. HR strategies such as work-life balance and health and safety contribute to the success of teachers in schools.

2. Factor influenced by performance

2.1. Leadership

Organizational success is correlated to the efficacy of leadership (Ngotho, 2018; Mutuku, 2022; Siraj et al., 2022; Mella and Mnjokava, 2022; Mutuku et al., 2021; Dahle, 2021; Helisia Margahana, 2021; Hashmi, 2014; Paracha et al., 2014). Leaders have a tremendous impact on the culture, value, adaptability, and satisfaction of their organizations because of their efforts. This impacts how institutions plan, execute, and evaluate the outcomes of their activities (Dahle, 2021). Mutuku (2022) stated that school principals' management style influences teacher performance.

2.2. Motivation

Motivation (Runhaar, 2017; Ngotho, 2018; Tensay and Singh, 2020; Rafier and Davari, 2015; Mella and Mnjokava, 2022; Ionescu et al., 2022; Ojebiyi and Amos, 2013; Popescu and Gogeanu, 2018; Van Beurden et al., 2021; Sultan et al., 2020; Ibrahim Kuku, 2020; Mira et al., 2019) plays a vital part in the school since it boosts the satisfaction and motivation of teachers. So, the HR practice of a school can improve the behavior of teachers through motivation. Consequently, teachers attained their targets and increased school performance (Runhaar, 2017).

2.3. Productivity/task performance

Organizations attain excellent workflow harmonization, which directly improves productivity (Runhaar, 2017; Ngotho, 2018; Rafier and Davari, 2015; Siraj et al., 2022; Olaivar and Loayon, 2022; Popescu and Gogeanu, 2018; Bryson et al., 2020; Hashmi, 2014; Ibrahim Kuku, 2022; Mira et al., 2019). Both the productivity and the job performance of highly motivated individuals have grown dramatically (Bryson et al., 2020).

2.4. Competency

The most effective teachers are well-versed in all the technical competencies (Runhaar, 2017; Rafiei and Davari, 2015; Siraj et al., 2022; Popescu and Gogeanu, 2018; Hashmi, 2014; Ibrahim Kuku, 2022; Mira et al., 2019; Rofiaty, 2019) of the teaching profession, including lesson planning and delivery, assessing student learning, leading inquiry-based learning, and improving students' social and emotional abilities. It has been demonstrated that certain qualities enhance academic performance by having a positive impact on students (Ibrahim Kuku, 2022).

2.5. Satisfaction

Teachers who are satisfied with their competencies (Paracha et al., 2014; Fuzi and Fuzi, 2019; Mira et al., 2019) in their professions are less likely to experience burnout or classroom stress. Teachers' mental and even physical health can be reflected in the happiness of their students. Fair and equal compensation, encouraging working conditions, pleasant coworkers, and a sense of purpose are among the most influential factors in both job satisfaction and academic performance (Mira et al., 2019).

2.6. Environment and culture

Teachers at schools with positive cultures (Omebe, 2014; Mutuku, 2022; Mella and Mnjokava, 2022; Ionescu et al., 2022; Mutuku et al., 2021; Van Beurden et al., 2021; Hashimi, 2014; Mira et al., 2019) are more invested in the achievement of their students. When there is a collaborative and positive school culture, teachers and administrators are more inclined to collaborate to achieve school goals, which is beneficial for children. Everyone learns better in a classroom with a more pleasant atmosphere. Staff members take great pride in their collaboration, which increases student accomplishment (Ismail et al., 2022).

2.7. Commitment and empowerment

There is a correlation between giving teachers empowerment cultures (Ngotho, 2018; Tensay and Singh, 2020; Rafiei and Davari, 2015; Siraj et al., 2022; Mella and Mnjokava, 2022; Ionescu et al., 2022; Olaivar and Loayon, 2022; Mutuku et al., 2021; Popescu and Gogeanu, 2018; Van Beurden et al., 2021; Sultan et al., 2020; Paracha et al., 2014; Mira et al., 2019) over instructional decisions and increased levels of dedication to their career. Teacher empowerment, defined as the six factors of autonomy, decision-making, status, self-efficacy, professional growth, and influence, is a major factor in maintaining teacher commitment. Commitment is empowerment that encourages teachers to spend more time dedicating to school activities to enhance the school's overall performance (Altun, 2017).

