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SUSTAINABLE HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AND WORK ENGAGEMENT: ROLE OF EMPLOYEE RESILIENCE

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ABSTRACT

Extant literature has generated limited understanding of whether and how sustainable human resource management will lead to better and more sustainable outcomes, such as enhanced employee resilience and improved work engagement. Moving toward common good values and drawing on the job demands-resources model, this study theorizes and tests the relationships among sustainable human resource practices, employee resilience and work engagement. The findings demonstrate that sustainable human resource practices positively impacts on employee resilience and lead to work engagement among employees. This study, with it's the theoretical and practical implications, reveals a mediation mechanism through which sustainable human resource practices contribute to both work engagement.

KEYWORDS: Sustainable HRM practices, work engagement, employee resilience, employee well-being, job resources, job-demand resource theory

INTRODUCTION

Due to the increased worldwide awareness of sustainable development, the sustainable features of human resource management (HRM) have grown in importance for organisations (Ren et al., 2020). As a result, sustainable HRM (SHRM), which links HRM practices to corporate sustainability, has become a significant field of study in HRM (Bush, 2020). Triple bottom line HRM, which focuses on how HRM affects a wider range of outcomes, including as financial, environmental, and human and social consequences, is the most popular conceptualisation of SHRM (Macke & Genari, 2019). But because the triple bottom line demands that workers take on more duties while performing various positions that call for incompatible behaviours, this strategy could have unintended consequences. For instance, workers frequently experience increased levels of stress and anxiety as a result of not having enough time, energy, or resources to effectively accomplish economic, environmental, and social goals (Bush, 2020). Alternative strategies are required to close the gap between SHRM practices and their effect on expected goals because of these unintended, unsustainable repercussions (Dyllick & Muff, 2016). Therefore, the most recent approach to SHRM practices based is the main emphasis of

this study.

According to George et al. (2016), a number of SDGs have a direct bearing on HRM, including SDG 3: "Good Health and Wellbeing," SDG 5: "Gender Equality," SDG 8: "Decent Work and Economic Growth," SDG 10: "Reduced Inequalities," and SDG 12: "Responsible Consumption and Production." By concentrating on the big problems, SHRM also addresses moral dilemmas brought on by an excessive dependence on the strategic HRM approach, which downplays the obligations that businesses have to their workers (Aust et al., 2020; Guest, 2017).

In all facets of HRM policies and procedures, the SHRM highlights values like reciprocity, solidarity, and dignity and introduces HRM practices founded on these principles (Hollensbe et al., 2014). However, firms may worry that the adoption of relevant SHRM will eventually result in decreased efficiency and decreased employee performance because this approach prioritises collective interests over individual firms and is open to non-business objectives like decent work, workplace democracy, societal fairness, and environmental protection (Frémeaux & Michelson, 2017). For instance, a company might worry that workers who are taught to conduct themselves in accordance with high moral and ethical standards will be prevented from looking for more creative or efficient ways to complete tasks, or that they might not be able to meet their performance targets if they concentrate on the principles of justice and completing tasks for the "common good." This also explains why, despite their potential innate concern for sustainability as private citizens, some business executives are hesitant to contemplate implementing SHRM practices (Luthra et al., 2018). The expected effects of SHRM, however, are not well supported by empirical data (Aust et al., 2020). Thus, the purpose of this study is to theorise and test empirically the ways in which SHRM affects employees.

According to the SHRM, an organization's human and social goals depend heavily on the interests and well-being of its employees. Once these goals are met, HRM will be able to assist organisations in achieving other objectives. Therefore, this study focuses on promoting employee well-being, which is one of SHRM primary objectives (Guest, 2017). Convincing businesses that such practices not only do not negatively impact business efficiency or performance, but also have a great deal of potential to improve employee performance is crucial in order to encourage them to embrace SHRM and work towards common good businesses in the current institutional and organisational settings that are focused on economics. For this reason, it is crucial to investigate experimentally the possible impacts of SHRM on employee performance and well-being, since HRM research should not be divorced from practice (Cooke et al., 2021). Nevertheless, there is a dearth of empirical data and theoretical support about whether and how the implementation of SHRM will improve employee performance and well-being (Stahl et al., 2020). With empirical support, this study advances the understanding of how SHRM practices affect employee outcomes.

