

## Measuring the Impact of Perceived Organization Support, Psychological Empowerment and Rewards on Employees' Satisfaction: Testing the Mediating Impact of Employee Engagement

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**Abstract:** Banking industry is under sturdy pressure from the need to compete and respond to speedy changes in the market. Banks, moreover, must motivate their employees to keep their organization coincident with the challenges they face. For this, banks have to cater their employees with the factors that not only engage their employees in the work but also help in creating satisfied workforce. Therefore, the present study aims to investigate the effect of perceived organization support (POS), psychological empowerment (PE) and rewards on employee satisfaction through the mediation of employee engagement in five big banks of Pakistan. Data has been collected from the 200 employees of five big banks of Pakistan (HBL, UBL, ABL, MCB and NBP). SPSS 17 has been used for factor analysis, reliability, correlation and regression analysis. The results showed that employee engagement partially mediates the relationship between POS, PE and employee satisfaction and fully mediates the association between the rewards and satisfaction. Theoretical and managerial implications along with limitations and recommendations for future research have also been discussed in the paper.

**Key words:** Perceived Organizational Support • Psychological Empowerment • Rewards • Employee Engagement • Employee Satisfaction • Banks • Pakistan

### INTRODUCTION

The current competitive environment is asserting tremendous pressure on the organizations to keep their management practices concurrent with the challenges they face [1]. To remain competitive and fulfil the needs of demanding customers in continuously changing world of work [2], competent work force [3] and adoption of novel management techniques are vital for all organizations [4]. Employees are the main source that enables the firms to get the maximum out of their limited resources [3]. Thus, employees' attitudes, behaviours and insertion of their opinions at work situation are of utmost importance in existing global and competitive environment. Main motive of 21<sup>st</sup> century managers should be to find such factors that affect the employees' attitudes and behaviours towards their work positively [5]. Perceived organization support (POS) [6, 5]. Psychological empowerment [4] and compensation and reward system [7] are the important new concepts that deal with

changing work environment, employee attitudes and their job performance.

Perceived organizational support (POS) is the concept that is getting appreciation in the world of business management especially in the services sector [8]. It is regarded as an exchange relationship between organization and employees based on organization support theory [9]. Organization support theory depicts that in order to have benefit of increased work effort and to meet socio-emotional needs; employees of a firm form a general perception about their organization that up to what extent the firm values their contribution and care about their welfare [8]. Perceived organizational support has been proved to influence on employees' satisfaction. Moreover, it reflects the quality of relationship between an employee and organization [10]. On the other hand, Psychological empowerment increases the sense of personal control in employees and inspires them to engage in work [11]. Furthermore, it boosts the motivation of employees in shape of dedication, determination to

complete tasks and to resolve the work related problems more dynamically, which in turn increases satisfaction and loyalty of employees. Similarly, according to the reciprocity principle of social exchange theory (SET), when employees are provided with compensation and rewards they respond to their organization by bringing themselves fully engaged into their work roles by devoting greater amount of their physical, emotional and cognitive resources in their work roles positively. Therefore, researchers consider perceived organizational support, psychological empowerment and compensation and reward system as imperative factors in the services industry [12-14] including banking sector [15].

Banking sector of Pakistan is playing a significant role in the development of country's economy. As on June 2012, this sector comprises of 44 commercial banks (including 22 domestic banks, 5 public sector commercial banks, 13 foreign banks and 4 specialized banks) with a total number of 9847 branches throughout the country [16]. Banks in Pakistan are highly determined to become competitive enough to meet ever changing demands of customers. To meet the challenges of current global era, varieties of tactics have been employed but among all, employees are given importance. Numbers of studies have been conducted on the employees' behaviour and their performance and loyalty [6, 17]. In Pakistan, study of Abraiz *et al.* [18] examines the relationship between empowerment and employee satisfaction. Similarly, relationship between (1) perceived organizational support and organizational commitment, (2) employee empowerment and customer satisfaction, (3) psychological empowerment and organizational commitment have also been examined [15, 19]. Within Pakistani context, these studies have one thing in common; they never study the effect of perceived organization support, psychological empowerment and reward system on employee satisfaction through the mediation of employee engagement. Therefore, purpose of the current study is to build such a comprehensive framework that examines the effect of perceived organizational support, psychological empowerment and reward system on employee satisfaction through the mediation of employee engagement. As Khan *et al.* [20] stated that employee satisfaction is the biggest problem that banking industry of Pakistan is currently facing. Employee engagement is regarded as a strategic approach for driving improvements in the performance and creating satisfaction among the employees. Many researchers investigate the potential mediating relationship of employee engagement between job

characteristics, perceived extrinsic and intrinsic rewards, perceived procedural justice, perceived however, little attention has been paid on the mediating relationship of employee engagement between the perceived organizational support, psychological empowerment and employee satisfaction and employee loyalty, especially in Pakistani banking sector [15]. The current study will therefore, answer the following research questions:

