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### Towards Understanding Work Engagement: Can HR Really Buffer HR? Test of a Moderated Model

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**Abstract:** The current study attempted to address notable research lacunae by investigating a potential link between developmental HR resources and work engagement. Drawing upon the explanations of Conservation of Resources theory, the present study attempted to assess the relationship of developmental HR practices including employee training opportunities, career development opportunities and developmental performance appraisal with work engagement. Following to this, the study also examined the moderating effect of developmental performance appraisal on the relationship of employee training and career development opportunities with work engagement. Large six banks in Pakistan were sampled for the present study through using self-administered approach. Whilst using partial least squares structural equation modeling technique, the two hundred and seventy seven respondents' data outlined significant direct relationship between all developmental HR prospects and work engagement. However, developmental performance appraisal did not pose any significant interaction effect on the relationship of employee training and career development opportunities with work engagement. The study forwards theoretical and practical implications particularly for the banking sector of Pakistan.

**Keywords:** Developmental HR; work engagement; employee training; career development; performance appraisal.

#### I. INTRODUCTION

Global competitive environment is pushing organizations to have employees who are dedicated, passionate and work immersed [22], [44]. This is essential due to the fact that the quality of work force is a key to

success for organizations at large. Notably, work engagement has come up to be an important element that explains the level of connectivity, passion and energy of individuals for responsive performance outcomes [25]. The topic of employees' work engagement has received accelerated importance and empirical attention over the past two decades by prominent scholars and practitioners in the field of positive occupational psychology [13]. Therein, empirical evidence has underlined several components as notable predictors of work engagement e.g., [10].

However, despite considerable research and hefty empirical focus on the topic, limited attention has been paid towards factors that are generally known as prominent predictors of positive employee behaviors and work outcomes such as HR practices [35]. More specifically, little is known as to how work engagement can be nourished through particular HR practices that are principally understood to influence individual work wellbeing such as developmental HR practices e.g., [3] [4], [55].

Hence, the core objective of the present study was to shed empirical light on this research gap via highlighting the acute contribution of developmental HR practices such as employee training opportunities, career development opportunities and developmental performance appraisal towards explaining work engagement. Overall, following the theoretical explanations of conservation of resource theory- COR [30], the paper attempted to test the direct and moderating effect of developmental HR practices to establish empirical comprehension regarding employees' work engagement prediction.

## **II. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **(A) Theory and Hypotheses**

#### **(B) Work Engagement**

Engagement is a psychological component, primarily intrinsic in nature as it related to the inner self of a person [35]. It has been nearly 25 years, since first conceptualized of the concept of engagement came up [56] and defined it as harnessing and nurturing of organizational employees' selves so that they contribute physically, cognitively and emotionally towards their work roles. The subsequent study, distinguished engagement from psychological presence by arguing that people who are psychologically active at work, show higher level of focus; connectivity, and integration with assigned job roles. The concept since then has evolved to a certain extent whereby; studies could be tracked outlining different kinds, forms, and conceptualizations of engagement. In notable academic literatures, work engagement is generally conceptualized with the definition of [44]. According to them, work engagement is elaborated as a healthy positive work-based state whereby people bring energy, dedication and connection towards their work. Work engagement brings high work pleasure and activation. People, who are work engaged, express high potency in their tasks which enables them to effectively and efficiently tackle all job-related issues. Such people show higher work dedication, involvement and attachment, showcasing the feelings of enthusiasm, pride, challenge and significance [10]. Accordingly, work engaged individuals are completely immersed in the work to the extent that they do not even realize how the time fly passed [44]. Engagement brings full energy and connection which is why, engaged employees work harder with higher amount of discretionary efforts [10].

[32] have expounded that engaged employees connect themselves completely with their work roles with full energy and enthusiasm. [13] suggests that engaged workers feel pleasant about their work and therefore the work becomes fun for them. Engaged members of an organization show full psychological presence and are open to people and work. This explanation outlines that the engaged employees show dynamic characteristics at work that every organization would desire seeing in their employees. [10] has provided evidence concerning to the benefits of work engagement including high extraversion, cheerfulness, sociability, emotional stability, hardworking, optimistic, resilient, and active in coping pressure.

This underlines that engagement goes beyond the efforts that an employee puts in the work and thus, outlines the element of energy and passion. Since work engagement boosts individual's self-efficacy, energy, and resilience [11], which takes them to perform better than others [57]. Accordingly, a number of researchers have also reported that engaged employees often feel excited about the work; experience happiness, and are express more psychological wellbeing e.g., [11], [57].