According to Bakker et al. (2004) and Demerouti et al. (2001), the job demands-resources (JD-R) model is used to examine how SHRM affects employee attitudes, behaviours, and, eventually, performance. The JD-R model states that high levels of work engagement and low levels of stress and burnout are the main indicators of employee well-being (Demerouti et al., 2001). On the one hand, workplace demands—such as physical hardship, time constraints, and position ambiguity—have a tendency to generate intense stress, energy depletion, motivational decline, and burnout in workers. Job resources, on the other hand, such as organisational, psychological, social, or physical elements of the job (e.g., office, self-efficacy, interpersonal harmony, and career opportunities), assist employees in reaching their professional objectives and promote personal development (Demerouti et al., 2001). According to Bakker et al. (2004), the JD-R model suggests that job resources could operate as a buffer against the detrimental effects of job demands on employee well-being. It also suggests that when a workplace is resourceful, the negative effects of job demand on employees are less pronounced. Accordingly, job resources are essential for managing and lowering job expectations as well as for employees (Hansez & Chmiel, 2010).

The JD-R model separates job resources into two categories: personal resources that are under an employee's control (e.g., competence and resilience) and workplace resources that are out of their control (e.g., autonomy, task variety, training, compensation schemes, and performance feedback) (Demerouti et al., 2001). This study makes the case that the existence of SHRM, which offers employees useful workplace tools, aids in the accumulation of personal resources, eases pain, lowers stress, and improves individual performance and well-being (as evidenced by a high level of work engagement).

One important personal resource that is the subject of this study is employee resilience. A recent McKinsey analysis claims that the COVID-19 epidemic is making layoffs, downsizing, restructuring, and job redesign more frequent (Lund et al., 2021). The difficulties of the modern workplace are now a significant cause of elevated job stress (Kramer & Kramer, 2020; Tu et al., 2021). Building resilience is essential for handling tumultuous and demanding work environments. People that possess a high degree of resilience are able to overcome obstacles and demonstrate a greater ability to adapt and use resources to achieve both individual and organisational objectives (Malik & Garg, 2020). More significantly, because they can swiftly adjust to adversity, resilient employees have reduced psychological discomfort levels (Tonkin et al., 2018). Employee resilience is therefore a vital tool that both individuals and organisations may use to promote wellbeing and improve performance. Nonetheless, there is still a dearth of research on resilience in an organisational setting, and the majority of resilience literature does not address how to build employee resilience (Cooper et al., 2019). This study examined how SHRM contributes to the growth of employee resilience, which in turn influences employee performance and well-being, in order to close this research gap.

We also look at work engagement, which gives businesses a competitive edge and is similar to high levels of pleasure and activity (Schaufeli et al., 2002). Because of their optimistic outlooks and high levels of engagement, engaged workers see their work as something they want to invest time and energy in—as a worthwhile endeavour that is captivating and fascinating (Bakker & Oerlemans, 2011). They produce favourable feedback in the form of success, gratitude, and acknowledgement (Bakker, 2009). Furthermore, studies indicate that motivated workers are more likely to show excitement and vigour in their personal lives, including sports and artistic pursuits, and to enjoy activities outside of work (Bakker & Oerlemans, 2011). Work engagement is a subjective well-being state associated to the workplace that has significant ramifications for both people and organisations. However, according to a recent Gallup poll from 2021, 85% of workers are disengaged from their jobs. Therefore, it is critical to look at the factors that influence job engagement and find strategies for attracting and retaining an engaged workforce for the sake of organisational performance and employee well-being (Malik & Garg, 2020).

THEORY AND HYPOTHESES

The JD-R model, which views resilience as a significant personal resource and SHRM practices as essential organization-level workplace resources for employees, serves as the foundation for the investigation of the connections between SHRM, resilience, work engagement, and employee performance (Demerouti et al., 2001). Regardless of their level (e.g., organisational or individual), job resources are intrinsically motivating because they meet employees' basic needs—autonomy, competence, and relatedness—and promote personal development. They also contribute to extrinsic motivation since resources make it easier to accomplish professional objectives. Job resources lead to higher work engagement and improved performance in both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation cases (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007).

