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**Determining involvement HRM practices and benevolent HRM attributions' role in improving employees' engagement and reducing stress in sales-centric organisations**

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# Determining involvement HRM practices and benevolent HRM attributions' role in improving employees' engagement and reducing stress in sales-centric organisations

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**Abstract:** Workplace stress has been characterised as a global occupational phenomenon that causes adverse organisational outcomes; including serious employee's illnesses and phenomenal productivity loss per annum. Human resource management (HRM) has always thrived to induce predefined work practices that support employee wellbeing in the organisations. The present study provides a framework on how HRM practices can augment employee wellbeing by reducing their stress levels. Involvement HRM practices and benevolent HRM attributions are portrayed to enhance employee gratitude, which in return results in alleviating employee stress and improving employee engagement levels. The data was collected from 298 respondents using survey questionnaire. Proportionate stratified random sampling was deployed and structural equation modelling (SEM) was executed for the determination of causal relationship among constructs. Results affirmed established theoretical foundations as strong causality existed among the constructs. The study provides HR practitioners a pathway of optimising organisational productivity and employee wellbeing.

**Keywords:** involvement HRM practices; gratitude; employee stress; human resource management; HRM attributions; engagement; structural equation modelling; SEM.

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## 1 Introduction

The role of psychological and mental wellbeing is discussed considerably in the literature of human resource management (HRM). Researchers like Malik et al. (2022) have theorised that employee wellbeing is a broad domain and there are multiple factors that play an integral role in constituting physical, social, and psychological wellbeing. Researchers like Akhtar et al. (2021) and Guest (2017) have argued that stress is a core element of employees' psychological wellbeing. In the organisational setting, unavoidable pressure exerted on an employee is referred as stress. Stress has been referred as worldwide epidemic by International Labour Organisation and World Health Organisation (Hameed et al., 2017; Hameed and Khwaja, 2022). Stress and pressure on the employees can have serious consequences as it effects psychological and physiological wellbeing of the employees. Consequently, employee absenteeism, reduction in job satisfaction levels, and enhanced turnover are some of the core concerns to be faced by the organisations (Khwaja et al., 2020a). Especially in sales-oriented organisations, the element of employee turnover is quite high if there is a lot of pressure on the employee (Zaman et al., 2021).

The magnitude of stress absorption also varies depending upon the region, culture, society and values. In general, developing or emerging economies have more intense sales-oriented organisations; and eventually, the stress levels among the staff are quite high too (Mahmood et al., 2019). The mental wellbeing of the workforce certainly gets considerably effected, and it eventually leads to serious repercussions. Work pressure also leads to burnout which is not beneficial for employee wellbeing (Lam et al., 2022). The phenomenon of work stress in the sales-oriented pharmaceutical sector of Pakistan is

quite intense (Butt et al., 2021; Qureshi et al., 2022; Rahman et al., 2019). The working atmosphere in the pharmaceutical sector of Pakistan is competitive due to considerable amount of competition (Qureshi and Raza, 2022; Tanveer et al., 2022).

The role of HRM practices remains to grow and develop employees through appropriate management interventions. Starting from selection to development, and motivation to retention; HRM practices should facilitate employees in every regard and manner. Demo et al. (2012) elucidated the importance of involvement HRM practices for boosting organisational and employee's performance. The achievement of wellbeing of the employees in the organisational sphere is projected and estimated by the employers; but due to intense work pressure, the employees are not able to cherish wellbeing (Hameed et al., 2017). In this case, involvement HRM practices and benevolent HRM attributions (BHRA) play a decisive role in increasing wellbeing of the employees (Malik et al., 2021). More importantly, the intervention of gratitude both from the employer and employee end is pivotal. Employee only tends to go an extra mile for the firm, if they perceive that the organisation is looking after their wellbeing and development. The research question remains that how BHRA and involvement HRM practices can affect on reducing stress levels of the employees and increasing engagement levels in the organisations.