Henceforth, this leads us to understand that, work engagement is a crucial component concerning individuals' work well-being. Having highly engaged employees can significantly help individuals to showcase better performance and work behaviors and to achieve wider organizational goals in a much effective manner.

### **(C) HRM and Work Engagement**

As the conservation of resources theory [30] resources in any shape and prospect are valuable for facilitating individuals to achieve desired work targets. The theory also asserts that resourceful individuals are in a much better position to gain further resources and capitalize upon them. Therein, consistent with the views of [35], one form of resources in any work setting are the HRM practices. This is because HRM practices equip individuals to effectively achieve their work goals and minimize the job demands' effect. Similar explanations are also forwarded by [57]. Accordingly, findings from a recent empirical study by [55] has outlined resource link of HRM practices towards enhancing employees' work engagement. Notably, developmental HR resources are the HR practices that concern with the growth and developmental needs of an employee. They include employee training opportunities, career development opportunities and developmental performance appraisal [55].

His study has distinguished and indicated towards the concept of developmental human resource. According to authors, developmental HR which includes employee training opportunities, career development, opportunities and developmental performance appraisal can make a robust influence upon fostering positive employee behaviors and outcomes.

### **(D) Employee Training Opportunities and Work Engagement**

Employee Training opportunities refers to the amount of learning and development prospects available for employees to obtain necessary job based skills to perform as per organizational expectations [55]. Employee training has been outlined as one of the significant contributors towards individual positive outcomes and behaviors as they are crucial towards imparting necessary skills in the workforce to ensure responsive performance. Research studies have sketched a strong relationship between employee training/ perceptions about employee training opportunities with employee outcomes and work wellbeing

characteristics such as performance [55]; motivation and job satisfaction [47] turnover intention [55] and organizational commitment [7]. According to Association for Training and Development (ATD) industry report, on an average, US companies spent \$1,208 per employee during the year 2013 [1], [4].

Importantly, researchers have not treated employee training opportunities in much detail in connection to work engagement e.g., [35], [57] whereby, few writers have also indicated towards the importance yet severe paucity of research on this relationship [2], [3], [4], [5], [6]. Conclusively, on the grounds of these explanations the current study assumed that healthy availability of employee training opportunities can be of considerable value for predicting work engagement conclusively, following hypothesis was examined:

**H1:** There will be a positive relationship between employee training opportunities and work engagement.

### **(E) Career Development Opportunities and Work Engagement**

Parallel to this, career development opportunities are also reported to be significant in predicting critical employee behaviors and work outcomes yet; very limited number of studies can be traced examining its relationship with work engagement. [14] have suggested that career development opportunities are significantly related with work engagement and therefore should be reinforced in the organizations for responsive employee outcomes. [44] argue that employees should be provided with career development opportunities to remain engaged at work.

Likewise, [32] also found positive and significant relationship between perceived career development opportunities and work engagement. Furthermore, [14] also empirically investigated and found significant impact of perceived career development opportunities on work engagement. The study has stated that, employees' perceptions regarding their career development opportunities, and their impact in predicting critical employee work behaviors is yet to be investigated. Similar views were also found in the studies of [16]. Additionally, [44] have emphasized on the provision of career development opportunities to enhance work engagement. Similarly, [58] have also emphasized on the career development resources towards enhancing work engagement. Henceforth, the study examined the following:

**H2:** There will be a positive relationship between career development opportunities and work engagement.

### **(F) Developmental Performance Appraisal and Work Engagement**

Developmental performance appraisal refers to practices aimed at enriching attitudes, skills and effective behaviors for employee to enhance their work prospects [18] developmental performance appraisal is also termed as an important developmental HR component. Empirical evidence has outlined perceptions about performance appraisal to be significantly contributing towards numerous employee work behaviors [55]. The scholars have empirically established that perceptions about performance appraisal and satisfaction with it can significantly enhance employee wellbeing at work. Very little is known empirically on the relationship of performance appraisal and work engagement. [58] have outlined performance as an important HR resource with strong proposition for its impact on employee work engagement. [37] have also highlight the gap and need for realizing and investigating the importance of performance appraisal and work engagement. [35] studied HR resources and found significant impact of performance appraisal perceptions

on work engagement. The study has also highlighted towards the wide empirical gap in the engagement literatures on this relationship along with strong recommendations for further investigation for validation. Similarly, [22] also outlined found significant impact of performance appraisal with work engagement. The study outlined towards the strategic significance of this HR resources with recommendations for further empirical investigation. Decisively, the following hypothesis was formulated:

