

The Role of HRM Practices in Reducing Burnout through Work Engagement: Evidence from SEM

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Abstract

Employee burnout has become a critical challenge for organizations seeking to sustain employee well-being and performance in increasingly demanding work environments. Drawing on the Job Demands–Resources framework, this study examines the role of Human Resource Management (HRM) practices in reducing employee burnout through the mediating effect of work engagement. Using a quantitative, cross-sectional design, data were collected from 250 full-time employees across various organizational sectors. Standardized and validated instruments were employed to measure HRM practices, work engagement, and burnout. The hypothesized relationships were tested using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). The results indicate that HRM practices have a significant positive effect on work engagement ($\beta = 0.57, p < 0.001$) and a significant negative effect on burnout ($\beta = -0.21, p < 0.01$). Work engagement was found to be strongly and negatively associated with burnout ($\beta = -0.61, p < 0.001$). Mediation analysis using bootstrapping (5,000 resamples) revealed that work engagement partially mediates the relationship between HRM practices and burnout (indirect effect $\beta = -0.35$, 95% CI = -0.46 to -0.26). The structural model demonstrated an acceptable fit to the data (CFI = 0.93, TLI = 0.92, RMSEA = 0.076, SRMR = 0.052). These findings highlight the importance of strategic HRM practices in fostering work engagement and mitigating burnout. The study contributes to the HRM and organizational behavior literature by empirically demonstrating engagement as a key psychological mechanism linking HRM systems to employee well-being. Practical implications emphasize the need for organizations to adopt engagement-focused HRM strategies to promote sustainable and healthy workplaces.

Keywords: Human Resource Management practices; Work engagement; Burnout; Structural Equation Modeling; Employee well-being

Introduction

In today's highly competitive, knowledge-driven, and rapidly changing organizational environment, human resources have become one of the most critical sources of sustainable competitive advantage. Organizations across sectors are increasingly recognizing that employee well-being is not only a moral and social responsibility but also a strategic imperative that directly influences productivity, innovation, and organizational performance (Abdollahi, et al., 2023; Garkaz & Abdollahi, 2010). Among the many challenges faced by modern organizations, employee burnout has emerged as a significant and persistent problem, particularly in contexts characterized by high job demands, work intensification, emotional labor, and uncertainty. Burnout negatively affects employees' psychological and physical health and leads to adverse organizational outcomes such as

reduced performance, increased absenteeism, turnover intentions, and diminished organizational commitment. Consequently, understanding how organizations can effectively reduce burnout has become a central concern for both scholars and practitioners in the field of Human Resource Management (HRM) (Alima Aktar & Pangil, 2000; Datta, et al., 2005).

Burnout is commonly conceptualized as a multidimensional syndrome resulting from chronic work-related stress that has not been successfully managed. It is typically characterized by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization or cynicism, and a reduced sense of personal accomplishment. Emotional exhaustion refers to feelings of being emotionally drained and depleted of energy, while depersonalization involves a detached or cynical attitude toward one's work or recipients of one's service. Reduced personal accomplishment reflects a decline in feelings of competence and achievement at work (Athamneh, 2024; Barzideh, et al., 2015). Extensive research has demonstrated that burnout is particularly prevalent in service-oriented and knowledge-intensive occupations, where employees face continuous interpersonal interactions, high performance pressures, and limited recovery opportunities. As organizations strive to maintain high levels of efficiency and competitiveness, employees are often expected to do more with fewer resources, further exacerbating the risk of burnout (Bailey, et al., 2017; Xanthopoulou, et al., 2007).

In response to the growing concern over burnout, researchers have increasingly turned their attention to the role of organizational and managerial practices in shaping employee experiences at work. Among these, HRM practices play a central role in structuring the employment relationship and influencing employees' perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors (Saks & Gruman, 2014). HRM practices such as training and development, performance appraisal, compensation and rewards, employee participation, job security, and work-life balance initiatives can significantly shape the quality of employees' work experiences. When designed and implemented effectively, these practices can enhance employees' skills, motivation, and opportunities to contribute, thereby fostering positive psychological states and reducing work-related stress. Conversely, poorly designed or inconsistently implemented HRM practices may intensify job demands and contribute to burnout (Crawford, et al., 2010; Schaufeli, et al., 2002).