Building on the above stated factors, the study is confined to determine the role of involvement HRM practices on employee stress, engagement and gratitude. The study aims that due to involvement HRM practices, the stress levels of the employees will be reduced and the engagement level of the employee will be increased. Furthermore, gratitude interventions will be in the best interest of the organisations, therefore, involvement HRM practices will positively influence gratitude. The study emphasises on the introduction of gratitude in the organisational context. Along these lines, BHRA will be critical too as it will be positively associated with gratitude, reducing stress level among the employees, increasing engagement and improving wellbeing of the workforce. The use of attribution theory as an underpinning theory is conducted as it precisely connotes association among the constructs. The study is focused on the pharmaceutical sector of Pakistan, as the element of stress among sales staff of the respective sector is quite high (Qureshi et al., 2022).

## **2 Literature review**

The review of literature provides a thorough insight about the association among the constructs.

### *2.1 Benevolent HRM attributions*

Nishii et al. (2008) developed the construct of HRM attributions, and Fehr et al. (2017) coined the concept of BHRA. Cappelletti et al. (2010) explained how people can be managed through benevolence. Employees comprehend HRM practices by considering the contextual factors in the organisations. Employees respond to HRM practices seeing if they are harmful or beneficial to them (Cooper et al., 2019). Once the employees perceive that the embedded practices are inaugurated by the management for their facilitation and assistance, they consider them to be of benevolent nature. In case of

benevolent HRM practices, employees usually work proactively for organisational performance (Malik et al., 2022). According to Fehr et al. (2017), the inauguration of BHRA positively impacts on employee's attitudes and helps them in performing their job.

Learning organisations committed to improve overall wellbeing of the employees tend to ensure that there are ample number of opportunities for growth and development (Hameed et al., 2017). Employees on the other hand should precisely perceive that the organisations are striving to grow, in which they will be creating opportunities for development of the employees. In this regard, engaging employees to go to the next level seems a pivotal task (Mahmood and Rehman, 2016). Therefore, organisations need to portray BHRA, which are well acknowledged and taken well into consideration by the employees. Multinational corporations therefore conduct employees' engagement surveys almost after two years to examine how much employees are connected/engaged with the organisation (Akhtar et al., 2021).

Researchers have discussed and argued about BHRA in diverse ways and manners. Few have discussed it as a composite construct; meanwhile, a few unfolded it into wellbeing HRM attributions and performance HRM attributions (Fehr et al., 2017; Malik et al., 2021). The perceptions of HRM attributions as a positively connotated construct has been found in the literature. Moreover, prior studies have identified that BHRA can reduce stress among the employees (Malik et al., 2022), and can increase engagement levels too (Khan and Malik, 2017). Meanwhile, it is eminent to configure simultaneously that how BHRA would affect on the gratitude levels of the employees. According to Nishii et al. (2008), BHRA is positively associated with employees' commitment. Based on the aforementioned discussion, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1 BHRA has a significant influence on gratitude.

H2 BHRA has a significant influence on employee engagement.

## 2.2 *Involvement HRM attributions (IP)*

Involvement HRM practices (IP) propagate that employees' participation in organisational context should be encouraged and supported in all possible manner (Akhtar et al, 2021). In other words, providing opportunities for growth and development, discretion, and freedom of expression within the organisational sphere are some of the core factors that make IP. According to Mahmood et al. (2019), IP positively influences satisfaction levels of the employees. Shin et al. (2018) have discussed about either higher involvement practices impact on employee creativity. Considerable amount of theoretical support can be attained to explain how IP can decrease stress levels and improve employee wellbeing. According to Macky and Boxall (2008), demands-control model explains how employees can manage stress. The involvement of the employees in the overall organisational building, growth and development is significant as it ensures that the core stakeholder of the organisation is knitted together (Khan and Malik, 2017). The synergy between organisational tasks, vision, mission with employees' motivation and strive to work proactively can be declared as a utopian approach (Khwaja and Ahmad, 2013), however, with the introduction of involvement HRM practices, such outcomes can be attained.