SHRM and employee resilience

Employee resilience is critical for effective adaptation and response to environmental changes (Wang et al., 2014). The relationship between HRM practices and employee resilience has garnered increasing attention in the last ten years, and numerous empirical studies have demonstrated that a cohesive set of HRM practices can enhance employee resilience (Bardoel et al., 2014; Cooke et al., 2019). Wang et al. (2014) discovered that HRM interventions including training and development can help employees become more resilient. According to Cooper et al. (2019), resilience and well-being-oriented HRM practices are positively correlated. According to the JD-R model (Demerouti et al., 2001) and positive psychology (Luthans et al., 2006), SHRM (as firm-level workplace resources) is essential for boosting employees' resilience, which is a valuable personal resource.

The human/social and environmental outcomes that contribute to organisational sustainability are

highlighted by the SHRM, which places an emphasis on "doing good" (Stahl et al., 2020; Voegtlin et al., 2022). Thus, putting SHRM into practice would entail using HRM competencies—that is, abilities, knowledge, and attitudes—to advance society and assist businesses in tackling one or more of the major issues (Aust et al., 2020). As a result, SHRM engages workers in decision-making, offers sustainability training and development opportunities, fosters diversity and equity in the workplace, supports ethical and sustainable behaviour, and enhances worker well-being. Employee resilience, which emphasises the proactive evaluation of risks and personal assets that may impact employee outcomes, can be fostered by all of these HRM strategies (Luthans et al., 2006). In this context, risk is defined as any element or occurrence that has the potential to have unfavourable effects but has no bearing if it doesn't happen (Kraemer et al., 1997). For instance, bullying and discrimination are hazards in the workplace (Luthans et al., 2006).

Reducing risks and raising personal assets are two ways to build and improve resilience (Luthans et al., 2006). In order to minimise internal failures such ethical crises, sexual harassment, workplace discrimination, and employee misbehaviour, organisations can first proactively lower the likelihood of unfavourable events by developing an ethical and trustworthy organisational culture (Luthans et al., 2006). By advancing the common good for the benefit of society, businesses use SHRM to convey to their workforce the company's mission and foster a broader sense of societal and individual responsibility (Hollensbe et al., 2014). Therefore, by including leadership programs, hiring and selecting staff with high moral standards, and providing in-depth training on ethical concerns, SHRM helps to create a strong, moral, and trustworthy culture. It incorporates equitable career processes and diversity management, encourages rewards for moral behaviour and employs behavior-based performance evaluations rather than outcome-based ones.

In order to enhance employees' personal assets—which are crucial in the event of unforeseen emergencies like layoffs brought on by economic downturns—organizations should proactively supplement the resources that they currently possess (Luthans et al., 2006). These resources could include social capital that is external to the individual (e.g., workplace resources) and human capital that is internal to the individual (e.g., personal resources, according to the JD-R model). According to Jiang et al. (2013), human capital is the knowledge, skills, and abilities that each employee possesses, whereas social capital is the existing and potential resources that are a part of and derived from an individual's network of interactions.

In order to develop employees' human capital, SHRM includes a number of training and development practices in the ability bundle. These include programs that improve the ability to make independent decisions, organization-wide training to develop sustainable and responsible values and behaviours, and the development of skills to interact and communicate with multiple stakeholders (Aust et al.,

2020). However, because SHRM makes employees more capable of doing good deeds for others, they are more likely to build positive exchange relationships and high-quality interactions with various stakeholders, which further expand and fortify their networks and provide opportunities for social capital development. Additionally, SHRM turns employees from self-centred individuals into members of a community with shared values and norms towards the common good by assisting businesses in developing an ethical and trustworthy culture where reciprocity is valued and practiced. According to Adler and Kwon (2002), trust and common norms are additional sources of social capital in addition to networks. As a result, SHRM helps to enhance social and human capital in the workplace, which is essential for fostering employee resilience. It should be mentioned that the ability, motivation, and opportunity bundles are mutually reinforcing, according to the AMO model, and that studying the impact of HRM practices as a whole rather than the isolating effects of individual bundles is the best way to understand their influence (Ho & Kuvaas, 2020). Therefore, the following hypothesis is put forth:

Hypothesis 1: SHRM has a positive effect on employee resilience.

Employee resilience and work engagement

According to research, engaged workers are highly motivated, have strong connections with their work activities, are excited about their work, are more likely to put effort into their employment, and believe they can handle the demands of their jobs (Lu et al., 2015). A high level of work engagement among employees can help organisations achieve a variety of outcomes, including financial performance and employee development. These outcomes have a significant impact on employees' attitudes, organisational commitment, and citizenship behaviours (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004), as well as their performance and organisational success (Harter et al., 2002).

