

1st Undergraduate Research Symposium on Human Resource Management – 2025

(URSHRM 2025)

“The HR Era of Digital Transformation”

**Department of Human Resource Management
Faculty of Business Studies
University of Vavuniya, Sri Lanka**



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Message from the Vice Chancellor, University of Vavuniya



It gives me profound delight to convey my heartfelt congratulations to the Department of Human Resource Management, Faculty of Business Studies, University of Vavuniya, for the successful organization of the *1st Undergraduate Research Symposium on Human Resource Management – 2025 (URSHRM 2025)*.

The theme of this inaugural symposium, “*Human Resource Management in the Era of Digital Transformation*”, reflects a bold and relevant vision. As we navigate an era marked by rapid technological change, the field of Human Resource Management stands at the forefront of shaping agile, innovative, and future-ready organizations. Our ability to reimagine people management through the lens of digital advancement is not just necessary—it is transformative.

What makes this symposium truly remarkable is that it showcases the research talents of our undergraduate students—our emerging scholars and leaders of tomorrow. Their enthusiasm, creativity, and commitment to academic inquiry are commendable. Through their work, they are not only analyzing today’s challenges but also helping to shape the future of the HR profession in a digital-first world.

This landmark event is a testament to the Department of Human Resource Management’s unwavering commitment to fostering a vibrant research culture, even at the undergraduate level. I appreciate the Department of Human Resource Management for its visionary leadership and tireless efforts in creating this dynamic platform for knowledge exchange and academic excellence.

To all student researchers, mentors, and organizers, your contribution is both valued and celebrated. I hope this symposium sparks new ideas, inspires collaboration, and ignites a lifelong passion for learning and innovation.

I wish URSHRM 2025 resounding success and look forward to witnessing the continued growth of research and intellectual engagement among our students.

Senior Professor A. Atputharajah
Vice Chancellor
University of Vavuniya
Sri Lanka

Message from the Dean, Faculty of Business Studies



I am pleased to deliver this congratulatory message to the 1st Undergraduate Research Symposium on Human Resource Management (URSHRM 2025), organized by the Department of Human Resource Management, Faculty of Business Studies, University of Vavuniya.

This inaugural undergraduate symposium is a commendable initiative by the Department, aimed at motivating students to present the findings of their research conducted during their academic journey. It provides a valuable platform for students to share their noteworthy research outcomes, build confidence, and contribute to the academic community. Moreover, it fosters a culture of research and networking within the faculty.

The conference theme, “*HR Era of Digital Transformation*,” is highly relevant to the emerging trends. It encourages young minds to propose innovative solutions and adapt to the dynamic shifts in the HR era.

The symposium features a diverse range of conference tracks, including Digital HRM and Global HRM, Workplace Counseling & Psychology, Employee well-being, Retention & HRM challenges, Organizational drivers of Engagement and Performance, Diversity, Sustainable and Green HRM.

I extend my heartfelt congratulations to the organizing committee, especially the Conference Chair, Ms. MRF. Aqeela Ijas; Chief Editor, Mr. P. Mathushan; and all the HR staff, Convener, Ms. V. Kanishmalini, for their dedication in successfully launching this pioneering event. I wish URSHRM- 2025 every success.

Prof. Y. Nanthagopan

Dean

Faculty of Business Studies

University of Vavuniya

Message from the Head, Department of Human Resource Management



It is with great pride and enthusiasm that I extend my warmest greetings to all participants, presenters, faculty members and distinguished guests of this 1st Undergraduate Research Symposium.

The Department of Human Resource Management is honoured to be part of this vibrant academic endeavour that celebrates the intellectual curiosity, creativity, and scholarly dedication of our undergraduate students. This symposium not only provides a platform for showcasing student research but also fosters critical thinking, collaboration, and the practical application of HRM theories and practices in addressing contemporary organizational challenges.

As future professionals in a dynamic and evolving field, our students have demonstrated exceptional initiative in exploring the themes of the “H R Era of Digital Transformation. Their work reflects a deepening engagement with the organizational needs.

I commend each student for their commitment to research excellence and extend my sincere appreciation to our department staff who have guided and supported them to come up with valuable insights. May this symposium inspire and progress within the HRM community and beyond.

Congratulations to all, and I wish you an enriching experience.

Ms/MRF.Aqeela Ijas
Head
Department of Human Resource Management
Faculty of Business Studies
University of Vavuniya

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We extend our sincere gratitude to all those who contributed to the successful organization of the 1st Undergraduate Research Symposium on Human Resource Management (URSHRM 2025), held on 30th July 2025 at the Faculty of Business Studies, University of Vavuniya.

First and foremost, we would like to express our heartfelt appreciation to the Vice Chancellor, University of Vavuniya, Senior Professor A. Atputharajah, for his relentless encouragement and visionary leadership.

We also convey our deep gratitude to the Dean, Faculty of Business Studies, Prof. Y.Nanthagopan, for his valuable guidance and unwavering support in making this symposium a success.

Our sincere appreciation is extended to the Head of the Department of Human Resource Management, Ms/MRF. Aqeela Ijas and the academic staff of the HR department for their dedication, teamwork, and tireless efforts in planning and executing every aspect of URSHRM 2025.

We are deeply grateful to our keynote speakers, Prof. (Ms.) T. Raveendran and Dr. K.G. Priyashantha for their inspiring address and valuable insights, which added immense value to the symposium.

We also extend our appreciation to the esteemed panelists who participated in the panel discussion on the theme “The HR Era of Digital Transformation.” Your expert perspectives and thought-provoking dialogue enriched the symposium and sparked meaningful conversations among participants.

A special word of appreciation is extended to the student presenters for showcasing their outstanding research and to their supervisors for nurturing academic excellence. Your contributions made this symposium truly meaningful.

We also acknowledge the generous support from our sponsors and partners, whose collaboration made this event possible.

Finally, we thank the organizing committee for their tireless efforts and dedication behind the scenes, ensuring the smooth conduct of URSHRM 2025.

Together, we have taken a significant step in fostering a culture of research and innovation among undergraduate students in the field of Human Resource Management.