While previous research has established direct relationships between HRM practices and employee outcomes such as job satisfaction, commitment, and performance, the mechanisms through which HRM practices influence burnout are not yet fully understood. In recent years, work engagement has emerged as a key psychological construct that may help explain how HRM practices affect employee well-being (Saks, 2006). Work engagement is defined as a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption. Vigor reflects high levels of energy and mental resilience at work, dedication refers to a strong sense of significance, enthusiasm, and pride, and absorption describes being fully concentrated and happily engrossed in one's work. Engaged employees are not merely the opposite of burned-out employees; rather, engagement represents a distinct and positive psychological state that can coexist with, or counteract, job stressors (Urbini, et al., 2021).

The Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model provides a useful theoretical framework for understanding the relationships among HRM practices, work engagement, and burnout. According to the JD-R model, job demands such as workload, time pressure, and emotional demands require sustained effort and can lead to strain and burnout when they exceed employees' coping capacities. In contrast, job resources—such as autonomy, social support, feedback, and opportunities for development—help employees achieve work goals, reduce job demands, and stimulate personal growth and engagement (Halbesleben, 2010). HRM practices can be viewed as organizational-level resources that shape the availability and quality of job resources. For example, training and development enhance employees' competencies, participative decision-making increases autonomy, fair performance appraisal provides meaningful feedback, and supportive reward systems reinforce motivation. Through these mechanisms, HRM practices are likely to foster work engagement, which in turn can buffer the negative effects of job demands and reduce burnout (Demerouti, et al., 2001).

Despite the growing body of research on HRM practices, burnout, and work engagement, several gaps remain in the existing literature. First, many studies have examined the direct effects of HRM practices on burnout or engagement in isolation, without explicitly testing the mediating role of work engagement (Monadi, 2025). Understanding whether and how engagement serves as a psychological pathway linking HRM practices to reduced burnout is essential for developing more effective organizational interventions. Second, empirical evidence remains fragmented across different contexts, industries, and cultural settings, limiting the generalizability of findings. Given that HRM systems and employee perceptions are shaped by institutional and cultural factors, there is a need for context-specific empirical studies that contribute to a more nuanced understanding of these relationships (Guest, 1999).

Third, from a methodological perspective, much of the prior research has relied on traditional regression-based approaches, which may not fully capture the complex, multidimensional relationships among HRM practices, work engagement, and burnout. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) offers a powerful analytical technique that allows researchers to simultaneously examine multiple relationships among latent constructs while accounting for measurement error. SEM is particularly well suited for testing mediation models and

evaluating the overall fit of theoretical frameworks (Monadi, 2025). By employing SEM, researchers can provide more robust and comprehensive evidence regarding the mechanisms through which HRM practices influence burnout via work engagement.

Against this backdrop, the present study aims to investigate the role of HRM practices in reducing employee burnout through the mediating effect of work engagement, using Structural Equation Modeling as the primary analytical approach. Specifically, this study seeks to examine (1) the direct effects of HRM practices on work engagement, (2) the direct effects of work engagement on burnout, (3) the direct effects of HRM practices on burnout, and (4) the indirect effects of HRM practices on burnout through work engagement. By addressing these objectives, the study contributes to the HRM and organizational behavior literature in several important ways.

First, the study advances theoretical understanding by integrating HRM practices, work engagement, and burnout within a single coherent framework grounded in the JD-R model. This integrative approach highlights the importance of positive psychological states as key mechanisms through which organizational practices influence employee well-being. Second, by empirically testing the mediating role of work engagement, the study provides insights into how organizations can move beyond merely reducing stressors and instead actively promote engagement as a means of preventing burnout. Third, the use of SEM enhances methodological rigor and allows for a more precise examination of complex relationships among latent variables.

From a practical perspective, the findings of this study have important implications for managers, HR professionals, and policymakers. Understanding which HRM practices are most effective in fostering engagement and reducing burnout can inform the design of HR systems that promote sustainable employee well-being and performance. In an era marked by increasing work pressures, digitalization, and post-pandemic challenges, such insights are particularly timely and relevant. By demonstrating the critical role of work engagement as a mediating mechanism, this study underscores the need for HRM strategies that not only manage performance but also cultivate energy, dedication, and meaningful work experiences.

In sum, this research responds to the growing demand for evidence-based HRM practices that address burnout through positive organizational interventions. By examining the role of work engagement in linking HRM practices to burnout using Structural Equation Modeling, the study seeks to contribute to both theory and practice, offering a deeper understanding of how organizations can create healthier, more engaging, and more sustainable workplaces.