Work engagement is described as "a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterised by vigour, dedication, and absorption" (Schaufeli et al., 2002, p. 74) as a state of well-being related to one's job. According to Schaufeli et al. (2002), p. 74, vigour is characterised by "high levels of energy and mental resilience while working, the willingness to invest effort in one's work, and persistence even in the face of difficulties." Being deeply engaged in one's work and feeling "a sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride, and challenge" are characteristics of dedication (Schaufeli et al., 2002, p. 74). High levels of focus and contented engagement in one's task are characteristics of absorption (Schaufeli et al., 2002). According to this study, work engagement is fostered by employee resilience. The JD-R model states that the existence of job resources sets off an extrinsic and intrinsic motivational process that results in high levels of engagement (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Resilience is a crucial internal resource that enables people to evaluate their capacity to fulfil work demands favourably and to feel that they can meet their requirements by completely committing to the objectives of the company. In order to avoid burnout, the detrimental opposite of engagement, it also

helps people to successfully handle the negative effects of job expectations and obstacles (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). When workers are resilient, they can hold onto resources (such time, energy, and good feelings) and have more resources (Chen, 2018). This is because resilient individuals are adaptable to shifting circumstances and receptive to new experiences, which allows them to grow personally by learning from setbacks, difficulties, and adversity. Furthermore, resilient workers typically exhibit greater emotional stability, which facilitates the development of positive working connections and social support. A high degree of work engagement is facilitated by all of these collected resources (Malik and Garg, 2020). Work engagement and employee resilience may be related, according to recent empirical data. Chen (2018), for instance, looks into how PsyCap affects managers and workers in Taiwan's service industry and discovers that all four PsyCap components—hope, optimism, self-efficacy, and resilience—significantly predict work engagement. Based on this theory and previous research, we hypothesize the following:

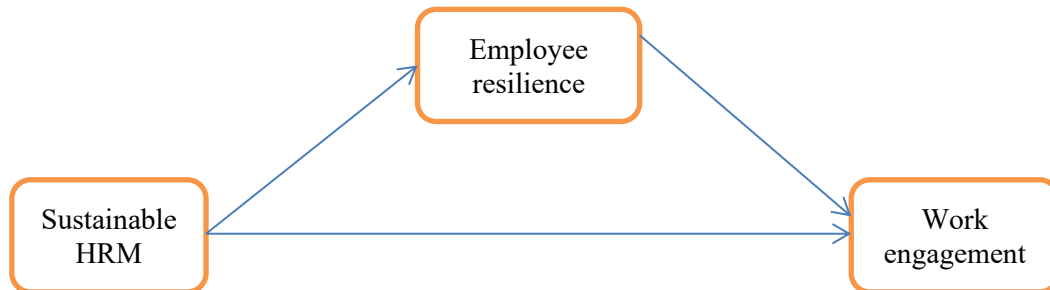
Hypothesis 2: Employee resilience has a positive effect on work engagement.

SHRM, employee resilience and work engagement

According to the JD-R model and positive psychology (Luthans et al., 2006), SHRM is essential for boosting employees' resilience, which is a valuable personal resource. SHRM engages workers in decision-making, offers sustainability training and development opportunities, fosters diversity and equity in the workplace, supports ethical and sustainable behaviour, and enhances worker well-being. Employee resilience, which emphasises the proactive evaluation of risks and personal assets that may impact employee outcomes, can be fostered by all of these HRM strategies (Luthans et al., 2006). The JD-R model states that the availability of workplace resources gives workers more control over their working environment and activates their personal resources. Employees can accomplish their goals in a resourceful workplace without making undue investments. Employees are able to acquire and cultivate more personal resources of resilience when external resources like appropriate coaching, excellent feedback, encouraging co-workers, autonomy, and professional development opportunities are available. Burnout is less likely to occur among workers in such settings. They are also more likely to be active, committed, and engrossed in their work, and they are more self-assured and proud of the work they accomplish (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 3: Employee resilience mediates the positive relationship between the SHRM and work engagement.

Insert Figure 1



METHOD

Sample and procedure

The current study was carried out using a structured online self-report questionnaire survey created with Google Forms. Every responder to our self-report structured questionnaire survey received assurances regarding the privacy of the information gathered. We collected cross-sectional data from 388 employees at manufacturing companies using the convenience sample technique. By providing the data in an aggregate fashion, the privacy of the respondents' information was preserved.