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*ORGANIZATIONAL DRIVERS
OF ENGAGEMENT AND
PERFORMANCE*

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The Impact of Leader-Member Exchange on Job Embeddedness: Mediating Role of Employee Advocacy in The Hotel Industry

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TRACK NO: - 01

Digital HRM / Global HRM

THE IMPACT OF CONFLICT MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES ON TEAM INNOVATION PERFORMANCE IN THE MANUFACTURING SECTOR

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ABSTRACT

This study examines how conflict management strategies affect team innovation performance in Sri Lanka's manufacturing sector, focusing on five strategies: integrating, obliging, dominating, avoiding, and compromising. Data were collected from 200 operational employees at two apparel firms using structured online questionnaires. Quantitative analysis, conducted via IBM SPSS 27.0, included descriptive statistics, correlation, t-tests, ANOVA, and regression. Results revealed that integrating and compromising strategies positively impact innovation, while dominating and avoiding strategies have negative effects. Additionally, gender and organizational tenure moderate these relationships. The findings offer practical insights for enhancing innovation through effective conflict management in Sri Lankan manufacturing firms.

Keywords: *Collaborating, Compromising, Conflict Management Strategies, Team Innovation Performance*

**THE IMPACT OF DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION ON EMPLOYEE
ENGAGEMENT: THE MODERATING ROLE OF PERCEIVED
ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT AMONG LICENSED COMMERCIAL
BANK STAFF IN JAFFNA DISTRICT**

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ABSTRACT

Digital transformation is a critical driver of change in the modern business landscape, particularly within the financial sector, where it significantly impacts operational processes and employee roles. The Sri Lankan banking sector has actively embraced digital transformation, with major players like Commercial Bank leading in digital innovation to enhance customer experience and operational efficiency. Previous research has extensively explored digital transformation and employee engagement, but limited studies have investigated the direct influence of digital transformation on employee engagement specifically within the licensed commercial banking sector in Jaffna. Moreover, the moderating role of perceived organizational support in this relationship remains largely unexplored. The main objective of this study is to examine the impact of digital transformation on employee engagement and to assess whether perceived organizational support moderates this relationship within licensed commercial banks. A quantitative research approach was adopted for the empirical phase, utilizing a survey questionnaire distributed to a sample selected through a convenience sampling method. The findings are expected to confirm a positive relationship between digital transformation and employee engagement, while also demonstrating that high perceived organizational support may strengthen this effect. This study contributes both theoretically and practically by addressing an empirical and contextual research gap within the Sri Lankan licensed commercial banking sector. By understanding how organizational support can enhance engagement, this research provides direction for licensed commercial bank management and HR policymakers to develop effective strategies for managing change, improving employee adoption of new technologies, and ensuring successful digital transitions within licensed commercial banks.

Keywords: *Digital Transformation, Employee Engagement, Perceived Organizational Support, Licensed Commercial Banks, Sri Lanka.*

IMPACT OF WORK ENGAGEMENT ON INNOVATIVENESS IN THE TOURISM INDUSTRY JAFFNA DISTRICT. MODERATOR IS OPENNESS TO EXPERIENCE

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ABSTRACT

Innovativeness is a critical driver of success and sustainability in the tourism industry, particularly in emerging regions such as the Jaffna District. This study aims to assess the impact of work engagement on innovativeness among employees in the tourism sector, while examining the moderating role of the personality trait "openness to experience." Despite the growing recognition of work engagement as a key contributor to employee performance and creativity, limited empirical research has been conducted in the context of the Northern Sri Lankan tourism industry. This study addresses this gap by collecting data from 200 hotel employees across various three hotels in the Jaffna District. Standardized questionnaires were used to measure work engagement, innovativeness, and openness to experience. The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics, simple regression analysis, multiple regression analysis and moderation analysis. The findings reveal a significant positive relationship between work engagement and innovativeness. Moreover, openness to experience significantly moderates this relationship, indicating that individuals with higher openness levels are more likely to translate engagement into innovative behavior. The study further highlights that demographic factors such as age and job position also influence innovativeness. These insights suggest that tourism organizations in Jaffna can enhance innovation by fostering employee engagement and considering personality traits in their human resource practices.

Key words: *Work engagement, Innovativeness, Openness to Experience*

TRACK NO: - 02

WORKPLACE COUNSELING &
PSYCHOLOGY

INVESTIGATING THE MEDIATING ROLE OF LONELINESS ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ACADEMIC BURNOUT AND STUDENT DROPOUT INTENTION IN SRI LANKAN NORTHERN PROVINCE UNIVERSITIES

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ABSTRACT

Student dropout is a persistent concern in higher education, particularly in post-conflict and socio-economically challenged regions such as Sri Lanka's Northern Province. While academic burnout is a known contributor to dropout intentions, the psychological pathways that link the two remain insufficiently explored. This study investigates the mediating role of loneliness in the relationship between academic burnout and student dropout intention among undergraduates at the University of Jaffna and the University of Vavuniya. The objective was to examine how emotional exhaustion, reduced academic efficacy, and social isolation interact to influence dropout decisions. A quantitative research approach was adopted, using structured questionnaires administered to a sample of 338 students selected through stratified random sampling. Data were analyzed using SPSS 27, employing descriptive statistics, regression, and mediation analysis. Findings revealed that academic burnout significantly predicts dropout intention and that loneliness partially mediates this relationship. Notably, students experiencing burnout reported higher levels of loneliness, which in turn amplified their intention to leave university. These results emphasize the importance of addressing both academic and emotional well-being to improve student retention. The study concludes that interventions targeting loneliness, such as peer support programs, counseling services, and inclusive campus environments, may mitigate the negative effects of burnout and reduce dropout rates. These insights are vital for university administrators, mental health professionals, and policymakers in enhancing student support systems across Sri Lanka's higher education sector.