3. Recommendations

HR best practices are essential procedures and behaviors that are consistently effective. Educational institutions must strengthen their human resource strategies to positively impact both teacher productivity and academic achievement. It is well-known that the quality of an organization's human resources management practice has

a direct impact on its level of success. However, there has not been a significant amount of research on the relationship between human resource management practices and teacher performance. This is an issue that needs to be addressed. In order to improve human resource management practices, this research recommends that HR managers or school principals continue to upgrade the process to enhance school performance.

To achieve this, the research suggests that HR managers or school principals must plan well in advance and organize activities according to the plan. They should also manage and lead activities to achieve school objectives. Additionally, the principal, as the head of HR, should strengthen the current recruitment and selection process to bring in high-quality, efficient staff to the school. Training and development for teachers should be enhanced, and performance management should be strengthened through feedback. Additionally, teacher involvement should be increased in all activities and decision-making, and work-life balance, health, and safety measures should be implemented for teachers. Furthermore, compensation and benefits should be used as motivation for teachers.

HRM practices are at the heart of the organization. As such, this research recommends maintaining and upholding performance-influencing factors using HRM practices. Using HRM best practices, the principal will be able to increase teacher productivity, maintain school performance, and achieve school goals. One of the most important performance influence factors is leadership style, so using different leadership styles, specifically motivational styles, is crucial. Leadership styles that increase performance include transformational leadership, transactional leadership, distributed leadership, and teacher leadership. With the implementation of motivational activities, teacher productivity will increase, task performance and competency will improve, and teachers will be more satisfied, leading to their full commitment to achieving school goals. Additionally, the school climate will become task-oriented, creating a comfortable working environment for teachers and leading to increased teacher empowerment.

4. Limitation

This study was limited by the lack of relevant data or publications on the relationship between human resources and school performance. Similarly, due to the dominance of quantitative and few mixed technique research papers, a comprehensive knowledge of the social context and evidence on the motivations, beliefs, and experiences of individuals cannot be included in this study.

5. Conclusion

The primary aim of this study was to establish a correlation between human resource management and school performance. In summary, this study's findings demonstrate a significant interrelationship between human resource practices and school performance. HR practices positively correlated with school performance include succession strategic planning, effective organization of school academic and administrative work, a robust hiring and selection system, strong staff relations enhancing collaboration, incentives, remuneration, work-life balance, and attention to

teacher health and safety. Moreover, specific performance indicators significantly impact academic performance. These factors encompass the leadership styles of school principals, impacting teacher performance by motivating teachers, enhancing their job satisfaction, increasing productivity and competencies, fostering a favorable organizational climate, and empowering teachers with greater autonomy. There is less literature on the elements influencing school success than there is on the factors influencing business organizational effectiveness. Thus, research into the relationship between HRM practices and academic outcomes, particularly teacher efficiency and effectiveness, is required. Quantitative and mixed-method studies were most commonly observed for this SLR on human resources and school performance. Consequently, further qualitative research is needed to explore human resource management strategies that contribute to school success.

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Commentary

Addressing employee misfit—A crucial HR concern for organizational success

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Abstract: In the rapidly evolving landscape of contemporary business, the strategic alignment of employees with their designated roles is a pivotal determinant of organizational success. Employee misfit, characterized by a misalignment between employees' skills, interests, and assigned roles, poses formidable challenges to individual and collective performance. This comprehensive research report delves into the intricate implications of employee misfit, explores evolving trends in career consciousness among job seekers, outlines the multifaceted challenges HR managers face, and fervently advocates for implementing a comprehensive selection process to address this prevalent issue effectively. The report underscores the proactive role of management in cultivating a supportive work environment, fostering diverse career pathways, and embedding an inclusive selection framework to confront and mitigate the persistent issue of employee misfit.

Keywords: employee misfit; job boredom; job crafting; HRM

In the rapidly evolving and fiercely competitive business milieu, the seamless alignment of employees with their designated roles has risen to paramount importance in pursuing organizational excellence. Employee misfit, typified by incongruence between employees' competencies, interests, and designated tasks, ushers in many challenges. These span from compromised individual job satisfaction to diminished performance and even the disruption of organizational cohesion. This comprehensive research report endeavors to explore the multifaceted implications of employee misfit, chart the unfolding trends in career consciousness among job seekers, elucidate the intricate challenges encountered by HR managers, and advocate resolutely for the widespread adoption of a comprehensive selection process that stands unwavering in the face of this pervasive concern. The report emphasizes the pivotal proactive role that management must undertake to foster a nurturing work environment, cultivate a landscape of diverse career trajectories, and embed an all-encompassing selection framework to navigate the labyrinthine issue of employee misfit effectively.