**H3:** There will be a positive relationship between developmental performance appraisal and work engagement.

### **(G) Moderation of Developmental Performance Appraisal**

Principally, moderator variables are introduced in a research framework when there is typically inconsistent or weak relationship between the predictor and criterion variables [59]. Hence, keeping in view the limited and weak empirical evidence pertaining to employee training opportunities and career development opportunities relationship with work engagement, there comes a potential opportunity for testing an interacting effect. Therein, popular studies have tested moderation of different work prospects towards enhancing work engagement. For instance, literature highlights study testing the moderation of job stressors on the relationship between recovery and work engagement whilst sampling from a variety of different organizations. The study found that job stressors which are job features that could make a job difficult to a certain extent were important in challenging people to give their mental and physical best in the morning and hence, significantly moderated the relationship.

Accordingly, follower characteristics were found to moderating between transformational leadership and work engagement in another study [54]. Similarly, [13] found the moderation of job demands on the relationship between personal resources and work engagement amongst hospital staff members. In parallel, study sampling cabin and flight service crew confirmed the moderating effect of cue perceptions on the relationship between work engagement and service performance. In simple, these studies have empirically helped to understand how some occupational specific and/or work-related components could be of immense value in achieving the desired results.

Under the premise of conservation of resources theory [30], the availability of further resources can further maximize and enhance the use of other available resources to influence work well-being. Parallel to this, there are studies available that have investigated the moderation of different job factors upon the relationship of several other job factors with work engagement [52], [53], [54]. Critical review by [21], [58] has outlined performance appraisal and concerned employees' perception regarding them, to be of great value for enhancing work engagement. The authors have argued that due to the motivational potential of job factors like performance appraisal, the impact of available job resources can be buffered.

More importantly, organizational scholars have also hinted and recommended towards moderating potential of developmental performance appraisal [2], [3], [4]. Taken together, the COR theory and these evidences indicated that employee provided with healthy performance feedback to enrich attitudes, skills and effective behaviors then they will be able to responsively strategize the maximum capitalization of other developmental HR resources including employee training opportunities and career development opportunities to further enrich their work engagement. Thus, the present tested the following:

- H4:** Developmental performance appraisal will act as a moderator such that, employees perceiving positive about development focused performance appraisal would be able establish a more stronger relationship between employee training opportunities and work engagement.
- H5:** Developmental performance appraisal will act as a moderator such that, employees perceiving positive about development focused performance appraisal would be able establish a more stronger relationship between career development opportunities and work engagement.

### **III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **(A) Population and Sample Size**

As mentioned earlier, the questionnaire was posed to non-managerial employees of the large six banks of Pakistan. Non-managerial employees are those who are only responsible for the work assigned to them specifically and are responsible for the major operational working of the bank. According to workplace gender and quality department report, cashiers, payroll clerks, account assistants; insurance and financial officers; bank workers; credit & loan officers, and money market officers come under non-managerial employees' category in the financial sector [51].

#### **(B) Sampling Size and Technique**

Determination of sample size is essential for any survey research to minimize the cost of sampling error. [23] has recommended sample size should be estimated through using power of statistical test. This is defined as the probability that null hypothesis will be rejected when it is in fact false [23]. Prominent scholars e.g., [48], [17] have outlined that better the sample size, greater the power of a statistical test. Power analysis, according to [17], is a statistical procedure essential for delineating the exact sample size for a research.

G\*Power 3.1 software was used to compute the sample size using priori power analysis technique [26]. On the grounds of following parameters i-e Power (1- $\alpha$  err prob; 0.95); alpha significance ( $\alpha$  err prob; 0.05); effect size  $f^2$  (0.15), suggested by [23] and nine main predictors resulted with a minimum sample of 166 for the present study. (See Appendix A).

According to [45] it is important to understand that, sample size too small can potentially result in Type 1 Error, which means rejecting a finding which could potentially result to be significant and acceptable. According to [40] small size can affect the recognition of a statistical pattern. Hence, considering 166 as the final sample could have ended up with very poor response rate for actual data analysis. As a result, looking for other means for better sample size seemed mandatory [33]. Notably, [60] have forwarded table to determine the sample size for any known number of target population. As per the table, minimum sample size for the target population of 88,778 is 384. Moreover, as per a recent study conducted through self-administered survey, the response rate in the banking sector of Pakistan was 40 percent [61]. Thus, with an addition of 40 percent to the actual sample, 537 questionnaires were distributed for the current study.