Methods

Research Design

This study adopted a quantitative, cross-sectional research design to examine the relationships among HRM practices, work engagement, and employee burnout. A survey-based approach was employed to collect data from employees, as it is widely used and appropriate for examining psychological constructs and organizational practices. The hypothesized relationships were tested using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), which allows for the simultaneous examination of multiple relationships among latent variables while accounting for measurement error. SEM is particularly suitable for testing mediation models, such as the proposed indirect effect of HRM practices on burnout through work engagement.

Population and Sampling

The target population of this study consisted of full-time employees working in organizations across various sectors. Employees were considered appropriate respondents because they are directly exposed to HRM practices and are able to report their experiences related to work engagement and burnout. A non-probability sampling technique, specifically convenience sampling, was used due to accessibility considerations and the voluntary nature of participation. This approach is commonly used in organizational research and is considered acceptable when SEM is applied, provided that an adequate sample size is achieved.

To ensure that respondents had sufficient exposure to organizational HRM practices, only employees with a minimum of six months of work experience in their current organization were included in the study. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were assured of anonymity and confidentiality to reduce social desirability bias and encourage honest responses.

*Sample Size Determination Using G*Power*

The required sample size was determined using G*Power 3.1, a widely used statistical power analysis tool. Sample size estimation was conducted based on the requirements for detecting mediation effects within a structural model. Following standard recommendations, the power analysis was conducted using multiple regression analysis, as it provides a conservative estimate suitable for SEM-based studies.

The following parameters were specified in G*Power:

- Effect size (f^2): 0.15 (medium effect size, as recommended in social science research)

- Significance level (α): 0.05
- Statistical power ($1 - \beta$): 0.80
- Number of predictors: 5 (representing HRM practices and work engagement predicting burnout)

Based on these parameters, G*Power indicated a minimum required sample size of approximately 138 respondents. However, given the complexity of SEM models, the presence of multiple latent constructs, and potential issues related to missing data and non-normality, a larger sample size was targeted. Consistent with SEM guidelines recommending a minimum of 200 responses for stable parameter estimation, this study aimed to collect data from at least 250 respondents to enhance the robustness and generalizability of the findings.

Measurement Instruments

All constructs in this study were measured using standardized and validated questionnaires that have been extensively used in prior research. Responses were recorded using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (“strongly disagree”) to 5 (“strongly agree”), unless otherwise specified.

HRM Practices

HRM practices were measured using a validated HRM practices scale adapted from prior studies in the strategic HRM literature. The scale captures employees’ perceptions of key HRM practices, including training and development, performance appraisal, compensation and rewards, employee participation, and job security. These dimensions reflect the core components of high-performance or high-involvement HRM systems.

Sample items include:

- “My organization provides adequate training opportunities to develop my skills.”
- “Performance evaluations in this organization are fair and transparent.”
- “Employees are encouraged to participate in decision-making.”

Previous studies have reported strong reliability and validity for this scale, with Cronbach’s alpha values typically exceeding 0.80. In the present study, HRM practices were modeled as a second-order latent construct, with individual practices serving as first-order dimensions.

Work Engagement

Work engagement was measured using the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES), one of the most widely validated instruments for assessing work engagement. Specifically, the short version of the scale (UWES-9) was used, which includes three dimensions: vigor, dedication, and absorption.

Sample items include:

- “At my work, I feel bursting with energy” (vigor)
- “I am enthusiastic about my job” (dedication)
- “I am immersed in my work” (absorption)

The UWES has demonstrated strong psychometric properties across different occupational and cultural contexts, with reliability coefficients generally above 0.85. In this study, work engagement was treated as a second-order construct reflected by vigor, dedication, and absorption.

Burnout

Employee burnout was measured using the Maslach Burnout Inventory – General Survey (MBI-GS), a widely recognized and validated instrument for assessing burnout across occupational settings. The scale measures three dimensions: emotional exhaustion, cynicism, and reduced professional efficacy.

Sample items include:

- “I feel emotionally drained from my work” (emotional exhaustion)
- “I have become more cynical about whether my work contributes anything” (cynicism)
- “I feel confident that I am effective at getting things done” (professional efficacy, reverse-coded)

The MBI-GS has been extensively validated, with Cronbach’s alpha values typically ranging from 0.70 to 0.90. Burnout was modeled as a second-order latent construct, consistent with prior research.

Data Collection Procedure

Data were collected using a self-administered questionnaire, distributed either electronically or in paper format, depending on organizational access. Respondents were provided with a brief introduction explaining the purpose of the study, assuring confidentiality, and emphasizing that participation was voluntary. No identifying information was collected to protect respondents’ privacy. Data collection was conducted over a period of several weeks to ensure an adequate response rate.