In the quest to unravel the determinants of business success, management scholars have extensively explored two distinct variants of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) framework. One school of thought emphasizes external market dynamics, viewing competitive advantage as an outcome primarily shaped by factors beyond the organization's immediate control. This "outside-in" approach, as articulated by Porter (1985), compels management to grapple with pivotal questions such as market selection and the strategic positioning of the business. Concurrently, another perspective delves into the internal strengths and weaknesses residing within the organization's purview. This perspective, famously known as the Resource-Based View (RBV) of the firm, underscores the significance of an "inside-

out” approach. It directs attention to the management of resources within the firm’s domain, including human resources, thereby shaping the competitive advantage. The RBV forms the theoretical foundation that underscores the notion that Human Resource Management (HRM) can, in and of itself, serve as a source of sustained competitive advantage, transforming HR costs into strategic investments capable of yielding economic returns.

Acknowledging that workplace learning manifests in a myriad of settings extending beyond formal training, it is evident that learning is not confined to structured educational programs. Learning often arises incidentally through the daily demands and challenges of work, as well as through social interactions with colleagues, clients, and customers. However, the contours of learning experiences are significantly molded by the demands of the job itself. Certain roles broaden employees’ horizons, expose them to new perspectives, and encourage experimentation, fostering what can be described as “expansive” learning. In contrast, other jobs stress adherence to set procedures and well-defined boundaries, resulting in a more “restrictive” form of learning.

Recognizing the critical role that qualified employees play in ensuring organizational sustainability and competitiveness, organizations must create an environment conducive to their growth and development. The design of job roles, as proposed by Hackman and Oldham in their Job Characteristics Model, should encompass factors such as skill variety, job identity, and job significance, to render jobs both meaningful and motivating (De Sousa Sabbagha et al., 2018; Erdogan and Bauer, 2021). Notably, the concept of overqualified employees has gained attention in the realm of Human Resource Management (HRM), with some researchers suggesting that such employees can be seen as a form of human capital (Sesen and Ertan, 2020). Research underscores the significance of employee development programs as valuable tools for efficiently leveraging overqualified staff to achieve organizational objectives. However, the attainment of harmony between employee qualifications and job requirements, given exogenous factors, doesn’t always manifest as intended. This discrepancy can result from factors attributed to employees, organizations, and, on a broader scale, cultural beliefs, economic conditions, or employment policies.

Over nearly a century of extensive research, the concept of person-environment (PE) fit has emerged as a complex and pivotal precursor to various work-related outcomes. This intricate interplay between individuals and their surroundings has been meticulously explored by researchers, yielding a wealth of knowledge. Studies have revealed that a harmonious alignment between the individual and their work environment, characterized as a good fit, can lead to a range of favorable outcomes. These include reduced stress, heightened trust, improved team cohesion, increased job satisfaction, and a significant advantage for organizations in terms of decreased employee deviance, cynicism, withdrawal, and turnover. Additionally, enhanced performance, both in the context of tasks and within the broader organizational framework, has been observed.

Schneider’s attraction-selection-attrition (ASA) model posits that self-selection and the natural attraction to similar individuals propel both employees and organizations towards homogeneity and fit. However, contemporary research has

illuminated the reality that misfits are prevalent in most employees' work situations. Misfit, positioned at the negative end of the fit spectrum, typically results in discomfort and incompatibility. Scholars are increasingly advocating for an in-depth examination of how individuals experience and navigate through misfit, as there is a growing understanding that it can be partially influenced by employees' cognitive processes and actions.

Over time, researchers have disentangled the multifaceted nature of PE fit, identifying several key dimensions, including person-organization (PO), person-job (PJ), person-group (PG), and person-supervisor (PS) fit. These dimensions have been quantitatively assessed through various methods, encompassing objective evaluations by comparing individual attributes to environmental attributes and perceptual assessments where individuals directly evaluate their own fit. Intriguingly, research has shown that perceived fit consistently outperforms objective assessments in predicting a broad array of outcomes, lending empirical support to the importance of studying individuals' subjective perceptions and experiences of fit.