Whilst aiming to maximize ease and simplicity, proportionate stratified random sampling technique [46] was applied. In that, the population was divided into meaningful segments and the proportion was



drawn on grounds of their percentage share against the total number of required respondents (537). See Appendix B for further details pertaining to sample and questionnaire division. The respondents were informed about the purpose of the study prior to their participation in the survey.

### **(C) Response Rate**

The study yielded 359 questionnaires out of the total 537 distributed at the first place. This termed to be 66.8 percent response rate. Of the total received, 82 questionnaires were discarded due to their incompleteness thus; leaving 277 questionnaires were used for final data analysis. This decisively marked the final response rate to be 51.5 percent. According to [45], 30 percent response rate is sufficient for the survey based empirical studies whereby, [15] have reported an average of 50 percent and above response rate in their meta-analysis report to be appropriate and significant. out of 277, 238 respondents were male and remaining 39 were female. In terms of experience, 200 had a master level academic qualification; 71 had bachelor's degree and the remaining 6 had diploma level qualification.

### **(D) Instrumentation**

Utrecht work engagement scale (UWES) was adapted for the present study [43]. The scale comprises of 9 items and has been confirmed with robust construct validity [29], Originally, UWES is the shorted version of 17-item scale [1] and has also been tested in many countries and occupational settings such as Japan, South Africa, China, Finland, Norway, Greece, Spain, & India [47], [1], [38], [57].

Accordingly, scale by [55] was deployed to investigate employee training opportunities. The scale contains 8 items focusing on the developmental nature of training prospects and employee perceptions pertaining to availability, effectiveness and significance of these opportunities. The scale has been reported with a Cronbach's alpha of .82 previously [55]. In parallel, 6-item scale by [55] was adapted to examine career development opportunities. The scale was reported with a cronbach's alpha coefficient of .89 previously.

DPA is defined as efforts concerned with enriching attitudes, experiences, and skills that improve the effectiveness of employees [18]. Based on the explanation, the study operationalized developmental performance appraisal as individual perception about the relevance, clarity and understanding of the activities concerned with improving the effectiveness of employees at work which involves feedback, goal setting, recognition and appreciation. On the explanation of [18] and work of [36], a 7-item scale was developed by [55] and reported Cronbach's alpha of .86. The current used this scale to examine the direct and moderating effect of DPA.

### **(E) Control Variables**

To ensure that the link and association between exogenous and endogenous variables is not confounded, the present study controlled the demographic variables including age (continuous variable); gender (male=1 and female=2), and years of experience (continuous variable).

## **IV. DATA ANALYSIS**

The present study confirmed core statistical assumptions prior to the main analysis for results and interpretation following the recommendations of [19]. The study then deployed partial least square (PLS)

path modeling approach through using Smart PLS 2.0 M3 to test the causal association in the hypothesized relationships [42]. PLS path modeling approach has been referred and recommended by prominent scholars based on its predictive power e.g., [31], [41]. Accordingly, PLS path modeling has also been mentioned as a substantial multivariate analysis technique in social and psychological research domains [20], [34]. The PLS path modeling examines the model in two stages i-e assessment of measurement model and assessment of structural model.

### (A) Assessment of Measurement Model

This state caters to the scrutiny of psychometric properties of the deployed scales. Therein, assessment of individual item reliability, internal consistency reliability and discriminant validity was performed [27]. At first, factor loadings which is also known as individual item reliability [27], [31] to outline as to how much each of the factor (item) explains a variable in the analysis and are essential to assess and ensure that all the indicators (items) are equally reliable [27]. Notably, there are different perspectives pertaining to minimum threshold for retaining and deleting the individual items [27] some of the prominent authors have suggested that models with measures weighing outer loadings of 0.70 or above are to be considered more reliable [20], [27], [49].

Moreover, the authors have also emphasized that maintaining the threshold of 0.70 helps in improving the data quality. Henceforth, four items from work engagement, five items from employee training opportunities, one item from career development opportunities and lastly, two items from developmental performance appraisal were deleted. Overall, the retained items resulted in loadings between 0.724 to 0.817. Next, the study assessed composite reliability coefficient of the instruments whereby, the assessment of reliability coefficient was performed based on the rule of thumb, recommended by [9].

The scholars have suggested that composite reliability scores greater or equal to 0.70 are sufficient. The present study has responsively achieved adequate internal consistency reliability as composite reliability coefficients for all the latent constructs have ranged in between 0.881 to 0.926. Next, the study examined convergent validity of the which refers to the extent to which, the items of a latent construct correlate with each other within the latent construct. In the views of [20], convergent validity is better assessed through evaluating AVE; average variance extracted scores for which, the recommended threshold is 0.50 or above [23]. Conclusively, all the latent constructs resulted with acceptable psychometric properties which can be further referred from Table 1 and Figure 2 respectively.