Involving employees in tasks which would ultimately help them in their growth and development is essential. Some researchers believe that healthy training and development

activities are necessary for improving employee's skills (Malik et al., 2022; Khwaja et al., 2022). Employees also feel connected and engaged once they feel that the organisation is investing on them. Employees perceived sense of commitment and associated is necessary for prolonged success and triumph for the organisations (Akhtar et al., 2021). It has been estimated that learning organisation with balanced employee workload tend to perform significantly in objective and subjective terms (Mahmood et al., 2019; Hameed and Khwaja, 2022). Considering these aspects, involvement HRM practices are notably eminent for engaging employees in the organisational spheres.

Employee's engagement to work with commitment and dedication in a firm depends upon various factors like, organisational support, organisational climate, organisation justice, etc. (Khwaja, 2014). Meanwhile, the engagement levels of the employees fluctuate when there is minimal organisational support. Firms at times only focus on organisational performance and sideline employees' wellbeing (Tabassum et al., 2020). Such sorts of developments are not in the best interest of the organisation in the long run. The alignment of organisational goals and employees' growth and development should be precisely interlinked (Mahmood et al., 2019), otherwise, it may lead to a win-lose in short-term and lose-lose in the long-run (Hameed and Khwaja, 2022). Henceforth, the following hypotheses are proposed:

### *2.3 Gratitude*

According to Algoe et al. (2016), gratitude is totally dependent upon benevolent attribution dependent emotion. In other words, gratitude tends to plays it role when the receiving end perceives that the benefactor has facilitated them in any possible manner. Gratitude demonstration is significant from the employers' end as it certainly has positive effect on the employees (Akhtar and Malik, 2016). Employees are anticipated to be more engaged and committed to work once they perceive that the organisation is demonstrating gratitude through practices, policies, and procedures. The study of Portocarrero et al. (2020) argues about the relationship between dispositional gratitude and wellbeing. Organisations inclined on demonstrating gratitude tend to be of more productive nature, employee turnover is low, commitment and job satisfaction is at the higher end (Hameed and Khwaja, 2022). Based on these factors, it can be projected that due to gratitude interventions by the employers, stress levels among the employees reduce significantly. Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H5 Gratitude has a significant in reducing stress levels of the employees.

### *2.4 Stress*

As per conditions and influences, physical and psychological response of individuals is regarded as stress. It is regarded as an unpleasant emotional experience which effects wellbeing of the employees. Stress can be caused due to grief, fear or anxiety at the workplace, and can significantly effect the performance of the employees. It has been estimated that due to stressful nature of work, the employees tend to display various physical and psychological problems (Salari et al., 2020). Stressful events at the workplace directly and indirectly effect on employees' psychological wellbeing too, therefore, the employers tend to ensure that the working environment is feasible for everyone (Zaman et al., 2019). Extensive workload can also cause stress, and in the

organisational context, a huge amount of stress predominantly comes from unwarranted workload (Mo et al., 2020). Extensive job descriptions, managing somebody's else work (in case of absence), mis commitments by the management, toxic work environment, and absence of organisational justice are some of the core factors due to which work stress accelerates, and employees' performance and wellbeing gets affected (Khwaja, 2014). The engagement level of the employees certainly gets effected too. Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H6 EG has a significant influence on employee stress.