It is widely accepted that perceived misfit is an uncomfortable and stressful experience. The ASA model postulates that employees with poor fit will likely, either voluntarily or involuntarily, exit their work environments. While empirical evidence broadly supports this assertion, there exist nuanced relationships between fit and various components such as attitudes, cognitions, and behaviors. For instance, research has unveiled strong correlations between perceived measures of PO fit and job attitudes, such as job satisfaction and organizational commitment. However, the link between perceived fit and actual turnover tends to be weaker, implying that individuals do not necessarily act immediately upon their dissatisfaction. They often find themselves in dynamic tension, experiencing misfits but not actively pursuing alternative opportunities.

Recent studies have explored the factors influencing this decision to tolerate misfits rather than seek new positions. Factors such as job mobility and embeddedness, which combine the influence of connections to the work environment, the desire to avoid turnover-related sacrifices, and the perception of fit, play crucial roles in employees' decisions to stay in a misfit situation. Moreover, the notion that employees evaluate their fit in *media res*, comparing their current situation to past experiences and future expectations, suggests that a state of misfit might not necessarily lead to immediate turnover if it is perceived as an improvement over previous misfit or if improvements are anticipated.

Scholars have long contended that mental well-being and adjustment hinge on achieving a harmonious alignment between employees' work-related expectations and their actual experiences. When such fit is lacking, a persistent sense of dissatisfaction, frustration, and unfulfilled goals tends to prevail. Yu's motivational model of PE fit offers an insightful perspective, suggesting that employees are highly motivated to alleviate the tension induced by misfit. To achieve this, they employ both conscious and unconscious efforts to transform their experiences of misfit into a sense of fit, actively seeking to reconcile their expectations with their actual experiences in the work environment.

In fact, a substantial body of evidence reveals that a considerable proportion of employees are, in fact, overqualified for their roles (Arvan et al., 2019). For example, countries like the United Kingdom, Canada, the United States, Germany, the EU, China, and various parts of the world have witnessed instances where a significant portion of the workforce finds themselves overqualified for their current positions. This trend has been accentuated by increased labor market competitiveness, economic downturns, and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic (Gong et al., 2021). Overqualified individuals bring extensive qualifications to their roles, potentially contributing to organizational performance and creativity. However, there's a flip side to this coin. Overqualified employees may exhibit negative work attitudes, including a lack of willingness to exert additional effort. Consequently, the issue of overqualification has garnered attention from academics, practitioners, and business leaders.

Past research underscores the adverse consequences of perceived overqualification for both employees and organizations. It has been linked to low job satisfaction, demotivation, frustration, and adverse health effects (Wassermann et al., 2017; Chambel et al., 2021a). Despite extensive research, there remains an important gap in understanding the relationship between perceived overqualification and withdrawal behaviors, as well as the psychological underpinnings of this phenomenon. Delving into the “when,” “why,” and “how” of employee withdrawal in the context of perceived overqualification is an essential exploration. One of the pivotal facets of such withdrawal is Counterproductive Work Behavior (CWB), characterized by voluntary actions that harm an organization's goals, breach organizational rules, and undermine its well-being (Bakker et al., 2012).

This misfit often leads to feelings of job boredom when the work environment doesn't correspond with employees' interests or expectations. Overqualified individuals who perceive a mismatch between their qualifications and the responsibilities required in their position may find themselves experiencing boredom at work (Liu and Wang, 2012). In response, employees may proactively alter their work to align better with their needs, talents, and motivations, which could manifest as job crafting, defined as “self-initiated, proactive strategies to change the characteristics of one's job to better align it with personal needs, goals, and skills”. Examining whether job crafting mitigates the effect of perceived overqualification on job boredom is an area that warrants further exploration.

The ramifications of employee misfits reverberate through an organization's individual and collective layers, exerting an influence that extends far beyond the immediate impact. Kristof-Brown et al. (2005) highlight the profound linkage between employee misfit and a spectrum of challenges, including dwindling job satisfaction, waning intrinsic motivation, surging stress levels, and even the emergence of conflicts within the workplace. However, its ramifications transcend the microcosm, influencing collaboration dynamics, stymieing innovation, and eroding the fabric of organizational culture. Hence, it becomes imperative to unravel and address the criticality of harmonizing employees' competencies, interests, and aspirations with their designated roles, as this alignment constitutes the bedrock of a harmonious work environment and the achievement of optimal organizational outcomes.