**Table 1**  
**Loading, CR & AVE Results**

	<i>Loadings</i>	<i>CR</i>	<i>AVE</i>
<b>Work Engagement</b>		0.8817	0.614
WE05	0.7606		
WE06	0.7228		
WE07	0.7959		
WE08	0.8170		
WE09	0.8175		

*contd. table 1*



	Loadings	CR	AVE
<b>Career Development Opportunities</b>		0.8324	0.5989
CD01	0.7930		
CD02	0.7240		
CD03	0.7901		
CD04	0.8037		
CD05	0.7557		
<b>Employee Training Opportunities</b>		0.9267	0.8084
ET01	0.8965		
ET02	0.9093		
ET03	0.8914		
<b>Developmental Performance Appraisal</b>		0.9065	0.6603
DP02_1	0.7639		
DP03_1	0.7914		
DP04_1	0.8397		
DP05_1	0.8611		
DP06	0.8029		

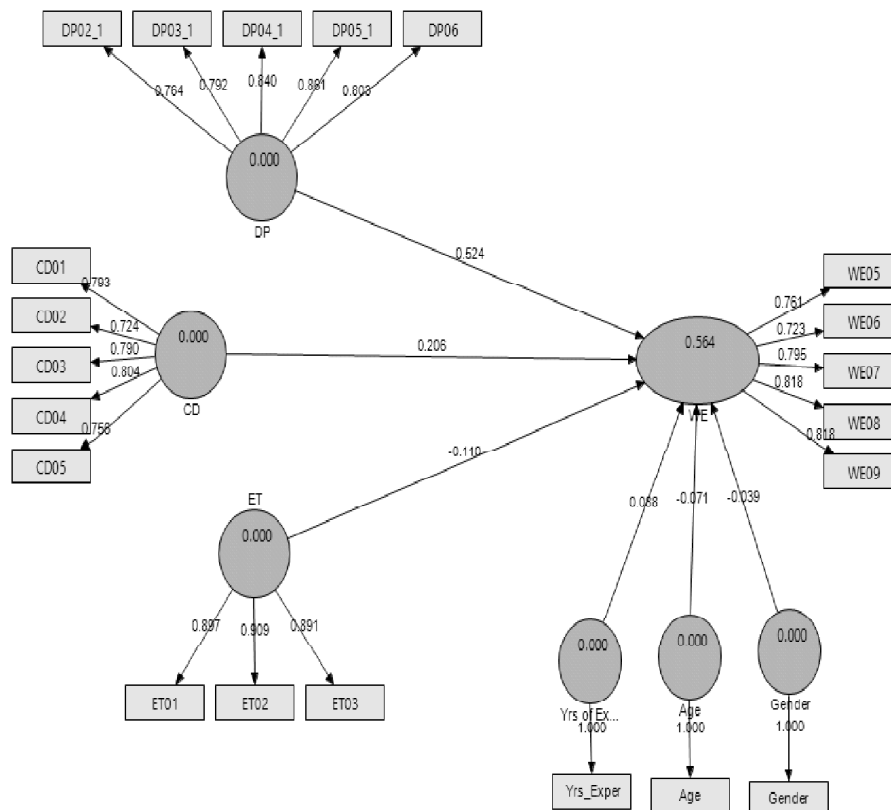


Figure 1: Measurement Model

In parallel, the discriminant validity was also ascertained through average variance extracted (AVE) scores [20]. As per the recommendations, the Discriminant validity is assessed through taking the square root of the AVE scores. Therein, the square root should be greater than the correlating values. Table 2 provides the details in this regard whereby, it outlines that the present study has significantly achieved considerable discriminant validity.