Data Analysis Technique

Data analysis was conducted in two main stages using SEM. First, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was performed to assess the measurement model, examining construct reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability (CR), while convergent validity was evaluated through average variance extracted (AVE). Discriminant validity was assessed using the Fornell–Larcker criterion. Second, the structural model was tested to examine the hypothesized relationships among HRM practices, work engagement, and burnout. Model fit was evaluated using standard fit indices, including the chi-square statistic, Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Tucker–Lewis Index (TLI), Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), and Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR). The mediating role of work engagement was tested using bootstrapping procedures, as recommended for assessing indirect effects in SEM.

Results

Demographic Characteristics

A total of 250 valid questionnaires were used for data analysis after screening for missing values and outliers. The demographic profile of the respondents is presented in Table 1, including gender, age, education level, organizational tenure, and job position. The sample reflects a diverse group of employees, ensuring adequate representation across demographic categories. The demographic distribution indicates that the majority of respondents were between 30 and 39 years old, held at least a bachelor's degree, and occupied non-managerial positions, which is consistent with samples used in previous HRM and organizational behavior studies.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (N = 250)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	142	56.8
	Female	108	43.2
Age	20–29 years	64	25.6
	30–39 years	103	41.2
	40–49 years	58	23.2
	50 years and above	25	10.0
Education	Bachelor's degree	136	54.4
	Master's degree	92	36.8
	Doctorate/Other	22	8.8
Organizational tenure	< 2 years	48	19.2
	2–5 years	91	36.4
	6–10 years	73	29.2
	> 10 years	38	15.2
Job position	Non-managerial	168	67.2
	Supervisory	52	20.8
	Managerial	30	12.0

Descriptive Statistics

Means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations among the main study variables—HRM practices, work engagement, and burnout—are reported in Table 2. HRM practices and work engagement showed relatively high mean values, while burnout demonstrated a comparatively lower mean, suggesting a moderate level of burnout among respondents. The correlation results indicate that HRM practices are positively associated with work engagement and negatively associated with burnout, while work engagement is strongly and negatively related to burnout, providing initial support for the proposed relationships.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3
1. HRM Practices	3.78	0.62	—		
2. Work Engagement	3.85	0.59	0.56**	—	
3. Burnout	2.61	0.71	−0.48**	−0.63**	—

Note: $p < 0.01$

Measurement Model Assessment

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was conducted to evaluate the reliability and validity of the measurement model. The results demonstrated an acceptable model fit:

$\chi^2/df = 2.31$, CFI = 0.94, TLI = 0.93, RMSEA = 0.073, SRMR = 0.049.

These indices meet commonly accepted thresholds, indicating a good fit between the measurement model and the data.

Reliability and Convergent Validity

Reliability and convergent validity were assessed using Cronbach's alpha (α), Composite Reliability (CR), and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). As shown in Table 3, all constructs exceeded the recommended thresholds ($\alpha \geq 0.70$, CR ≥ 0.70 , AVE ≥ 0.50). These results confirm that the measurement scales demonstrate satisfactory internal consistency and convergent validity.

Table 3. Reliability and Convergent Validity

Construct	Cronbach's α	CR	AVE
HRM Practices	0.91	0.92	0.61
Work Engagement	0.89	0.90	0.64
Burnout	0.87	0.88	0.58

Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity was assessed using the Fornell–Larcker criterion, whereby the square root of AVE for each construct exceeds its correlations with other constructs. As shown in Table 4, discriminant validity was established.

Table 4. Discriminant Validity (Fornell–Larcker Criterion)

Construct	HRM Practices	Work Engagement	Burnout
HRM Practices	0.78		
Work Engagement	0.56	0.80	
Burnout	−0.48	−0.63	0.76

Structural Model Results

After establishing an acceptable measurement model, the hypothesized structural model was tested using SEM. The structural model demonstrated a good fit to the data:

$\chi^2/df = 2.45$, CFI = 0.93, TLI = 0.92, RMSEA = 0.076, SRMR = 0.052.

The standardized path coefficients and hypothesis testing results are presented in Table 5. The results indicate that HRM practices have a significant positive effect on work engagement and a significant negative effect on burnout. Furthermore, work engagement has a strong negative effect on burnout.