### **3 Methodology**

In the respective study, positivist doctrine was used as the philosophical stance and deductive approach was deployed. Survey method was executed for the collection of data from the respondents. The respondents of the study were the employees working in sales departments of pharmaceutical sector of Pakistan. The element of work stress is quite phenomenal in the pharmaceutical companies of Pakistan as majority of the firms conduct sales-centric operations (Butt et al., 2021; Qureshi et al., 2022; Rahman et al., 2019). The market competition is intense; therefore, pharmaceutical firms ensure competitiveness by putting stress on the sales staff (Tanveer et al., 2022). Henceforth, considering the objectives of the study, pharmaceutical sector of Pakistan was suitable for the collection of data. The items of the constructs were adapted from prior research studies. Five items scale of BHRA was adapted from the study of Nishii et al.'s (2008); 11-items scale of involvement HRM practices (IP) was adapted from the study of Demo et al. (2012); four-items employee stress management (SM) scale was adapted from the study of Winwood et al. (2013); six-items gratitude (GT) scale was adapted from the study of McCullough et al. (2002) and five-items engagement (EG) scale was adapted from the study of Saks (2006). The items of SM were reverse-coded. Proportionate stratified random sampling was deployed for the collection of data as the data collection was to be done only from the sales staff. As the subgroups of sales team working in the pharmaceutical industry were the core respondents of the study, therefore, proportionate stratified random sampling was selected as the sampling method. The unit of analysis were individuals and cross-sectional research design was used for the study. Structural equation modelling (SEM) technique was deployed for the estimation of theoretical model. According to Hair et al. (2017), sample size of more than 200 respondents is suitable for SEM. The data was hence collected from 298 respondents. SEM approach ensures that all the items are precisely knitted with their respective factors, and concise association among constructs is attained (Khwaja et al., 2020c; Zaman et al., 2022a).

### **4 Results**

Data estimations were conducted by fulfilling the assumptions of regressions and SEM. For the collected data, covariance-based structural equation modelling (CB-SEM) was executed on AMOS 24.0 as it has strict thresholds for determining data normality, validity, reliability and causality (Khwaja et al., 2020b). The initial data checks like missing values configuration, examining outliers, data normality, common method bias,

and exploratory factor analysis (EFA) were conducted on SPSS 25.0. confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), convergent and discriminant validity, measurement model fit measures and path analysis was conducted on AMOS 24.0. It is imperative to fulfil assumptions of regression before estimating data on SEM as it ensures that all the necessary statistical thresholds are fulfilled (Khwaja et al., 2022; Tabassum et al., 2020; Zaman et al., 2021). The data was collected from 298 respondents. The demographic results are demonstrated in Table 1 which illustrate that majority of the respondents were male 53.7%, and majority of the people were in the age category of 18–25 years old (49.3%). In terms of work experience, 30.2% people had 3–4 years of work experience.

**Table 1** Demographics outcomes

<i>Demographics</i>	<i>Category</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Gender	Male	160	53.7%
	Female	138	46.1%
Age	18–25 years	147	49.3%
	26–30 years	120	40.3%
	31–35 years	14	4.7%
	36–40 years	6	2.0%
	Over 41 years	11	3.7%
Experience	0–2 years	77	25.8%
	3–4 years	90	30.2%
	5–10 years	27	9.1%
	11 years to 20 years	78	26.2%
	20 years and above	26	8.7%

#### 4.1 Normality of data

Descriptive statistics analysis was conducted for determining normality of the data. Constructs normality configuration is utmost before executing CB-SEM, since as there are normality concerns in the data set, it would be inappropriate for further statistical estimations (Bashir et al., 2021; Mahmood et al., 2019). Data normality of all the constructs of the study, namely, involvement HRM practices (IP), BHRA, gratitude (GT), employee stress management (SM), and engagement (EG) was configured through variance, standard deviation (SD), skewness and kurtosis tests. For the data to be normal, variance values should be between +1; and SD values should be between +2 (Zaman et al., 2022b; Khwaja and Ahmad, 2013). The results reported in Table 1 indicate that variance values of the constructs were IP 0.317, BHRA 0.556, GT 0.402, SM 0.628, and EG 0.626 respectively. SD values were IP 0.563, BHRA 0.745, GT 0.634, SM 0.792, and EG 0.791 respectively. The thresholds of skewness and kurtosis are +2 and +3 respectively (Abbasi et al., 2022; Hameed and Khwaja, 2022). The results in Table 2 precisely illustrate that the data is normal and it is appropriate to stimulate statistical estimations.