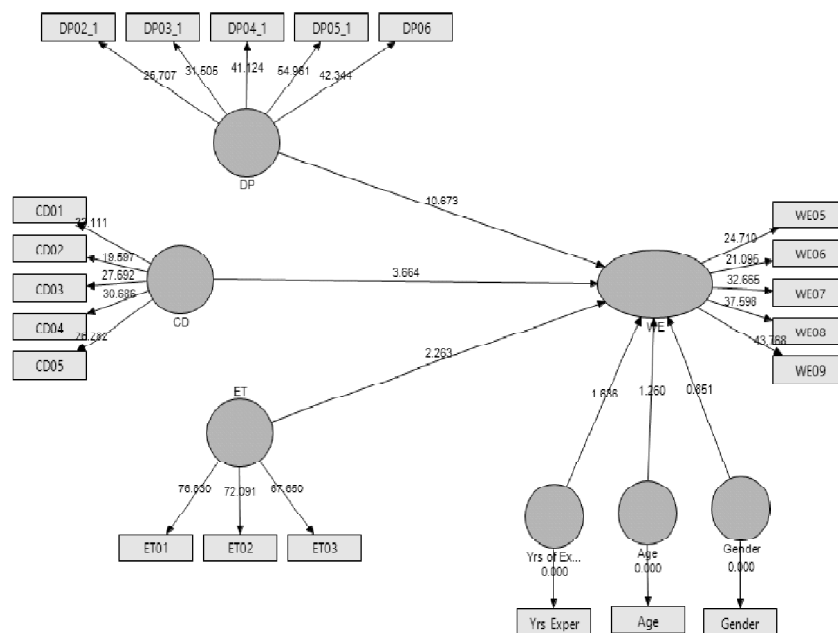
**Table 2**  
**Discriminant Validity**

Construct	CD	DP	ET	WE
<b>CD</b>	<b>0.7738</b>			
<b>DP</b>	0.5732	<b>0.8125</b>		
<b>ET</b>	0.5728	0.6090	<b>0.8991</b>	
<b>WE</b>	0.5740	0.7135	0.5552	<b>0.7836</b>

Note: Values in Bold face are the square root values of average variance extracted.

**(B) Assessment of Structural Model**

The affirmation of measurement model took the analysis to the next stage of PLS path modeling whereby, the structural model was assessed. The first component in the structural model assessment relates with the testing of hypothesized relationships [27], the structural model should be tested in two stages, assessing the direct relationships first followed by testing of moderating variable to evaluate its interaction effect. Standard bootstrapping procedures were performed through running 5000 bootstraps samples on 277 cases to outline path coefficient’s significance level of the direct hypothesized relationships at the first instance [27], [28]. Results on Figure 2 and Table 3 suggest that employee training opportunities were significantly



**Figure 2: Structural Model-Direct Effects**

related with employees' work engagement ( $\beta = 0.1103$ ;  $t=2.262$ ;  $p<0.01$ ) thus, supporting hypothesis 1. Accordingly, career development opportunities were also found in a significant relationship with work engagement ( $\beta = 0.2056$ ;  $t= 3.663$ ;  $p<0.00$ ) hence, confirming hypothesis 2. In parallel the results have also landed empirical support towards hypothesis 3 through confirming significant positive relationship between developmental performance appraisal and work engagement ( $\beta = 0.5243$ ;  $t= 10.672$ ;  $p<0.00$ ).

Thus, having ascertained the direct relationships between developmental HR practices and work engagement, the present study assessed the *R-squared* value of the endogenous latent variable. As shown in figure 1, the variables explained 56 percent of total variance in work engagement. This suggests that three sets of exogenous latent variables including employee training opportunities, career development opportunities and developmental performance appraisal explained 56 percent variance in work engagement, after controlling demographic variables. The R-squared is significant as per the assertions of [24] who asserted that any value of 0.10 or higher *R-squared* value is acceptable.

**(C) Assessment of Moderating Effect**

From the results of direct relationships, the bootstrapping procedure was again deployed on 277 cases to assess the moderating effect of developmental performance appraisal on the relationship of employee training opportunities and career development opportunities with work engagement. On the course of moderation, the PLS path modeling results found no moderation of developmental performance appraisal on the relationship between employee training opportunities and work engagement ( $\hat{\alpha}= 0.0016$ ;  $t= 0.0200$ ;  $p>0.10$ ). Accordingly, the study also reported no moderating effect of developmental performance appraisal on the relationship between career development opportunities and work engagement ( $\hat{\alpha}= 0.1444$ ;  $t=0.948$ ;  $p>0.10$ ). Hence, the study found no interacting effect of developmental performance appraisal towards work engagement thus, rejecting hypotheses 4 and 5. Figure 3 and Table 3 provides further details in this regard.