Keywords: *Academic Burnout, Loneliness, Mediation, Student Dropout Intention, University Students*

MODEL FOR UNPACKING EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT IN THE JAFFNA HOTEL INDUSTRY: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL EMPOWERMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF ORGANIZATIONAL JUSTICE AND WORKPLACE OSTRACISM

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ABSTRACT

This study addresses the critical issue of employee engagement within the demanding Sri Lankan hospitality industry, a sector vital to the nation's economy. While existing literature has explored direct relationships between these variables, there remains a notable gap in understanding the underlying psychological processes, particularly the mediating role of psychological empowerment. This research investigates how organizational justice and workplace ostracism influence employee engagement, specifically examining the crucial mediating function of psychological empowerment among hotel employees in the Jaffna district, where context-specific research is limited. The study employs a quantitative approach. Structured questionnaires were used to collect data from a sample of 150 hotel employees in the Jaffna district, selected through a simple random sampling technique. The collected data is analysed using regression analysis and correlation analysis through SPSS to examine direct and mediating effects. The results revealed that organizational justice positively influences employee engagement and psychological empowerment, while workplace ostracism negatively impacts both. Crucially, psychological empowerment serves as a bridge explaining how perceptions of fairness or experiences of exclusion translate into varying levels of engagement. The conclusion of this research will contribute to a more precise theoretical framework for understanding how justice and ostracism impact engagement in the hospitality sector. This research seeks to guide human resource departments and policymakers in hotels to enhance employee engagement, mitigate the detrimental effects of workplace ostracism, and foster a positive, socially connected, and inclusive work environment.

Key words: *Employee Engagement, Organizational Justice, Psychological Empowerment, Sri Lanka, Workplace Ostracism.*

THE IMPACT OF WORKPLACE CYBERBULLYING ON JOB SATISFACTION: THE MODERATING ROLE OF STRESS COPING – A STUDY AMONG FEMALE NURSES

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ABSTRACT

Workplace cyberbullying is an emerging psychosocial risk in healthcare, particularly affecting female nurses who operate in high-pressure digital environments. This study explores the impact of workplace cyberbullying on job satisfaction among female nurses in the Badulla District, with a specific focus on the moderating role of stress coping strategies. Grounded in Lazarus and Folkman's Transactional Model of Stress and Coping, the research addresses a key gap in the Sri Lankan healthcare literature, where little attention has been given to how personal coping resources may buffer negative workplace experiences. A quantitative approach was employed, and data were collected from 200 female nurses selected through stratified random sampling from base and divisional hospitals. Standardized instruments were used: Doane et al.'s (2013) Cyberbullying Scale, the Brief COPE Inventory adapted from Folkman and Lazarus (1988), and Thompson and Phua's (2012) Job Satisfaction Scale. Data were analyzed using SPSS, including descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and moderated regression analysis through the PROCESS macro (Model 1), which is used to test interaction effects. Results confirmed a significant negative effect of workplace cyberbullying on job satisfaction ($\beta = -1.0733$, $p < .001$). Notably, stress coping moderated this relationship (interaction $\beta = 0.2387$, $p < .001$), suggesting that strong coping strategies can reduce, though not eliminate, the negative impact. The study provides practical implications for hospital management and HR professionals, stressing the need for interventions that reduce cyberbullying and promote effective stress coping strategies. Enhancing emotional resilience and organizational support systems can help maintain job satisfaction and workforce stability in the healthcare sector.

Keywords: *Cyberbullying, Female Nurses, Job Satisfaction, Sri Lanka, Stress Coping.*

THE IMPACT OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE ON EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT: THE MODERATING ROLE OF WORKLOAD AMONG GOVERNMENT SCHOOL TEACHERS IN BATTICALOA DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

Employee engagement is a crucial predictor of performance and well-being in any sector, especially within the education system. In Sri Lanka, and particularly in rural districts such as Batticaloa, teachers face increasing emotional demands, workload pressure, and limited support, all of which may hinder their engagement at work. While previous research has explored emotional intelligence (EI) concerning job satisfaction and performance, limited studies have investigated how EI directly influences employee engagement (EE), particularly within the school sector in underrepresented regions. Moreover, the moderating role of workload in this relationship remains largely unexplored. The main objective of this study is to examine the impact of emotional intelligence on employee engagement and to assess whether workload moderates this relationship. A narrative literature review methodology was adopted to synthesize findings from both global and local research. Additionally, an empirical phase is proposed using quantitative methods with a sample of 365 government schoolteachers in Batticaloa, selected through simple random sampling. The findings are expected to confirm a positive relationship between EI and EE, while also demonstrating that high workload may weaken this effect. This study contributes both theoretically and practically by addressing an empirical and contextual research gap and offering insights for educational policymakers and school administrators. By understanding the emotional and workload-related challenges faced by teachers, this research provides direction for improving teacher support systems, engagement strategies, and overall educational outcomes.

Keywords: *Emotional Intelligence, Employee Engagement, Schoolteachers, Sri Lanka, Workload*

TO EXPLORE THE MODERATING ROLE OF RESILIENCE ON THE
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN WORKLIFE CONFLICT AND EMPLOYEE
HAPPINESS OF IT EMPLOYEES

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ABSTRACT

The increasing prevalence of remote work, particularly in the IT sector, has highlighted the complex dynamics between work-life conflict, resilience, and employee happiness. This study aims to explore the moderating role of resilience in the relationship between work-life conflict and employee happiness among IT employees working from home. Grounded in the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model and Maslow's hierarchy of needs, the research examines how resilience, a personal resource, can buffer the negative impacts of work-life conflict on employees' well-being. Using a quantitative research design, data were collected from a sample of 150 IT employees through structured online surveys measuring work-life conflict, resilience, and employee happiness. The study employed descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and multiple regression to analyze the data. The results reveal a significant negative relationship between work-life conflict and employee happiness, while resilience was found to moderate this relationship positively. Specifically, higher levels of resilience weakened the adverse effects of work-life conflict on employee happiness, suggesting that resilience plays a protective role. These findings underscore the importance of fostering resilience through targeted organizational interventions to enhance employee well-being and productivity in remote work settings. By addressing the insights of this study, organizations can implement strategies to promote resilience, reduce work-life conflict, and support employee happiness, contributing to a more sustainable and engaged workforce.