**Table 2** Descriptive statistics

<i>Constructs</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Variance</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Skewness</i>		<i>Kurtosis</i>	
	<i>Statistic</i>	<i>Statistic</i>	<i>Statistic</i>	<i>Statistic</i>	<i>Std. error</i>	<i>Statistic</i>	<i>Std. error</i>
IP	298	0.317	0.563	-0.658	0.141	2.492	0.281
BHRA	298	0.556	0.745	-0.105	0.141	0.022	0.281
GT	298	0.402	0.634	-0.775	0.141	1.687	0.281
SM	298	0.628	0.792	0.177	0.141	-0.492	0.281
EG	298	0.626	0.791	-0.415	0.141	0.281	0.281

Note: IP: Involvement HRM practices; BHRA: Benevolent HRM attributions; GT: Gratitude; SM: Employee stress management; EG: Engagement.

#### 4.2 Covariance-based structural equation modelling

The results attained through normality tests indicated that the data is sound for the estimation of SEM, therefore, EFA was conducted. The items should be loaded in front of their respective factors, and there should not be any cross-loadings, low loadings or no loadings (Muthén et al., 2017). For each individual item, EFA loadings should be greater than 0.4 (Tabassum et al., 2020). Table 3 presents EFA loadings ( $\eta$ ) and it is visible that there are no loadings less than 0.4. CFA ( $\delta$ ) was conducted to confirm that the items are precisely knitted on their respective factors. According to Khwaja et al. (2020a), the minimum CFA loadings ( $\delta$ ) should be between 0.3 and 1. The results indicate that the loadings are in the acceptable range. For determining data reliability, composite reliability (C.R) test was conducted and the value must be between 0.7 and 1 (Zaman et al., 2022a). CR values for IP was 0.913, BHRA 0.882, GT 0.946, SM 0.816, and EG 0.929 respectively. Average variance extracted (AVE) fulfils convergent validity criteria and the value should be between 0.5 and 1 (Malik et al., 2022). AVE values reported in Table 2 indicate that IP was 0.593, BHRA 0.601, GT 0.746, SM 0.527, and EG 0.687 respectively. Measurement model fit statistics were also determined in which Chi-square/degree of freedom ( $\chi^2/df$ ) was 1.859. For the model to be fit,  $\chi^2/df$  value should be between 1–5 (Mahmood et al., 2019). Furthermore, confirmatory fit index (CFI), goodness of fit index (GFI), Tucker-Lewis index (TLI), adjusted goodness of fit index (AGFI) and normative fit index (NFI) should be less than 1 (Khwaja et al., 2019). The results indicated CFI value to be 0.945, GFI 0.856, TLI 0.940, AGFI 0.831, and NFI 0.886 respectively. Moreover, standardised root mean squared residual (SRMR) value should be between 0 to 0.08, and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) value should be between 0 to 0.10 (Akhtar et al., 2021; Zaman et al., 2021). The table presents that SRMR value was 0.034 and RMSEA value to be 0.052. Discriminant validity has been presented in Table 4. According to Hameed and Khwaja (2022), in case when the correlations among exogenous factors are less than 0.85, discriminant validity is satisfied. Table 3 indicate that there is no discriminant validity and multicollinearity concern in the data.

**Table 3** Measurement model

<i>Constructs and items</i>	$\eta$	$\delta$	<i>C.R</i>	<i>AVE</i>
Benevolent HRM attributions (BHRA)			0.882	0.601
BHRA1	0.734	0.718		
BHRA2	0.948	0.882		
BHRA3	0.737	0.766		
BHRA4	0.643	0.755		
BHRA5	0.729	0.745		
Involvement HRM practices (IP)			0.913	0.593
IP1	0.500	0.613		
IP2	0.521	0.604		
IP3	0.693	0.723		
IP4	0.501	0.554		
IP5	0.851	0.748		
IP6	0.900	0.796		
IP7	0.813	0.767		
IP8	0.764	0.811		
IP9	0.552	0.702		
IP10	0.746	0.778		
IP11	0.586	0.562		
Gratitude (GT)			0.946	0.746
GT1	0.810	0.812		
GT2	0.824	0.893		
GT3	0.943	0.917		
GT4	0.839	0.850		
GT5	0.962	0.932		
GT6	0.727	0.765		
Employee stress management (SM)			0.816	0.527
SM1	0.734	0.734		
SM2	0.767	0.769		
SM3	0.692	0.696		
SM4	0.695	0.701		
Engagement (EG)			0.929	0.687
EG1	0.661	0.754		
EG2	0.929	0.898		
EG3	0.838	0.849		
EG4	0.886	0.889		
EG5	0.786	0.761		

## Measurement model fit statistics:

Chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) = 831.412, degree of freedom (df) = 452, P = 0.000, Chi-square/degree of freedom ( $\chi^2/df$ ) = 1.859, CFI = 0.945, GFI = 0.856, TLI = 0.940, AGFI = 0.831, NFI = 0.886, SRMR = 0.034, RMSEA = 0.052.