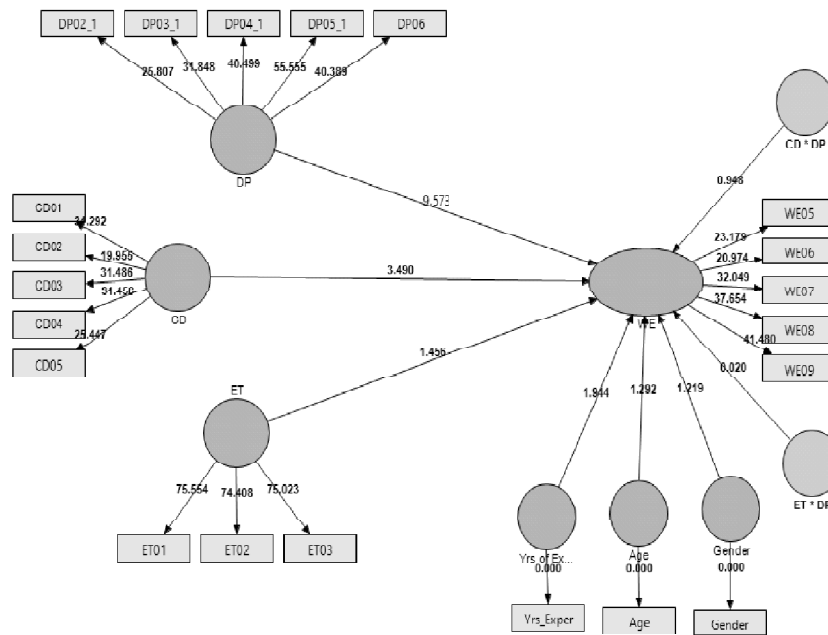


Figure 3: Structural Model- Moderating Effects

**Table 3**  
**Summary of Hypotheses**

<i>Relationship</i>	<i>Summary of Hypotheses</i>			
	<i>Beta</i>	<i>Std Error</i>	<i>T-Value</i>	<i>Decision</i>
<b>CD -&gt; WE</b>	0.2056	0.05613	3.663	Supported
<b>DP -&gt; WE</b>	0.5243	0.04913	10.672	Supported
<b>ET -&gt; WE</b>	0.1103	0.04874	2.262	Supported
<b>CD * DP -&gt; WE</b>	0.1444	0.15236	0.948	Not Supported
<b>ET * DP -&gt; WE</b>	0.0016	0.08245	0.020	Not Supported

## V. CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

The present study outlined significant theoretically significant framework to enhance understanding and prediction of work engagement. Based on the explanations of Conservation of Resources Theory (COR) [30], the paper tested how developmental HR practices such as employee training opportunities, career development opportunities and developmental performance appraisal can viably act as healthy job resources to enhance individual psychological work wellbeing. In particular, the study found significant positive relationship between employee training opportunities and work engagement. The findings are consonant to the explanations of [55], [4]. Pertaining the vitality of employee training opportunities as a developmental HR practice and the empirical assertions highlighting its significance towards predicting work engagement [35], [57].

The finding has indicated that employees were provided with healthy employee training opportunities whereby, such prospects helped them to gain skills to work with more energy, passion and connectivity thus, predicting work engagement. The results have indicated that similar to western economies, employee training opportunities can also be viable for emerging Asian economies [35]. Overall, the result has sketched that employee training opportunities can make a healthy make people feel valued thus, enabling them to further their work behaviors and outcomes [50].

Accordingly, the present study found a significant positive relationship between career development opportunities and work engagement. whilst responding to the calls of [58], the finding has strengthened the limited prior empirical evidence available on this relationship [32] suggesting that availability of career growth opportunities can be reinforced in the organization in order to keep employees energized and connected with the work roles. Overall, the results have fostered our understanding regarding the importance of HR prospects like career development explaining that besides tangible outcomes, healthy availability of such factors can also harness the individual psychological work wellbeing [14].

Moreover, the study also found significant direct relationship between developmental performance appraisal and work engagement. The finding suggests that employees of the banks were positive about the developmental based reviews, feedback and facilitation for improvement and skill enhancement which thus led them to boost their work engagement. In other words, when the employees are content with the performance appraisals, they tend to showcase energy, commitment and immersion towards their work prospects. Hence, employees receiving developmental based performance feedbacks can responsively see

how they are performing and transform themselves accordingly to maintain higher engagement levels. Henceforth, the findings have addressed the notable gaps in the engagement literature by empirically confirming the significance of developmental HR practices for engagement enthusiasts.

Secondly, based on prominent theoretical explanations, the moderating effect of developmental performance appraisal was tested in the study. However, the statistical results found unexpected results, indicating no moderating effect of developmental performance appraisal on the relationship of employee training opportunities and career development opportunities with work engagement. Despite the significant direct relationship with work engagement, one plausible explanation regarding no interaction effect could be the difference in the nature and context of the moderating variable from the endogenous variables. Since employee training and career development opportunities are generalized and broader HR practices [55] whereby, DPA is a particularized HR factor, different for every individual [18]. As a result of this, developmental performance appraisal seemed to have been less prominent in bringing further enrichment into the employee training, career development and work engagement relationships. Likewise, this result may also be explained with the fact that since respondents had positive perceptions regarding available employee training opportunities and career development opportunities which is why, they possibly didn't feel in much need of any personalized performance feedbacks and appraisals to further capitalize upon training and career prospects to boost work engagement.