Keywords: *Employee happiness, IT employees, Moderation effect, Remote work, Resilience, Work-life conflict.*

TRACK 03: -

ORGANIZATIONAL DRIVERS OF ENGAGEMENT AND PERFORMANCE

THE IMPACT OF LEADER SUPPORT ON OPEN INNOVATION: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF TEAM COLLABORATION

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ABSTRACT

This study explores how leader support influences open innovation, with particular emphasis on the mediating role of team collaboration within the Sri Lankan apparel industry, specifically in the Anuradhapura District. The apparel sector, a key contributor to the national economy, is facing intensifying competition and is hindered by limited access to technology, infrastructure, and skilled labour in rural regions. Drawing on Leader–Member Exchange (LMX) theory and open innovation frameworks, the research investigates internal organisational dynamics that affect innovation performance. A quantitative, descriptive, and explanatory design was employed, using a structured bilingual questionnaire administered via Google Forms. The sample consisted of 200 staff-level employees from five apparel factories, selected through convenience sampling. Data were analysed using SPSS, including descriptive statistics, correlation, regression, and mediation analysis. The findings indicate that leader support significantly enhances both team collaboration and open innovation. Furthermore, team collaboration mediates the relationship between leader support and open innovation, highlighting its essential role in facilitating knowledge sharing and innovation outcomes. The study underscores the importance of cultivating a collaborative organisational culture through effective leadership, particularly in resource-constrained environments. These insights contribute to the academic discourse on human resource management and innovation and offer practical guidance for industry leaders and policymakers seeking to improve innovation capabilities in rural manufacturing settings.

Keywords: *Apparel industry, Leader support, Open innovation, Team collaboration, Workplace innovation*

THE IMPACT OF LEADER-MEMBER EXCHANGE ON JOB EMBEDDEDNESS: MEDIATING ROLE OF EMPLOYEE ADVOCACY IN THE HOTEL INDUSTRY

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ABSTRACT

In Sri Lanka, empirical studies on leader-member exchange, job embeddedness, and employee advocacy are still limited. There is a clear gap within this research that must be addressed, namely by examining the impact of Leader-Member Exchange on job embeddedness and examining the mediating influence of employee advocacy within the hotel industry. This study aims to identify the impact of leader-member exchange on job embeddedness; to analyze the impact of leader-member exchange on employee advocacy; to identify the impact of employee advocacy on job embeddedness; and to verify the mediating role of employee advocacy between leader-member exchange and job embeddedness. To achieve these objectives, questionnaires were given to a sample of 345 operational-level employees in star-rated hotels in the Chilaw zone of the Puttalam District. 230 completed questionnaires were collected using a stratified random sampling method. Simple linear regression analysis and Regression-Based Mediation Analysis using the PROESS Macro were applied to test the data. A positive relationship was found between leader-member exchange and job embeddedness. Furthermore, it was revealed in the findings that leader-member exchange positively impacts employee advocacy in the hotel industry. Further, employee advocacy was found to have a positive impact on job embeddedness. Mediation analysis confirmed that employee advocacy significantly mediates the relationship between leader-member exchange and job embeddedness. Based on these findings, it is recommended that the hotel industry be keen to develop employee advocacy, because it boosts the relationship between leader-member exchange and job embeddedness. This, in turn, can help organizations attain a competitive advantage as well as promote their employer brand effectively.

Keywords: *Employee Advocacy, Job Embeddedness, Leader-Member Exchange*

KNOWLEDGE SHARING, TRUST AND JOB PERFORMANCE: THE ROLE OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT, PSYCHOLOGICAL RESILIENCE, AND INTRINSIC MOTIVATION – EVIDENCE FROM HEALTHCARE WORKERS IN VADAMARADCHY

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ABSTRACT

Healthcare systems heavily depend on the commitment and performance of their personnel to ensure quality care and operational efficiency. In finite-resourced local regions like Vadamaradchy, enhancing job performance is particularly challenging. Global studies have emphasized the individual effects of knowledge sharing, organizational trust, employee engagement, psychological resilience, and intrinsic motivation on improving performance. Nevertheless, there is no empirical research in the healthcare sector, especially in the Sri Lankan context, that has examined the combined effect of these factors within a single model, leaving a significant gap in understanding how these elements operate in local contexts. This study intends to fill this gap by examining the influence of knowledge sharing and organizational trust on job performance, considering employee engagement as a mediator and psychological resilience and intrinsic motivation as moderators. Guided by Social Exchange Theory (SET), the research will adopt a quantitative design, using a structured questionnaire to collect data from healthcare workers in the Vadamaradchy region. From a target population of 550, a sample of 226 participants will be selected using a convenience sampling method. The study is expected to make theoretical contributions to organizational behavior literature in developing country healthcare settings and provide practical ideas for healthcare administrators on nurturing trust-based relationships, promoting knowledge sharing, and strengthening engagement through resilience and intrinsic motivation.

Keywords: *Healthcare, Job Performance, Knowledge Sharing, Organizational Trust, Psychological Resilience*

THE NEXUS OF EMPLOYEE VOICE ON ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE READINESS: MEDIATING ROLE OF COMMITMENT TO CHANGE

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ABSTRACT

In the Sri Lanka context of rapid business changes, organizational readiness for change has become a critical factor for achieving sustainable growth and competitiveness. Despite this, many organizational change efforts fail due to employee resistance, often stemming from a lack of voice in decision-making processes. While previous research has mainly focused on leadership roles and top-down communication during change, limited attention has been paid to the influence of employee voice on organizational change readiness, particularly in the Sri Lankan private sector. Furthermore, the role of psychological mechanisms such as commitment to change as a mediator in this relationship remains underexplored. Therefore, this study aimed to examine how employee voice affects organizational change readiness, with a special focus on the mediating role of commitment to change. A quantitative research design was adopted, and primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire distributed to employees in selected private sector organizations in Sri Lanka. Data were initially collected from 150 employees, and after data screening, 125 valid responses were retained for analysis using a convenience sampling method. The collected data were analyzed using SPSS software, applying descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and mediation testing. The findings revealed a significant positive relationship between employee voice and organizational change readiness. Additionally, employee voice was strongly correlated with commitment to change, and commitment to change also showed a significant relationship with organizational change readiness. Mediation analysis confirmed that commitment to change partially mediates the relationship between employee voice and organizational change readiness. The study contributes to both academic literature and organizational practice by highlighting the importance of encouraging employee voice to foster greater commitment to change, thereby improving overall change readiness.