The landscape of career consciousness among job seekers has undergone a tectonic shift, necessitating a recalibration in how organizations approach the holistic process of employee selection and role alignment. In an era characterized by heightened awareness and empowered individual agency, job seekers actively seek roles that resonate with their long-term career aspirations and deeply-held personal values (Aguinis, 2013). The rigid adherence to traditional job molds has given way to a preference for positions that align with the fluid trajectory of individual career paths. This seismic shift mandates a re-evaluation of strategies by HR managers to ensure a harmonious synergy between job roles and the evolving career compass of candidates.

While HR managers wield considerable influence over employee recruitment and selection, the prevalent emphasis on technical prowess and qualifications can inadvertently overshadow the nuanced dimensions of “fit”, particularly the pivotal aspects of job satisfaction and pride in accomplishments (Roth et al., 1996; Judge et al., 2000). This unintended oversight can result in the placement of individuals lacking intrinsic motivation and a sense of fulfilment in their designated roles. Consequently, organizations grapple with instances of misfit that reverberate through the organizational framework, compromising efficiency and eroding engagement.

Effectively navigating the multifaceted challenge of employee misfit mandates an integrative approach encompassing diverse organizational strategy dimensions. Organizations should proactively offer an array of career trajectories that cater to diverse ambitions and aptitudes, encouraging employees to traverse a spectrum of roles within the organizational realm. This strategic diversification empowers employees to chart their growth paths, nurturing a culture of continuous learning, sustained job satisfaction, and unwavering engagement. Simultaneously, transparent dialogues between management and candidates emerge as an indispensable tool. By fostering candid conversations, organizations bridge the chasm between personal aspirations and professional roles, mitigating the spectre of employee misfits and fostering an era of heightened organizational synergy (O'Reilly and Chatman, 1986).

In the fluid dynamics of the modern workforce, conventional selection paradigms often fail to capture the intricate interplay of temperament and personal alignment. To circumvent the challenges posed by employee misfits, organizations must adopt an inclusive selection process encompassing temperament-based evaluations, rigorous aptitude and interest assessments, and holistic evaluations of attitude and personality traits (Aguinis, 2013; Cable and Judge, 1996). This comprehensive framework bestows organizations with profound insights into candidates' suitability for specific roles, elevating the probability of identifying individuals inherently attuned to their designated positions.

In the context of an ever-evolving work landscape, the issue of employee misfit assumes seminal significance for organizations that aspire to carve a trajectory of enduring success. Discerning the pivotal roles played by job satisfaction and pride in accomplishments is instrumental in harmonizing individuals with their designated roles. Organizations must remain agile and adaptable to the shifting contours of career consciousness, steering the course by offering a diverse spectrum of career pathways and nurturing a milieu of unwavering support (Harrison et al., 1998). The strategic implementation of a comprehensive selection process emerges as a potent instrument

for identifying candidates poised to flourish in their designated roles. Through proactive interventions to address employee misfits, organizations stand to manifest an ecosystem of symbiotic collaboration, invigorated employee engagement, and overarching organizational triumph. The strategic investment in aligning the right individuals with the right positions becomes an indomitable cornerstone in navigating the ever-evolving expanse of the contemporary world of work.

The discussion revolves around the intricate dynamics of person-environment (PE) fit, which has been extensively studied over nearly a century in the context of work-related outcomes and business success. Two prominent frameworks have emerged in management scholarship, emphasizing external and internal factors that shape competitive advantage. The first, known as the “outside-in” approach, focuses on external market opportunities and threats and conceives competitive advantage as something gained outside the firm. This perspective, popularized by Porter in 1985, prompts managers to address practical questions such as market selection and strategic positioning. The second perspective, termed the “inside-out” approach, delves into the strengths and weaknesses of resources under the firm’s control. This perspective underscores the importance of resource management, including human resources, as a source of competitive advantage and is encapsulated in the Resource-Based View (RBV) of the firm.