Note:  $\eta$  = Factor loadings at 0.40 using EFA;  $\delta$  = Standardised factors loadings using CFA; CR = Composite reliability; AVE = Average variance extracted.

4.3 Path analysis

Theoretically hypothesised relationships were tested using SEM path analysis. As all the pre-requisite requirements were precisely fulfilled, therefore, it was appropriate to determine causality among constructs. For a hypothesis to be accepted, significance levels (p-value) must be less than 0.05 as the confidence interval is of 95% (Bashir et al., 2019). Path coefficients or beta ( $\beta$ ) value should be significant, and t-stats should be greater than 1.96 (Abbasi et al., 2022). Hypotheses testing results are reported in Table 4, which indicate that there were six proposed relationships among constructs. First hypothesis (H1) projected that BHRA positively impacts GT and the beta value emerged to be 0.133 and t-stats 2.829. Second hypothesis (H2) predicted that BHRA and EG have a strong causal relationship. The result indicated t-stats of 6.166, and path coefficients of 0.333. Third hypothesis (H3) stated that IP has a significant influence on GT and the results presented beta value of 0.535, t-stats of 12.44 and p-value 0.00. Fourth hypothesis (H4) narrated that IP has a significant impact on EG, and the results reflected path coefficients 0.309 and t-stats 5.722. H5 proposed GT having positive effect on SM, and the outcomes revealed beta value of 0.299 and t-stats 6.102. The last hypothesis of the study H6 projected SM having positive impact on EG. Statistical outcomes presented that beta value of 0.132 and t-stats of 2.400. Henceforth, all the established relationships have been accepted.

**Table 4** Discriminant validity

Constructs	IP	GT	EG	BHRA	SM
IP	0.702				
GT	0.625	0.864			
EG	0.479	0.513	0.829		
BHRA	0.366	0.360	0.510	0.775	
SM	0.234	0.327	0.369	0.428	0.726

Note: Dependent variable: EG; IP: Involvement HRM practices; GT: Gratitude; EG: Engagement; BHRA: Benevolent HRM attributions; SM: Employee stress management.

**Table 5** Hypotheses testing outcomes

Hypotheses	Relationships	$\beta$	S.E	t-stats	p-values	Outcomes
H1	BHRA → GT	0.133	0.047	2.829	0.00	Accepted
H2	BHRA → EG	0.333	0.054	6.166	0.00	Accepted
H3	IP → GT	0.535	0.043	12.44	0.00	Accepted
H4	IP → EG	0.309	0.054	5.722	0.00	Accepted
H5	GT → SM	0.299	0.049	6.102	0.00	Accepted
H6	SM → EG	0.132	0.055	2.400	0.00	Accepted

Note: \*\* $p < 0.05$ .

## **5 Discussion and recommendations**

Stress levels in the employees have resulted in effecting their wellbeing, low productivity, demotivation and anxiety. Researchers have emphasised that employees stress leads to serious repercussions for the organisation and for the employee. Due to stress, mental and physical health of the employee can get deteriorated, and the organisation can eventually lose considerable amount of business. The companies have to therefore realise while pressuring employees for the completion of tasks. The creation of healthy and employee-friendly work environment remains the core responsibility of every organisation, but very few tend to understand this important aspect. According to Ogbonnaya (2019), the role and responsibility of HR department remains instrumental in ensuring that the work culture is suitable for all the employees. The creation of balance between the employer and the employee remains eminent and the HR departments have to be proactive enough in creating such conducive work environment (Malik et al., 2022).