Keywords: *Change Readiness, Commitment to Change, Employee Voice, Organizational Change*

IMPACT OF EMPLOYER BRANDING ON EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF EMPLOYEE ADVOCACY BEHAVIOUR IN THE BANKING SECTOR OF THE HATTON REGION

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ABSTRACT

Organisational performance and workforce stability are vital in the banking industry, where employee competence, trust, and commitment play a crucial role. Employer branding has emerged as a strategic approach for attracting and retaining top talent. However, despite significant investments in employer branding, banks often face persistent challenges such as low employee engagement and high turnover. This study investigates the relationship between employer branding and employee engagement, with a particular focus on the mediating role of employee advocacy behaviour a critical yet underexplored dimension. The main objective of this study is to examine the extent to which employer branding influences employee engagement and to assess whether employee advocacy behaviour strengthens this relationship. A quantitative, causal research design was adopted, and data were collected using a structured questionnaire. A convenience sample of 110 employees was drawn from six private banks operating in the Hatton area of Sri Lanka. Statistical tools such as regression analysis and mediation analysis (e.g., the Baron and Kenny method or Process macro) were employed to analyse the data. The findings reveal that employer branding has a significant positive impact on employee engagement. Furthermore, employee advocacy behaviour was found to serve as a strong mediator in this relationship. Employees who perceive their organisation as trustworthy and supportive are more likely to advocate for it, recommend it to others, and develop a strong emotional connection, which in turn enhances their engagement. This study contributes to the existing literature by providing empirical evidence on the effects of employer branding and internal branding strategies within the Sri Lankan banking sector. The practical implications highlight the need for human resource strategies that not only attract external talent but also foster internal brand alignment and advocacy among current employees, thereby enhancing organisational performance and long-term workforce stability.

Keywords: *Employee Advocacy, Employee Engagement, Employer Branding, Private Banks, Sri Lanka*

FACTORS DETERMINING THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS IN THE UNIVERSITY OF JAFFNA

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ABSTRACT

Education plays a vital role in shaping individuals and developing nations, with academic performance being a key measure of student success in higher education institutions. This study investigates factors determining the academic performance of undergraduate students at the University of Jaffna. The context-specific research is limited. While existing literature has explored the positive and negative impacts of these independent variables. But there is no adequate recent research in this area. This study employed a quantitative approach. Structured questionnaires were used to collect data from a sample of 120 undergraduate students at the University of Jaffna through both online and paper-based questionnaires using a convenience sampling method. The collected data is analyzed using correlation analysis through SPSS to examine the relationship. The results revealed that language proficiency, regular attendance, and positive family background had a significant positive relationship with academic performance, while social media addiction may show a negative impact. This research seeks to provide valuable insights for students, lecturers, academic advisors, and policymakers. Practically, the findings will help students to become more aware of the challenges they face and how to address them effectively. The findings of this study may not be fully generalizable to the broader population of undergraduate students due to the use of convenience sampling.

Keywords: *Academic Performance, Undergraduate Students, University Education*

**EXAMINING THE MEDIATING ROLE OF PERCEIVED
SUPERVISORY SUPPORT IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN
WORK ENGAGEMENT AND JOB CRAFTING AMONG IT
PROFESSIONALS IN POLONNARUWA DISTRICT, SRI LANKA**

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ABSTRACT

The fast-paced and high-pressure nature of the IT industry necessitates proactive workplace behaviors to maintain employee engagement and adaptability. This study investigates how work engagement influences job crafting behaviors among IT professionals in the Polonnaruwa District of Sri Lanka, with a specific focus on the mediating role of perceived supervisory support (PSS). Addressing a gap in existing literature that primarily views work engagement as an outcome variable, this research explores it as a predictor of proactive job redesign. A quantitative research design was adopted, employing a structured questionnaire distributed to a convenience sample of 300 IT professionals. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, correlation, and mediation analysis via SPSS. The findings reveal a significant positive impact of work engagement and job crafting, while PSS partially mediates this relationship. This suggests that when employees perceive their supervisors as supportive, they are more likely to translate their engagement into proactive work behaviors. The results underscore the importance of fostering supportive leadership and enhancing employee engagement to promote job crafting. These insights contribute to the theoretical understanding of work motivation and offer practical implications for HR professionals aiming to improve job design, employee satisfaction, and retention within the dynamic IT sector.

Keywords: *Job Crafting, Perceived Supervisory Support, Sri Lanka, Work Engagement, IT Professional*

TRACK NO: -04

EMPLOYEE WELLBEING, RETENTION &
HRM CHALLENGES

THE IMPACT OF HRM PRACTICES ON EMPLOYEE RETENTION IN THE APPAREL INDUSTRY

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the impact of human resource management practices on employee retention in the Sri Lankan garment industry, with a particular focus on the Hambantota district. The research addresses the ongoing challenge of high employee turnover in this critical economic sector. Following a quantitative research approach, this study uses primary data collected through a structured questionnaire. The main objective of this study is to investigate the impact of HRM practices on employee retention in the Sri Lankan garment industry. The study hypothesizes that recruitment and selection, training and development, compensation and benefits, and performance appraisal all have a positive impact on employee retention. The study confirms that all four HRM practices are positively correlated with employee retention, and each independent variable shows a statistically significant positive impact on employee retention. The findings offer practical implications for HR professionals and garment manufacturers seeking to reduce turnover and foster a committed workforce.