- Do perceived organizational support (POS), Psychological empowerment (PE) and reward system effect on employee satisfaction?
- Do Perceived organizational support (POS), Psychological empowerment (PE) and reward system effects on the employee engagement?
- Do employee engagement effects on the employee satisfaction?
- Does employee engagement mediate the relationship between Perceived organizational support (POS), Psychological empowerment (PE), reward system and Employee satisfaction?

Remainder of the paper includes the theoretical background and research hypothesis. This is immediately followed survey methodology and measurement scale. The last part of the study presents the conclusion and discussions on the origin of the research findings, managerial and empirical implications, limitations and areas of future research.

**Theory And Hypotheses Development:** Relationship between Perceived Organizational Support, Psychological Empowerment, Reward System and Employee Satisfaction: According to the Organization support theory, in order to find the readiness of an organization to reward increased work efforts and socio-emotional needs, employees of the firm develop general beliefs up to that extent to which their organization gives importance to their contribution and cares about their prosperity and welfare. Perceived organizational support reflects the innermost feelings of the employees that how much their organization cares and give importance to them. Employees possessing a sense of POS feel that whenever they need support regarding their work or life, organization is always willing to help them [21]. Moreover, POS also give assurance to the employees that organization will assist them to carry their work effectively and efficiently [22]. Study of Rhoades and Eisenberger [23] show that whenever organization provides support to their employees,

employees feel themselves valued and respected and in return they increase their collaboration and diligent performance. Grounded on this principle of reciprocity, employees having POS not only help their subordinates and colleagues but also increase their own performance and satisfaction [6]. In the similar context, social exchange theory (SET) expresses that whenever an organization give heed to their employees, social exchange relationship is developed between the employer and employees. Employees enjoying socio-emotional and economics resources from the organization feel themselves obliged to repay their organization in terms of increased motivation, satisfaction, work engagement and performance [24]. Managers of the firm used employee empowerment as a technique to create satisfied work force. Study of Seibert *et al.*, [25] portray that psychological empowerment is a factor of internal motivation that reflects active role of employees in the organization. Similarly, study of Spreitzer [4] stated that psychological empowerment exists when employees of the organization perceive that they can exercise some control over their work lives. Empowerment generates improved individual and organizational performance to help employees reach certain personal goals by authorizing employees to participate in the decision-making process, inspect their own jobs and find and fix problems [25]. Similarly, Edwards *et al.* [26] stated that rewards were received as an exchange of services between employer and employee. Reward system is among those HR practices which can have an effect on the satisfaction and motivation of employees. When an organization gives monetary rewards with excitement and exceptional amusement to their employees, that experiences become fabulous for recipient [27]. Relationship of reward systems is found to be positive associated with the satisfaction of the employees. Katou [27] stated that satisfaction of employees can be increased considerably when more attention is given on employees reward systems along with other HR practices. Similarly, study of Milne [28] suggested that rewards received by employees have a positive influence on their motivation as well as satisfaction level.

Thus the above literature leads us to formulate the following research hypotheses:

- H1:** There is a positive relationship between the POS and employee satisfaction.
- H2:** There is a positive relationship between the PE and employee satisfaction.
- H3:** There is a positive relationship between the reward system and employee satisfaction.