Workplace learning, crucial for individual and organizational growth, occurs through various channels, extending beyond formal training programs. Learning happens incidentally through daily work experiences, as well as through social interactions with colleagues, clients, and customers. However, the nature of learning is often shaped by job demands. Some roles broaden employees’ horizons, promoting expansive learning, while others emphasize adherence to set procedures and boundaries, leading to more restrictive learning experiences.

Qualified employees are the lifeblood of organizations, contributing to sustainability and competitiveness. To foster a flourishing work environment, jobs should provide elements like skill variety, job identity, and job significance, as proposed by Hackman and Oldham in their Job Characteristics Model. However, a significant challenge arises when employees perceive themselves as overqualified for their roles. In the field of Human Resource Management (HRM), overqualified employees have been recognized as a form of human capital. Organizations must efficiently utilize these overqualified individuals to achieve their objectives through employee development programs.

Nonetheless, a critical discrepancy arises when the qualifications of employees do not align with job requirements. This can be attributed to a variety of factors, such as the individuals themselves, the organization, or broader cultural, economic, and policy contexts. A substantial body of research reveals that a significant portion of the workforce is, in fact, overqualified for their positions, with this trend being influenced by factors like labor market competition, economic downturns, and the global impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

While overqualified employees can bring extensive qualifications to their roles, they may exhibit negative work attitudes and be less willing to exert additional effort. This has drawn the attention of academics, practitioners, and business leaders.

Previous studies have shown that perceived overqualification has adverse consequences for both employees and organizations. It can lead to low job satisfaction, demotivation, frustration, and adverse health effects.

One aspect of the perceived overqualification (POQ) phenomenon that requires further exploration is its relationship with employee withdrawal behaviors, especially Counterproductive Work Behavior (CWB). CWB refers to voluntary actions that undermine an organization's goals, contravene organizational rules, and jeopardize its well-being. Understanding the “when”, “why”, and “how” of employee withdrawal in the context of POQ is critical. Research suggests that the relationship between perceived overqualification and CWBs may be mediated by negative emotions and behaviors arising from a poor needs-supplies fit.

Moreover, job boredom is another issue that often plagues overqualified employees. A mismatch between their qualifications and job responsibilities can lead to boredom at work. Employees may attempt to alleviate this boredom through job crafting, which involves self-initiated efforts to reshape their job characteristics to align better with their needs, goals, and skills. Investigating whether job crafting can mitigate the effects of perceived overqualification on job boredom is a research area that warrants further exploration.

In summary, the dynamic interplay between individuals and their work environments, framed within the context of person-environment (PE) fit, has garnered significant attention in management scholarship. The two primary perspectives, the “outside-in” and “inside-out” approaches, provide valuable insights into the determinants of competitive advantage. Understanding the complexities of perceived overqualification (POQ) is essential, as it has significant implications for both individuals and organizations. Addressing issues related to job boredom and employee withdrawal behaviors, such as Counterproductive Work Behavior (CWB), is vital in the realm of Human Resource Management (HRM). A holistic understanding of these dynamics can inform strategies to better manage employee qualifications and enhance job experiences, ultimately benefiting both employees and organizations.

The novelty of this research lies in its holistic approach to understanding the multifaceted issues surrounding employee misfits and perceived overqualification. While prior studies have often examined these aspects in isolation, this report takes a comprehensive view by integrating various dimensions of person-environment fit, organizational behavior, and individual perceptions. It doesn't just stop at outlining the existence of misfits or overqualification; rather, it intricately explores their impacts on individual behaviors, organizational dynamics, and potential mitigating factors.

Moreover, this report goes beyond the surface-level analysis by delving into the less-explored territories within the realm of overqualification. It investigates not only the commonly discussed implications, such as job dissatisfaction, but also delves deeper into how overqualified individuals cope with their situations. This includes examining the potential role of job crafting in alleviating job boredom stemming from overqualification, which represents a novel angle not extensively covered in existing literature.

The synthesis of these different elements—exploring the interplay between individual attributes, organizational settings, and the psychological implications of

misfit and overqualification—provides a more nuanced understanding of these issues. It does not just reiterate existing findings but extends the discussion into uncharted territories, paving the way for further research and offering actionable insights for organizations seeking to address these complexities effectively. This comprehensive approach adds depth and richness to the understanding of these critical topics in the context of modern workplaces.

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