Keywords: *Employee Retention, HRM Practices, Garment industry*

THE IMPACT OF ENTREPRENEURIAL INTENTIONS AND MOTIVATIONS ON ENTREPRENEURIAL SUCCESS, MODERATED BY FAMILY SUPPORT

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ABSTRACT

Entrepreneurship has emerged as a significant source of regional development, particularly in rural economies where income generation, job creation, and innovation are vital for long-term sustainability. In the Sri Lankan context, especially in communities with limited resources like Point-Pedro, they often face multiple constraints such as insufficient entrepreneurial education, limited access to capital, and minimal institutional and familial support. Despite growing awareness, actual entrepreneurial success among rural youth remains low. Existing literature has investigated the roles of intention and motivation in entrepreneurship, but the impact of family support as a moderating element is under-researched. This study aims to examine the impact of entrepreneurial success while investigating how family support moderates these relationships. A quantitative research design was adopted, with a structured questionnaire carried out in both printed and digital forms in English and Tamil. The study used proportional stratified random sampling to select 265 participants from 850 registered entrepreneurs in the Point-Pedro Divisional Secretariat, representing 29 business categories. Though data analysis is yet to be completed, the predicted results suggest that entrepreneurial intentions, shaped by self-efficacy and risk-taking propensity, and motivational factors like personal fulfillment and opportunity recognition positively influence entrepreneurial success. Additionally, family support is expected to significantly moderate these relationships by providing emotional, financial, and operational support. These findings are anticipated to align with prior studies and hold significant implications for entrepreneurship development in rural Sri Lanka. The study offers valuable insights for policymakers, NGOs, and educational institutions to design family-inclusive entrepreneurial training and support mechanisms, thereby enhancing regional economic development and sustainable livelihoods.

Keywords: *Entrepreneurial Intentions, Motivations, Family Support, Entrepreneurial Success*

**THE IMPACT OF WORK-LIFE BALANCE ON EMPLOYEE
RETENTION: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF EMPLOYEE
ENGAGEMENT AND THE MODERATING EFFECT OF WORKPLACE
VIOLENCE – EVIDENCE FROM IT PROFESSIONALS IN JAFFNA**

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ABSTRACT

Employee retention is a major concern in many industries. The Information Technology (IT) industry in global employee turnover rates from 2013 to 2018 was at 23%. In Sri Lanka, employee turnover of the IT workforce has doubled from 6.6% in 2004 to 13% in 2006. This study investigates the impact of work-life balance on Employee Retention among IT professionals in Jaffna. It examines the impact of the mediating role of employee engagement and the moderating role of workplace violence. While existing literature has explored the direct and positive impact of these variables, there remains a notable gap in understanding how workplace violence influences these dynamics. Specifically, context-specific research within the Sri Lankan IT sector is limited. A narrative literature review methodology was adopted to synthesize findings from both global and local research. This study employed a quantitative approach. Structured questionnaires were used to collect data from a sample of 150 IT professionals in Jaffna through both online and paper-based questionnaires using a convenience sampling method. The collected data is analyzed using linear regression analysis through SPSS to examine the direct, mediating, and moderating effects. The results revealed that higher perceptions of work-life balance significantly enhance employee retention, and this relationship is partially mediated by employee engagement. Additionally, workplace violence was found to moderate this relationship, weakening the positive effects. This research seeks to provide actionable insights for IT companies in Jaffna to cultivate a supportive and engaging environment. The findings of this study may not be fully generalizable to IT professionals beyond the Jaffna District due to the use of convenience sampling.

Keywords: *Employee Engagement, Employee Retention, Information Technology Industry, Work-Life Balance, Workplace Violence.*

THE OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY CONDITIONS ON JOB SATISFACTION: SPECIAL REFERENCE TO ARALIYA RICE MILL EMPLOYEES IN POLONNARUWA DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) plays a critical role in ensuring organizational success, especially in labour-intensive industries like as rice milling, which is a key component of Sri Lanka's agricultural processing sector. This industry employs thousands of workers, especially in rural areas like the Polonnaruwa District, where they are exposed to unsafe working conditions. There remains a significant gap in localized research examining the link between occupational health (Mental and Physical health) and occupational safety (Safety training and the use of Personal Protective Equipment-PPE) conditions and their effect on job satisfaction. This research aims to fill that gap by examining the impact of OHS conditions on job satisfaction among employees at Araliya Rice Mill in Polonnaruwa. A quantitative research method will be employed, using a structured questionnaire with Likert-scale items, and a sample of 300 operational workers will be selected through stratified sampling to ensure proper representation of various divisions within the rice mill. It is expected that the study will reveal a strong positive relationship between occupational health conditions and job satisfaction. Employees with better mental and physical health are likely to report higher levels of motivation and engagement. Similarly, it is anticipated that the availability of safety training and the consistent use of personal protective equipment (PPE) will significantly influence employee satisfaction. The findings will provide valuable recommendations for industry stakeholders and policymakers to develop more effective OHS conditions that enhance both job satisfaction and productivity.

Keywords: *Job Satisfaction, Occupational Health, Occupational Safety, Personal Protective Equipment, Rice Mill Employees.*

THE IMPACT OF WORKPLACE EMPLOYEE GRIEVANCES ON BURNOUT: MEDIATING ROLE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY AMONG NON-MANAGERIAL EMPLOYEES IN SELECTED PRIVATE SECTOR BANKS IN COLOMBO DISTRICT: A CONCEPTUAL STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Even though the non-managerial employees in the banking sector act as the important foundation, they are given heavy workloads and limited decision-making power, and face restricted opportunities to voice out their problems. When their grievances are not resolved properly, it may result in extreme emotional trauma and ultimately in burnout. This concept paper focuses on the impact of workplace employee grievances on burnout, which particularly targets private sector non-managerial employees in the Colombo district. Furthermore, this study examines whether psychological safety mediates this relationship. This paper seeks to identify the impact of unresolved grievances on burnout as well as the degree to which psychological safety can reduce the impact. The core focus of this study is to develop a conceptual framework rather than to engage in empirical investigation. It links both local and international studies to provide a model that indicates employee grievances as a possible sign for burnout, which often results in emotional exhaustion and reduced motivation. The Maslach Burnout Theory, which describes burnout as emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation, and reduced personal accomplishment, acts as the main foundation of this study. Additionally, psychological safety acts as a key barrier that can reduce the adverse effects of unresolved grievances. The anticipated results emphasise the need for psychologically safe workplaces, in which non-managerial employees can freely express their concerns without stressing about the negative consequences. This study promotes HR practices by highlighting open communication and efficient grievance settlement procedures to improve employee well-being and retention rate in the banking sector.