**Employee Engagement as Mediation:** According to the SET, the relationship develops over time into trust, commitment and loyalty if exchanging parties act in accordance to the certain rules of exchange [29]. Rule of exchange is based on the principle of reciprocity which stated that the actions of one party lead to the responses of other party. When an organization provides economic and socio emotional resources to their employees, their employees feel themselves morally bound to repay their organization in terms of their engagement, commitment, satisfaction and loyalty. Similarly, when an employee is catered with empowerment, rewards and organization support they response their organization by bringing themselves fully into their work roles and devote greater amount of their physical, emotional and cognitive resources in their work. Moreover, Kahn [30] stated that when these resources are given to the employees they feel obliged to repay organization in term of engagement. In the similar context, study of Rhoades *et al.* [23] provided that employees having greater POS become more engaged to their work and organization as part of the reciprocity norm of SET in order to help the organization to achieve its goals. Similarly, when employees receive empowerment and rewards from their organization then they response it with high level of engagement [31]. Many researchers have considered the employee engagement as the mediating variable between the different HR practices and employees job satisfaction. For example in the study of Maslach *et al.* [31], employee engagement mediates the relationship between the six work practices and employee satisfaction and commitment. Similarly, Karatepe [32] showed the mediation role of employee engagement between the high performance work practices (empowerment, rewards and organization support) and employee satisfaction, loyalty and performance. Moreover, Schaufeli and Bakker [33] stated that engaged employees likely to have a greater attachment to their organization and a lower tendency to leave their organization.

Thus consistent with the previous studies, the current study further proposes:

- H4:** Employee engagement mediates the relationship between POS and employee satisfaction.
- H5:** Employee engagement mediates the relationship between the psychological empowerment and employee satisfaction.
- H6:** Employee engagement mediates the relationship between reward systems and employee satisfaction.

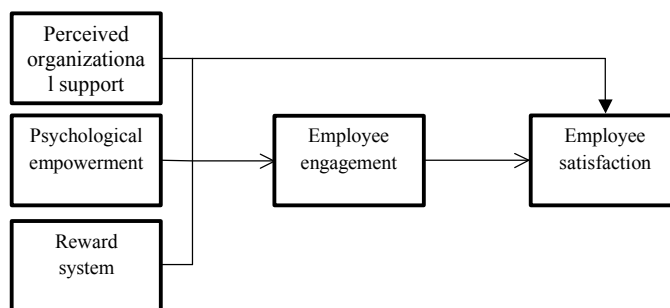


Fig. 2: Research Frame work

Table 1: Factor Analysis of Independent Variables

Constructs			
Items	Psychological empowerment	Perceived organization support	Rewards system
KMO= 0.765, Variance Explained= 65.23			
PE2	.853		
PE1	.825		
PE3	.780		
PE4	.758		
PE6	.721		
PE5	.702		
PE8	.674		
PE7	.671		
PE10	.629		
PE11	.611		
PE09	.591		
$\alpha = .822$			
POS2		.829	
POS3		.772	
POS5		.743	
POS1		.655	
POS4		.626	
$\alpha = .772$			
RS2			.781
RS5			.752
RS8			.637
RS4			.617
RS1			.583
$\alpha = .711$			

Research Frame work: Keeping in view the hypotheses of the study, research frame work has been shown in figure 1.

### Data Collection And Methodology

**Data Collection And Measurement Scales:** As the study aims to find the relationship between HR practices and employee satisfaction through the mediation of employee engagement in banking sector of Pakistan.

Therefore, unit of analysis in the current study were the employees working in the banking sector of Pakistan. Data were collected from the employees of big 5 banks of Pakistan (HBL, UBL, ABL, MCB and NBP). These banks incorporate a 60% share in the total deposits and over 52 % share in the total advances, thus, represent the true picture of the banking industry. A survey approach was used for data collection. Survey questionnaire, adopted from multiple studies, was used as a tool for data collection. Through convenience sampling, 230 questionnaires were distributed to the employees of five big banks; 200 were returned yielding a response rate of 87%. Twenty five questionnaires were rejected due to incomplete information. Therefore actual response rate came to be 80%.

Five point likert scale starting from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) was used to measure the study variables. For psychological empowerment, 11-items scale was adopted from Chiang and Hsieh [6] having 4 dimensions: meaning-3 items, competence-3 items, self-determination-2 items and impact-3 items. Similarly, 5-items perceived organizational support scale was also adopted from Chiang and Hsieh [6]. Moreover, 8-items reward system scale and 9-items employee engagement scale was adopted from Lee, [34]. Finally, for employee satisfaction 4-items scale were adopted from the Jun, Sai and Kin, [35]. Cronbach's alpha values of these five measures were .77, .92, .93, .94 and .772 respectively; hence, showing reliable measures to be used in the current study.