Measures

The survey used pre-existing scales. For every variable in the study, a 5-point Likert scale was employed, with 1 denoting "strongly disagree" and 5 denoting "strongly agree." The information is provided below:

SHRM: It was measured using a 22-item instrument adapted from the scale developed by Guerci et al. (2015).

ER: It was measured using the 3-item resilience subscale of the PsyCap instrument developed by Luthans et al. (2007).

WE: It was measured using the 9-item version of the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale, which was developed by Schaufeli et al. (2006).

RESULTS

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used to analyse the measurement model, and AMOS 24.0 version was used to evaluate the structural model and validate the assumptions. A 95% confidence level (5 percent threshold of significance) was employed in the analysis. Table 1 displays the correlation matrix, mean, standard deviation, and square root of average variance extracted (AVE) [for establishing discriminant validity]. The degree of correlation between variables is indicated by the co-relation coefficient.

Table 1. Mean, standard deviation and correlation matrix (along with square root of average variance explained- AVE)

Variables	N	Mean	Std dev.	SHRM	ER	WE
SHRM	422	2.9358	0.52179	0.773#		
ER	422	3.3299	0.54670	0.154**	0.734#	
WE	422	2.7872	0.54062	0.145*	0.128**	0.770#

Notes: # Square root of AVE; *p-value <0.05; **p-value<0.01; SHRM= Sustainable human resource practices; ER= Employee resilience; WE= Work engagement

Measurement model assessment

The values of fit-indices were within the acceptable range as recommended by Hair *et al.*, (2010) [$\chi^2/df=2.101$ (<3.0), goodness of fit-index (GFI) = 0.844 (>0.80), Tucker-Lewis index (TLI) = 0.904 (>0.90), comparative fit index (CFI) = 0.910 (>0.90), and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) = 0.043 (<0.07)].

To evaluate the reliability of each construct, the study looked at the Cronbach alpha and composite reliability values. The items' factor loadings, Cronbach alpha values, average variance extracted (AVE), and composite reliability (CR) are displayed in Table 2. The AVE values over 0.50 (Fornell and Larcker, 1981) and the CR and Cronbach alpha values of all the variables above 0.7 (Fornell and Larcker, 1981; Nunnally, 1978) were used to test convergent and discriminant validities in order to prove construct validity.

Table 2: Results for convergent validity and construct reliability (CR)

Factors and items	Standardized factor loadings	Cronbach's α	AVE	CR
SHRM		0.886	0.599	0.922
1. Developing ethical brochures and other materials used to attract job applicants.	0.715			

2. Attracting and selecting employees who demonstrate responsible values or behavior.	0.789			
3. Hiring employees who exhibit relatively high levels of moral development.	0.721			
4. Induction programs that emphasize responsible and sustainable values (e.g., dignity, solidarity, and reciprocity).	0.782			
5. Organization-wide training to develop responsible and sustainable behavior.	0.841			
6. Presence of ethical leadership programs and extensive training on ethical and sustainability issues.	0.796			
7. Creating cognitive conflict to stimulate independent decisions in ethically ambiguous situations	0.776			
8. Developing employee skills in engaging and communicating with multiple stakeholders (e.g., customers, suppliers, government, community, and the public, media).	0.769			
Employee Resilience		0.899	0.540	0.913
1. I feel confident in representing my work area in meetings with management	0.731			
2. I feel confident helping to set targets/goals in my work area	0.729			
3. Right now I see myself as being pretty successful at work	0.754			
4. If I should find myself in a jam at work, I could think of many ways to	0.763			

get out of it				
5. When I have a setback at work, I have trouble recovering from it, moving on (R)	0.728			
6. I usually take stressful things at work in stride”; and (d) optimism: “I always look on the bright side of things regarding my job	0.715			
7. I usually take stressful things at work in stride”	0.733			
8. I always look on the bright side of things regarding my job	0.739			
9. If something can go wrong for me work-wise, it will (R)	0.725			
Work Engagement		0.934	0.593	0.899
1. At my work, I feel bursting with energy.	0.820			
2. At my job, I feel strong and vigorous	0.811			
3. When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work.				
4. I am enthusiastic about my job.	0.711			
5. My job inspires me	0.745			
6. I am proud of the work that I do.	0.784			
7. I feel happy when I am working intensely	0.771			
8. I am immersed in my work.	0.721			
9. I get carried away when I am working.	0.794			