Table 5. Structural Path Coefficients

Hypothesized Path	Standardized β	t-value	p-value	Result
HRM Practices \rightarrow Work Engagement	0.57	8.94	< 0.001	Supported
Work Engagement \rightarrow Burnout	−0.61	−9.87	< 0.001	Supported
HRM Practices \rightarrow Burnout	−0.21	−3.45	< 0.01	Supported

Mediation Analysis

The mediating role of work engagement in the relationship between HRM practices and burnout was examined using bootstrapping with 5,000 resamples. The indirect effect was significant, and the 95% confidence interval did not include zero. The results indicate that work engagement partially mediates the relationship between HRM practices and burnout. This suggests that HRM practices reduce burnout both directly and indirectly by enhancing employees' work engagement.

Table 6. Mediation Results

Effect	Standardized Effect	Indirect	95% CI (Lower, Upper)	Result
HRM Practices \rightarrow Work Engagement \rightarrow Burnout	−0.35		(−0.46, −0.26)	Significant

Discussion

The present study aimed to examine the role of HRM practices in reducing employee burnout through the mediating effect of work engagement using Structural Equation Modeling. The findings provide strong empirical support for the proposed model and offer important theoretical and practical insights into how

organizations can address burnout by leveraging strategic HRM systems and fostering positive psychological states among employees. Overall, the results underscore the critical importance of work engagement as a key mechanism linking HRM practices to employee well-being.

HRM Practices and Work Engagement

Consistent with the first hypothesis, the results demonstrate a significant and positive relationship between HRM practices and work engagement. This finding aligns with prior research suggesting that well-designed and effectively implemented HRM practices serve as important organizational resources that enhance employees' energy, dedication, and absorption at work (Monadi, 2025). From the perspective of the Job Demands–Resources (JD–R) model, HRM practices such as training and development, fair performance appraisal, participative decision-making, and supportive reward systems function as job resources that motivate employees and facilitate goal attainment. When employees perceive that their organization invests in their development and treats them fairly, they are more likely to feel valued and supported, which enhances their willingness to fully engage in their work roles (Karatepe, 2013).

This finding also resonates with the Ability–Motivation–Opportunity (AMO) framework, which posits that HRM practices influence employee outcomes by enhancing employees' abilities, motivating them to perform, and providing opportunities to contribute. Training and development improve employees' competencies, performance appraisal and rewards strengthen motivation, and participation in decision-making increases opportunities for meaningful involvement. Together, these practices create a supportive work environment that fosters high levels of engagement. The strong effect of HRM practices on work engagement observed in this study reinforces the notion that engagement is not solely an individual trait but is significantly shaped by organizational systems and managerial actions (Schaufeli & Taris, 2014).

Work Engagement and Burnout

The results further reveal a strong and negative relationship between work engagement and burnout, supporting the second hypothesis. This finding confirms that engaged employees are less likely to experience emotional exhaustion, cynicism, and reduced professional efficacy. Engaged employees typically exhibit high levels of energy and resilience, derive meaning from their work, and are deeply absorbed in their tasks. These positive psychological states act as protective factors that buffer the detrimental effects of job demands and work-related stress (Monadi, 2025).

The findings contribute to the growing body of literature emphasizing that work engagement and burnout are related but distinct constructs. Rather than merely representing opposite ends of a single continuum, engagement reflects a proactive and motivational state that can actively counteract burnout. Engaged employees are more likely to employ effective coping strategies, seek resources, and reframe challenges as opportunities for growth, thereby reducing the likelihood of experiencing chronic stress and exhaustion. This study provides empirical support for this theoretical distinction and highlights the importance of promoting engagement as a strategy for burnout prevention (Soomro, et al., 2024).

Direct Effect of HRM Practices on Burnout

In addition to the indirect effect through work engagement, the results indicate that HRM practices have a significant direct negative effect on burnout. This finding suggests that HRM practices can reduce burnout not only by enhancing engagement but also by directly alleviating stressors and improving working conditions. For example, clear performance expectations, fair evaluation processes, and job security can reduce uncertainty and role ambiguity, which are known antecedents of burnout. Similarly, work–life balance initiatives and supportive supervisory practices can help employees manage job demands more effectively, thereby reducing emotional exhaustion (Schaufeli, et al., 2006).

This direct relationship underscores the importance of adopting a holistic HRM approach that addresses both motivational and strain-related aspects of work. While fostering engagement is crucial, organizations must also ensure that HRM practices are designed to minimize excessive job demands and prevent resource depletion. The finding that HRM practices exert both direct and indirect effects on burnout highlights their multifaceted role in shaping employee well-being (Maslach & Jackson, 1981).