The research work was based on the role of involvement HRM practices and BHRA effect on gratitude, employees stress and engagement. According to Kellner et al. (2016), a positive association among HRM practices and organisational outcomes have been presented in majority of the HRM studies, which is also referred as the 'content-based approach'. Meanwhile, Hameed and Khwaja (2022) have argued that underlying psychological processes must be taken into consideration while making connections between HRM practices and organisational outcomes. Therefore, perceptions of the employees have a phenomenal role in organisational performance and employee performance (Shantz et al., 2016), and this remains a core focus of the HRM attribution theory. Along these lines, the role of involvement HRM practices is also critical as the employees should be closely associated and aligned through employee-centric HRM practices (Khan and Malik, 2017).

In the respective study, the role of involvement HRM practices was emphasised along with BHRA. Their effect on gratitude, engagement and employee stress employees was determined. Systematic review of literature was presented to connote the theoretical relationships among the constructs. The theoretical foundations reflected that there is a significant association among the constructs. Hewett et al. (2018) argued that the causality among BHRA and SM may not be direct too. The inclusion of mediating constructs in this regard may facilitate the association process among the constructs. Moreover, effective stress management will consequently lead to employee's engagement within the organisation. It was also proposed that involvement HRM practices tends to reduce stress enhances engagement and increase gratitude levels among the employees.

For the determination of causal relationship among constructs, the data was collected from salesforce working in the pharmaceutical sector of Pakistan. As per the objectives of the study, pharmaceutical sector was found to be suitable due to contextual factors. Employees working in the sales departments of pharmaceutical companies face immense job stress on regular basis (Butt et al., 2021; Rahman et al., 2019); hence they were selected to be the appropriate target audience. Job demands are quite high and the competition among pharmaceutical companies of Pakistan is intense. Due to the aforementioned factors, work-life balance of employees working in pharmaceutical sector gets affected (Malik et al., 2022).

The empirical outcomes can be utilised practically within the organisational sphere in order to boost overall organisational performance. The inclusion of gratitude among the

employees certainly reduces their stress levels and boosts organisational engagement. The organisations can therefore conduct gratitude training for the employees, and more importantly, the firms must also extend organisational support for the employees. HR interventions should be perceived by the employees positively and they should consider that the organisation is looking forward to their wellbeing, and it will help them to perform better. On the other hand, it remains core responsibility of the organisation to create plausible working environment for the employees. Through these interventions, stress levels of the employees get reduced and engagement is increased. Employers can eventually deploy employer branding strategy to portray themselves as employee-friendly equal opportunity-based organisation. The pharmaceutical companies of Pakistan need to revamp their operational protocols and must consider the introduction of gratitude-based trainings for increasing job commitment, satisfaction and employee's wellbeing. Along with gratitude trainings, the introduction of BHRA and involvement HRM practices within the operational protocols is necessary for sustainable business operations.

### 5.1 Future research directions

BHRA was conceptualised as a composite construct in the respective study, however, there are multiple facets/antecedents of it. Future research studies can unfold dimensions of BHRA and understand the association of it with other constructs in more depth. Moreover, by extending the current theoretical framework, organisational justice can be also taken as an independent variable and perceived organisational politics can be included as a control variable. The attainment of data through cross-sectional research design has merits and de-merits. Future studies can deploy longitudinal research design for the collection of data. Furthermore, employee wellbeing can be considered as an outcome variable for future studies.

The deployment of gratitude within the organisational culture is a difficult task. Especially in the emerging markets context, where work pressures are quite high. Therefore, the inclusion of gratitude within the organisational climate and nurturing it continuously would be an interesting mechanism to explore. The study has been conducted in an emerging market context; however, pressure on salesforce also exists in the developed markets. Henceforth, the respective model can be tested in a developed market and in a different industry. Using the same theoretical model, data collection can be also done from two levels; supervisor and employee. Multilevel modelling will be providing meaningful insights in terms of the role of involvement HRM practices, employee stress management and engagement.

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