Notes: R= reverse coded; *p-value <0.05; **p-value<0.01; SHRM= Sustainable human resource practices; ER= Employee resilience; WE= Work engagement

Testing of hypotheses

With a bias-corrected bootstrap confidence level of 95%, the structural model was used to test the hypotheses with 5000 bootstrapping replicates (to get over the non-normality problem), and the

outcomes were good. As suggested by Hair et al. (2010) and Somers et al. (2003), the fit-index values fell within the acceptable ranges: $2/df = 2.108$ (<3.0), goodness of fit-index (GFI) = 0.849 (>0.80), Tucker-Lewis index (TLI) = 0.953 (>0.90), comparative fit index (CFI) = 0.907 (>0.90), and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) = 0.047 (<0.07). The direct effect of SHRM and WE was found to be positive and significant ($\beta = 0.316$; $p\text{-value} < 0.01$), supporting H1. The direct effect of ER and WE was found to be positive and significant ($\beta = 0.341$; $p\text{-value} < 0.01$), supporting H2. The mediating direct effect of ER and WE were found to be positive and significant ($\beta = 0.107$; $p\text{-value} < 0.01$), supporting H3.

Table 3. Path Analysis

Path	Direct effect	Indirect effect	Remarks
SHRM->WE	0.316**		H1 Supported
ER->WE	0.341**		H2 Supported
SHRM->ER->WE		0.107**	H3 Supported

Notes: * $p\text{-value} < 0.05$; ** $p\text{-value} < 0.01$; SHRM= Sustainable human resource practices; ER= Employee resilience; WE= Work engagement

Discussion, implications and limitations of the study

The strategy that acknowledges that companies have obligations to other stakeholders in addition to their shareholders is SHRM (Macke & Genari, 2019). However, little is known about if and how SHRM will result in better and more sustainable outcomes, despite the increased scholarly interest in and reported benefits of SHRM. The mechanism through which SHRM leads to WE are theorised in this work. The study offers useful ramifications for managers and organisations as well as theoretical contributions to positive psychology and SHRM. First, it offers a fresh theoretical perspective on how SHRM affects societal and human outcomes (Kramar, 2014). The JD-R model is used in this study to support the claim that the strategic HRM approach and the SHRM approach are essentially different, and that the latter may result in job demands that are closely linked to stress (Conway et al., 2016). Our findings show that SHRM-CGV offers useful job resources to improve WE. Second, this study combines organisational behaviour and HRM viewpoints to determine how HRM interventions could result in improved ER AND WE and happy psychological states. Most significantly, by conceiving SHRM as a common good strategy that helps businesses tackle the major sustainability concerns outlined by the SDGs, our findings advance research on SHRM. Although there have been encouraging trends in recent years towards a common good business model, the function of SHRM and the effects of such practices on businesses have not been empirically examined in academic HRM research.

First, the results confirm that managing people requires a SHRM approach. Our findings suggest that when organisations invest in and demonstrate their concern for their employees by the implementation of SHRM, individuals will build more personal resources. This could potentially boost the likelihood of achieving desired work engagement and performance. Second, by examining the relationship between employee resilience and improved performance and well-being, our research highlights the significance of encouraging work engagement, which can be accomplished by providing interventions that boost both personal and workplace resources. Our results demonstrate that acquiring resilient and engaged workers is essential to the success of an organisation. SHRM affects employee engagement through work engagement and resiliency mechanisms. Third, our research assists companies in determining how to cultivate and maintain a workforce that is resilient. Due to a lack of resources, changes in government regulations, technology breakthroughs, and pressure from a variety of stakeholders, organisations must react swiftly to the dynamic and unpredictable environment in order to stay viable (Benn et al., 2018). Furthermore, our findings imply that companies should give workers additional resources through SHRM, such as work-life balance policies, fair career mechanisms, voicing mechanisms, and sustainable training and development, in order to build their psychological capital of resilience. This will help to improve employee engagement and well-being. First, the study is conducted in one sector that is manufacturing. So, generalizability of our finding to other national context cannot be done. Second, some other mediating variables may be valuable for explaining the process through which HRM practices affect employee outcomes. Third, the study relies on cross-sectional data; longitudinal research is required to identify the causal relationships among the variables.

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