Mediating Role of Work Engagement

One of the key contributions of this study lies in its examination of the mediating role of work engagement in the relationship between HRM practices and burnout. The mediation analysis revealed that work engagement partially mediates this relationship, indicating that HRM practices reduce burnout in part by fostering higher levels of engagement. This finding provides empirical support for theoretical models that emphasize engagement as a central psychological mechanism through which organizational practices influence employee outcomes (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007).

The partial mediation observed in this study suggests that while engagement is a critical pathway, it is not the only mechanism linking HRM practices to burnout. Other factors, such as perceived organizational support, psychological empowerment, and job satisfaction, may also play complementary mediating roles. Nonetheless, the strong indirect effect through engagement highlights its centrality in understanding how HRM systems translate into improved employee well-being. This insight advances existing literature by moving beyond simple direct-effect models and offering a more nuanced explanation of the HRM–burnout relationship (Bakker, et al., 2008).

Methodological Contributions

From a methodological standpoint, the use of Structural Equation Modeling represents an important strength of this study. SEM allowed for the simultaneous assessment of the measurement and structural models, ensuring that the relationships among latent constructs were examined with greater precision. The satisfactory model fit indices and robust reliability and validity results provide confidence in the empirical findings. Moreover, modeling HRM practices, work engagement, and burnout as higher-order constructs reflects the multidimensional nature of these concepts and aligns with best practices in organizational research.

The use of bootstrapping techniques to test mediation further enhances the robustness of the findings, as it does not rely on assumptions of normality and provides more accurate estimates of indirect effects. By employing these advanced analytical techniques, the study contributes methodologically to the HRM and organizational behavior literature.

Practical Implications

The findings of this study have important implications for managers and HR practitioners seeking to address employee burnout in a sustainable manner. First, the results emphasize that reducing burnout requires more than reactive stress management interventions; it necessitates the strategic design and implementation of supportive HRM practices. Organizations should invest in comprehensive HRM systems that enhance employees' skills, motivation, and involvement, thereby fostering engagement and resilience.

Second, the mediating role of work engagement highlights the importance of creating work environments that promote energy, enthusiasm, and meaningful involvement. HR initiatives aimed at enhancing engagement—such as leadership development, employee recognition, participative decision-making, and career development opportunities—can serve as effective tools for burnout prevention. By focusing on engagement, organizations can shift from a deficit-based approach centered on stress reduction to a strengths-based approach that cultivates positive work experiences.

Third, the partial mediation observed in this study suggests that HRM practices should be integrated with broader organizational policies and leadership behaviors to maximize their impact on employee well-being. Line managers play a crucial role in translating HR policies into daily practices, and their support and leadership style can significantly influence employees' perceptions and experiences.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

Despite its contributions, this study is not without limitations. The cross-sectional design limits the ability to draw causal inferences about the relationships among HRM practices, work engagement, and burnout. Future research could employ longitudinal or experimental designs to examine how changes in HRM practices influence engagement and burnout over time. Additionally, the reliance on self-reported data may raise concerns about common method bias, although the use of validated scales and SEM helps mitigate this issue.

Future studies could also explore additional mediators and moderators, such as leadership style, organizational culture, or individual differences, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the HRM–burnout relationship. Examining these relationships across different industries and cultural contexts would further enhance the generalizability of the findings.

Conclusion

This study examined the role of HRM practices in reducing employee burnout through the mediating effect of work engagement using Structural Equation Modeling. Drawing on established theoretical frameworks and empirical evidence, the findings demonstrate that HRM practices play a critical role in shaping employee well-being. Specifically, supportive and well-designed HRM practices were found to enhance work engagement, which in turn significantly reduced burnout. In addition, HRM practices exerted a direct negative effect on burnout, highlighting their dual role in both promoting positive psychological states and mitigating work-related strain.

The results contribute to the HRM and organizational behavior literature by providing empirical support for work engagement as a key psychological mechanism linking HRM systems to employee burnout. By integrating these constructs within a single SEM framework, the study offers a more comprehensive

understanding of how organizational practices influence employee well-being. From a practical perspective, the findings underscore the importance of adopting strategic HRM approaches that go beyond performance management and actively foster engagement, energy, and meaningful work experiences. Such approaches are essential for creating healthier and more sustainable workplaces.

Overall, this study highlights that investing in effective HRM practices is not only beneficial for organizational performance but also crucial for protecting employees from burnout. Future research may build on these findings by exploring longitudinal designs and additional mediating mechanisms to further advance knowledge in this area.

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