Keywords: *Banking Sector, Employee Burnout, Non-Managerial Employees, Psychological Safety, Workplace Employee Grievances*

A CONCEPTUAL PAPER ON THE IMPACT OF WORK-LIFE BALANCE ON EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

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ABSTRACT

Employee engagement is a key factor in achieving high performance and productivity in competitive and high-pressure environments. The objective of this review is to examine the impact of work-life balance on employee engagement based on the existing literature and reflections. It is widely acknowledged that there is a need to expand the existing body of literature on work-life balance and employee engagement. This paper reviews the relationships between work-life balance and three dimensions of employee engagement, namely cognitive involvement, emotional involvement, and behavioral involvement. To achieve the review objectives, a systematic review of the literature was conducted by using an archival method. This review process has used more than 40 research papers that are relevant to the reviewed concepts. Findings of the review suggest that there is a positive relationship between work-life balance and cognitive involvement of employees. Similarly, there is a positive relationship between work-life balance and the emotional involvement of employees. Further, the study suggested there is a positive relationship between the behavioral involvement of employees. Finally, this review proposes a conceptual model that is useful to test and understand the relationships among the reviewed concepts.

Keywords: *Work-Life Balance, Employee Engagement*

TRACK NO: - 05

DIVERSITY

FACTORS INFLUENCING THE SUCCESS OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS: WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE MANNAR DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

This research investigates ‘Factors Influencing the Success of Women Entrepreneurs: With Special Reference to the Mannar District’, focusing on both internal and external factors. The study aims to identify the key variables influencing the entrepreneurial success of women in a region traditionally marked by socio-economic challenges. Through a survey of 250 women entrepreneurs, data were collected on internal factors such as motivation, advocacy, and decision-making, family status, and women’s characteristics, as well as external factors including networking, financial resources, business environment, and socio-cultural influences. Regression and ANOVA analyses were conducted to examine the impact of these factors on entrepreneurial success. The findings highlight the significant role of internal factors, particularly motivation and family support, in enhancing business outcomes. External factors such as business environment and sociocultural support also emerged as crucial elements for success. The study provides practical recommendations for policymakers to improve the entrepreneurial ecosystem by addressing the specific barriers faced by women, such as limited access to finance and market opportunities. This research contributes to the growing body of literature on gender and entrepreneurship, emphasizing the need for a holistic approach to support women entrepreneurs in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: *External Factors, Internal Factors, Regression Analysis, Socio-Cultural Influences, Women Entrepreneurs*

OCCUPATIONAL HAZARDS ON EMPLOYEE TURNOVER INTENTION: A STUDY OF FEMALE EMPLOYEES IN APPAREL INDUSTRY IN PUTTALAM DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

Employee turnover intention has become an increasing concern in Sri Lanka's apparel industry, particularly in areas like Puttalam, where the percentage of female workers is higher. Female workers are more prone to be exposed to occupational hazards in terms of excessive pressure of work and physical strain, and hence their tendency to leave work is bound to increase. While earlier research has investigated general causes of employee turnover, there are limited studies on the specific impact of occupational hazards on turnover intention among female apparel workers with a reference to the mediating function of job stress. This study aims to examine the impact of occupational hazards in terms of work pressure and physical hazards on the turnover intention of employees and whether job stress is a mediator of this relationship. A theoretical foundation was constructed from a narrative literature review, and thereafter, quantitative empirical research was based on a sample of 300 female workers selected by simple random sampling from garment factories in the Puttalam District. The findings are hypothesized assuming a very high positive correlation between occupational hazards and turnover intention, with a mediating effect of job stress. Specifically, both physical hazards and work pressure should increase the degree of stress, which in turn encourages turnover intention. This study addresses an important empirical deficiency by focusing on a vulnerable subgroup of workers and provides factory managers and policymakers with real-world implications. By explaining how occupational stress and turnover are caused by workplace risks, the study is promoting the development of targeted interventions aimed at improving occupational health standards, reducing employee stress, and creating workforce stability in Sri Lanka's apparel sector.

Keywords: *Job Stress, Occupational Hazards, Physical Hazards, Turnover Intention, Work Pressure*

THE PREDICTORS OF NURSING STAFF PRESENTEEISM IN PRIVATE HOSPITALS IN COLOMBO 05: ROLE OF WORKLOAD AND CO-WORKER PRESSURE

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ABSTRACT

Presenteeism is the act of attending work despite illness or diminished capacity to perform effectively and represents a critical concern in healthcare environments, particularly among nursing staff. This study examines the key predictors of presenteeism among nurses employed in private hospitals in Colombo 05, with specific emphasis on workload, co-worker pressure, and gender. The primary objectives were to explore the relationships between these variables, assess gender-based differences in presenteeism, evaluate the combined predictive power of the factors under study, and propose evidence-based strategies for mitigating presenteeism. A quantitative research methodology was adopted, involving a sample of 270 nurses. Data were collected through structured questionnaires and analyzed using Pearson correlation, independent samples t-tests, ANOVA, and multiple linear regression. The findings indicate significant positive correlations between presenteeism and both workload and co-worker pressure. Additionally, a statistically significant gender difference was identified, with female nurses reporting higher levels of presenteeism compared to their male counterparts. However, regression analysis revealed that only workload and gender were significant predictors of presenteeism, while co-worker pressure did not demonstrate a statistically significant influence. The study concludes that excessive workload and gender are key determinants of presenteeism among nursing staff in private hospital settings. Based on these findings, the study recommends the implementation of organizational interventions aimed at managing nurse workloads, fostering a supportive work culture, and promoting staff well-being. These insights offer valuable guidance for healthcare administrators and policymakers seeking to reduce presenteeism and improve the quality of healthcare delivery.