SPSS 17 was used in this study to analyse the collected data from employees of banking sector of Pakistan. Factor analysis (Principal Component Analysis) with varimax rotation was performed for all the five measurement scales. Table 1, shows the three factor solution of independent variables i.e. psychological empowerment 11-items, perceived organizational support 5-items and rewards system 8-items (3 have been dropped

Table 2: Factor Analysis of Mediating Variable

Items	Construct
	Employee Engagement
	KMO=.820, Variance Explained=70.433
EE1	.875
EE3	.817
EE4	.791
EE2	.754
EE5	.726
EE8	.698
EE9	.656
	$\alpha = .825$

Table 3: Factor Analysis of Dependent Variable

Items	Construct
	Employee satisfaction
	KMO=0.846, Variance Explained=63.5767
ES1	.875
ES2	.866
ES4	.824
ES3	.794
	$\alpha = .922$

due to low factor loading) explained 65.32 % of total variance and have an acceptable significant sample adequacy (KMO= .765,  $p < .05$ ).

Similarly, Table 2 depicts the one factor solution of mediating variable i.e. employee engagement 9-items (2 have been dropped due to low factor loading) explained 70.433 % variance with KMO= .820.

Moreover, Table 3 shows the one factor solution of employee satisfaction 4-items, explained 63.5767% of total variance. Employee satisfaction has a significant and acceptable KMO that is 0.846. Furthermore, Cronbach's alpha coefficient values as shown in Table 1, 2, 3 are also showing that all the constructs in the current study are reliable and are in consistent with previous studies.

## RESULTS

**Correlation Analysis:** As present study aims to find the relationship between POS, PE, reward system, employee engagement and employee satisfaction therefore, correlation analysis was conducted to find the relationship between these variables. Table 4 shows that there is significant and positive relationship between independent variables (POS, PE and reward system),

mediating variable (employee engagement) and dependent variable (employee satisfaction). POS, PE and rewards system depicts positive significant relationship with customer satisfaction ( $r=0.163, 0.240, 0.271, p < .001$ ). Similarly, results also display the significant and positive relationship of PE, POS and reward system with employee engagement ( $r=0.253, 0.297, 0.323, p < .001$ ). Moreover, each variable has been rated with mean value of greater than 4 (Table 4). Thus, these findings initially confirm all the hypotheses of the study and are in consistent with the previous studies [6, 34, 35].

**Regression Analysis:** SPSS 17 has been used to carry out regression analysis which tests the extent of impact of independent variables (POS, PE, rewards) on dependent variable (employee satisfaction) and the mediating effect of employee engagement. According to the Baron and Kenny [36], some specific conditions should be met in order to test the mediating effect of any variable: First, there should be significant relationship between independent and mediating variable. Second, the relationship between independent variable and dependent variable must also be significant. Third, on introducing the mediating variable, the impact of independent variable on dependent variable must be decreased significantly. In current study, same conditions with the help of regression analysis as described by Baron and Kenny [36] was performed to test the mediating effect of employee engagement. Table 5 shows the results of regression analysis. First step indicates that independent variables (POS, PE and rewards) account for 34.6.5% significant variance in employee engagement ( $R^2 = .345, F = 58.32$ ). Moreover, as shown in table 5, standardized coefficient beta values between POS, PE, rewards and employee engagement are significant ( $\beta = .433, .365$  and  $.317, p < .000$ ) with significant t values (6.65, 5.84 and 5.33,  $p < .000$ ). In the second step, independent variables (POS, PE and rewards) account for 24.4% significant variance in employee satisfaction ( $R^2 = .224, F = 52.58$ ). Standardized coefficient beta values between POS, PE, rewards and employee satisfaction are significant ( $\beta = .322, .475$  and  $.421, p < .000$ ) with significant t values (6.31, 5.43 and 4.13,  $p < .001$ ). In the third step, employee engagement is introduced into the overall model of POS, PE, rewards and employee satisfaction. The results shows the significant impact of 1) POS on employee satisfaction ( $\beta = .345; t = 4.13, p < .000$ ) and 2) PE on employee satisfaction ( $\beta = .154; t = 3.67, p < .000$ ), however, impact of rewards on employee satisfaction is found to be insignificant ( $\beta = .265; t = 2.91, p > .05$ ). Hence, employee engagement partially mediates

Table 4: Correlation analysis

Number	Mean	Standard deviation	POS	PE	Rewards	EE	ES
POS	4.0623	.51042	1	.342**	.172**	.253**	.163**
PE	4.0226	.62011		1	.269**	.297**	.240**
Rewards	4.2247	.56337			1	.323**	.271**
EE	4.1082	.59234				1	.483**
ES	4.3192	.55651					1

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

POS: Perceived organizational support, PE: psychological empowerment, Rewards: rewards system,

EE: Employee engagement, ES: Employee Satisfaction

Table 5: Regression Analysis

Step	Dependent Variables	Independent Variables	Standardized regression coefficients	F	T	Sig	Adjusted R2	Results
1	EE	POS	.433		6.65	.000		
		PE	.365		5.84	.000		
		Rewards	.317	58.32	5.33	.000	.346	
2	ES	POS	.322		6.31	.003		
		PE	.475		5.43	.000		
		Rewards	.421	52.58	4.13	.000	.244	
3	ES	POS	.322		6.31	.003		
		PE	.475		5.43	.000		
		Rewards	.421	52.58	4.13	.000	.244	
		POS	.345		4.13	.000		Partial
		PE	.154		3.67	.000		Partial
		Rewards	.265		2.91	.065		Full
		EE	.228	31.298	2.32	.001	.355	mediation

POS: Perceived organizational support, PE: psychological empowerment, Rewards: rewards system,

EE: Employee engagement, ES: Employee Satisfaction

the relationship between the POS, PE and employee satisfaction but fully mediates the relationship between rewards and employee satisfaction. Thus, results support the hypotheses H4, H5 and H6.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The current study was conducted on the banking sector of Pakistan with an aim to investigate the impact of POS, PE and rewards on employee satisfaction. Moreover, the present study also finds the mediating role of employee engagement between POS, PE, rewards and employees' satisfaction. Results of the study support that employee engagement plays a mediating role by which POS, PE and rewards affect employee satisfaction. Empirical analysis of the study demonstrates the relationship between POS, PE, rewards and employees' satisfaction. First, analysis exhibits the significant positive relationship between POS and employee satisfaction. This finding supports the hypothesis of

current study and is in accordance with the previous studies [5, 34, 35], which implies that employees are satisfied whenever they perceived that their organization is providing support to them and works for their welfare. Second, the result of the empirical analysis shows that psychological empowerment and employee satisfaction are also positively and significantly correlated with each other. Similarly, rewards system also found to be positively and significantly related to the satisfaction of employees. These particular findings support the work of previous researchers [6, 16, 34, 35]. Thirdly, the current study tests mediating effect of employee engagement between POS, PE, rewards and employee satisfaction. The results confirmed that employee engagement fully mediates the relationship between rewards and employee satisfaction and partially mediates the relationship between POS, PE and employee satisfaction. Thus, these particular findings also prove the validity of reciprocity norm of social exchange theory in banking sector of Pakistan which states that whenever organization gives

consideration to their employees, they response the organization in shape of higher engagement and satisfaction.

Most of the previous studies conducted in Pakistan find the relationship between HR practices and performance of employees. However little or no attention have been paid to empirically investigate the relationship of POS, PE, rewards and employees satisfaction through mediation of employee engagement, especially in the banking sector of Pakistan where satisfaction of employees is a big challenge for the managers. Therefore, this study contributes to the body of knowledge by empirically investigating the relationship between POS, PE, reward system and satisfaction of employee through the mediation mechanism of employee engagement. HR managers of the banks can create satisfied workforce by putting in practice these work practices. Empowering employees and by providing them support and rewards, HR managers of the banks can increase the employee engagement by bringing themselves fully into their work roles and devote greater amount of their physical, emotional and cognitive resources in their work which in turns results in higher level of satisfaction [37, 38, 39].

**Limitations and Future Recommendations:** Like all other studies the present study does have some limitations. First, all of the items used in the survey were measured using a five-point Likert-type scale. Measuring all construct using one type of scale might create a mono-method bias, which can decrease the validity of the study [40]. Second as this study was cross sectional and data were collected at a particular time. So, variable analysis is restricted to particular time. Third, sample was obtained from the employees working in big five banks of Pakistan, therefore, result can be biased. Consequently, if more samples are obtained from other different banks, then results can be generalized more vigorously.

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