Keywords: *Presenteeism, Workload, Co-Worker Pressure, Gender, Nursing Staff, Private Hospitals.*

GLASS CEILING AND ITS IMPACTS ON WOMEN'S CAREER DEVELOPMENT: PSYCHOLOGICAL CAPITAL AS A MEDIATOR

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates how the glass ceiling shapes the career development of women in the private banking sector of Sri Lanka's Matale District. It looks at three types of barriers: individual, organizational, and social, and examines whether Psychological Capital helps women face these barriers and move upward in their careers. The target population consisted of all female executive-level employees in selected private banks in the district. From this, a sample of 120 participants was selected using a purposive sampling method, focusing on women most likely to experience glass ceiling effects. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire and analyzed using SPSS and STATA software to conduct multiple regression and mediation analysis. Personal strengths, such as confidence, skills focus, and career drive, showed a clear, positive link with women's career development; the hypothesis on individual factors was supported. Social support encouragement from family, peers, and wider community norms also helped women advance; this hypothesis was supported. In contrast, the expected effect of organizational systems (policies, promotion rules, formal training) did not show a meaningful link to career progress in this sample; the organizational-factors hypothesis was rejected, suggesting that written policies are not enough when everyday practice does not change. Psychological Capital mattered. It helped explain how individual drive and social backing translate into career growth, so those mediation hypotheses were accepted. But it did not carry the influence of organizational structures, which led to the rejection of that mediation path, evidence that policies alone do not build inner strength unless they are lived and trusted. To break the glass ceiling, banks must pair real policy action with programs that build women's psychological resources and connect them to supportive networks, mentoring, coaching, family-inclusive outreach, and leadership pathways that women experience in daily work. It offers practical recommendations for HR professionals and bank leaders to promote training, mentoring, and psychological empowerment as tools to support women's advancement.

Keywords: *Glass Ceiling, Women's Career Development, Private Banking Sector, Psychological, Capital, Individual factors, Organizational factors, Social factors, Sri Lanka.*

TRACK NO: -06

SUSTAINABLE AND GREEN HRM

**MEDIATING ROLE OF EMPLOYEE ECO-FRIENDLY BEHAVIOR ON
IMPACT OF GREEN HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT ON
EMPLOYEE AFFECTIVE COMMITMENT: A SPECIAL REFERENCE
TO EMPLOYEES FROM APPAREL INDUSTRY IN VAVUNIYA
DISTRICT**

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ABSTRACT

Many organizations today face challenges with low affective commitment, where employees show weak emotional attachment and a limited sense of belonging to their workplace. This concern is particularly significant in Sri Lanka's apparel industry, where sustaining a loyal and engaged workforce remains a critical yet under-addressed issue. In response to increasing global environmental demands, Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) has emerged as a strategic tool, incorporating practices such as green recruitment, green training, green rewards, and green empowerment. While GHRM is widely recognized for promoting sustainability, its influence on employee affective commitment, especially through the mediating role of eco-friendly behaviour, remains underexplored in regions like Vavuniya. This study aims to examine the impact of GHRM on affective commitment and to identify whether employee eco-friendly behaviours strengthen this impact. A quantitative approach was adopted, using a structured questionnaire to collect data from 150 employees in the apparel sector, selected through convenience sampling. The anticipated results, based on regression and correlation analyses, are expected to confirm that GHRM significantly enhances both eco-friendly behaviour and affective commitment. Furthermore, it is expected that employees who actively engage in environmentally responsible actions such as reducing waste or supporting green initiatives will report stronger emotional connections with their organizations. These expected results help to offer valuable theoretical and practical insights for HR professionals, supporting the development of sustainable and emotionally engaging work environments within Sri Lanka's apparel industry.

Keywords: *Affective Commitment, Apparel Industry, Eco-Friendly Behaviour, Green Human Resource Management.*

CONCEPTUAL PAPER ON THE IMPACT OF GREEN HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES ON ORGANIZATIONAL CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOR TOWARD THE ENVIRONMENT IN THE LIGHT OF AMO THEORY

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ABSTRACT

Poor environmental performance creates a need for the implementation of green practices like green human resource management. Ability-Motivation-Opportunity (AMO) theory is a performance theory that suggests that an individual's performance depends on the abilities, motivation, and opportunities. The green HRM can create better environmental outcomes, considering AMO theory. Therefore, this review focuses on how green HRM practices transform employees to foster organizational citizenship behavior toward the environment in the organizational context. To achieve the review objectives, a systematic review of the literature was conducted by using an archival method. This review process has used more than 50 research papers that are relevant to the reviewed concepts. Findings of the review suggest that there is a positive relationship between green competence-building practices and organizational citizenship behavior toward the environment. Similarly, green motivation enhancement practices lead to organizational citizenship behavior toward the environment. Moreover, reviews suggest that green employee involvement practices lead to organizational citizenship behavior toward the environment. Useful to test and understand the relationships among the reviewed concepts empirically in the future.

Keywords: *Green HRM Practices, Organizational Citizenship Behavior toward the Environment, AMO Theory.*

CONCEPTUAL PAPER ON THE RELATIONSHIPS AMONG GREEN COMPETENCIES OF EMPLOYEE, GREEN BEHAVIOR OF EMPLOYEE AND GREEN EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE: A REVIEW OF LITERATURE

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Nowadays, organizations are focusing more on transforming normal employees into green employees through the implementation of green HRM practices. In this context, organizations pay more attention to developing the green competencies and green attitude of employees to make them to foster the green behaviors of employees, which ultimately leads to improving the green performance of employees. In this context, this paper reviews the relationships among Green Competencies of employees, Green Behavior of employees, and Green Performance of employees. In order to achieve the review objectives, a systematic review of the literature was conducted by using an archival method. This review process has used more than 80 research papers that are relevant to the reviewed concepts. Findings of the review suggest that there is a positive relationship between the green competencies of employees and the green performance of employees. Similarly, the green competencies of employees lead to green behavior of employees. Moreover, findings suggest that the green behavior of employees has a positive relationship with green employee performance. Similarly, the green behavior of employees mediates the relationship between the green competencies of employees and green employee performance. Finally, this review proposes a mediation model that is useful to test and understand the relationships among the green competencies of employees, the green behavior of employees, and green employee performance empirically in the future.

Keywords: *Green Competencies of Employee, Green Behavior of Employee, Green Employee Performance*