#### **(A) Theoretical Implications**

Multifold of theoretical and practical implications could be forwarded from the present study. At first, the present study has enhanced our understanding regarding the acute role and contribution of developmental HR practices to the understanding and prediction of work engagement. Whilst confirming the explanations of Conservation of resources theory [30], the paper has extended body of knowledge in the domain of work engagement through empirically testifying the role of HR practices [35], [55].

Whilst, responding the identified research gaps in the area, the present study has effectively highlighted considerable prospects that could help understand about the versatile nature of HR practices and their influence on individual work wellbeing. Henceforth, the current study substantiates the importance of developmental HR resources including employee training opportunities, career developmental opportunities, and developmental performance appraisal towards fostering work engagement. In the likewise manner, the study has also helped to understand that some job factors like developmental performance appraisal in the present study, may not be able to moderate and/or interact with other causal relationships, despite having significant direct relationships. ideally, this indicates and encourages for further empirical attention in other occupational settings for further sanction. Taken together, the study has enriched body of knowledge in the domain of work engagement whereby, results of the present study could be of potential scholarly motivation for future scholars to understand and address the issue of work engagement in a much responsive manner.

#### **(B) Practical Implications**

Accordingly, numerous practical implications can be tracked from the study results particularly for service industry with special focus on the banking sector of Pakistan. Firstly, the findings have visibly expanded our knowledge in connection to antecedents of work engagement and how employees' work wellbeing can

be harnessed. In connection to the banking sector, the current study provides a contributory framework to help assess the role of different HR resources in furthering work engagement. The findings showcase precise channels such like developmental HR practices through which individual work engagement levels can be amplified and maintained to reap further corporate benefits. Following this, HR gurus at work can focus on ways to develop a supportive environment and engage in activities to mentor employees and help support and coordinate with peers accordingly. The findings of the present study have demonstrated that HR managers and specialist practitioners can capitalize upon developmental HR resources as psychological stimulus to predict work engagement.

In specific, the findings have highlighted the critical role, Training department, managers, and other concerned professionals can play; how career development professionals can contribute and likewise; how performance managers can effectively use the appraisal strategy and feedback prospects to boost employees' work engagement. For instance, robust employee training programs may be offered to specifically cater to employees' work to help them establish more understanding and connection with their job roles. Therein, topics such as work wellbeing, motivation; Giving your best at work and so on could be an ideal choice. Likewise, career paths may be designed and developed for each position alongside detailed progress plans for employees to visualize their advancements. Parallel to this, another important implication of the current study pertains with the individual's self-awareness regarding work engagement. The results can be taken as a guideline by individuals to learn what influences their engagement and how they can possibly manage these predictors to keep their work well-being intact for promising results.

### **LIMITATIONS AND SCOPE FOR FURTHER STUDY**

In spite of obtaining a number of interesting answers, the present study also holds some important limitations. At first, the study adopted cross-sectional design which restricts from drawing causal explanations. Notably, longitudinal study design provides times intervals across the hypothesized exogenous and endogenous variables hence, a longitudinal design may be considered for future to measure the constructs at different instances to further strengthening the findings of the present study. Moreover, self-reporting can also be termed as another limitation of the present study which may have inflated the relationships among the exogenous and endogenous variables. Although prominent studies on work engagement can be traced that have used similar approach [62], [55], yet, there is a possibility that respondents might have under reported their work engagement. Nonetheless as per [39], using self-reports can result in common method variance in behavioral research. Though, the current study attempted to minimize these issues through ensuring respondents' anonymity and improvement of the selected scales [40]. Thus, future researchers may possibly employ other strategies such as qualitative techniques or focus group approach in this regard.

Importantly, the study findings have limited generalizability as it examined the non-managerial employees in the banking sector of Pakistan. As a result, additional examination is encouraged across various occupational settings such as manufacturing, health, tourism and so on in order to forward generalizable results. Lastly, since, developmental performance appraisal failed to pose any moderating effect in the present study, further studies may be planned to empirically confirm this further in other occupational settings. In Resolution, the present study has forwarded noteworthy theoretical implications for scholars and practical implications for HR gurus and policy makers to better understand work engagement and how it could be principally nourished and maintained for profound employee behaviors and outcomes.



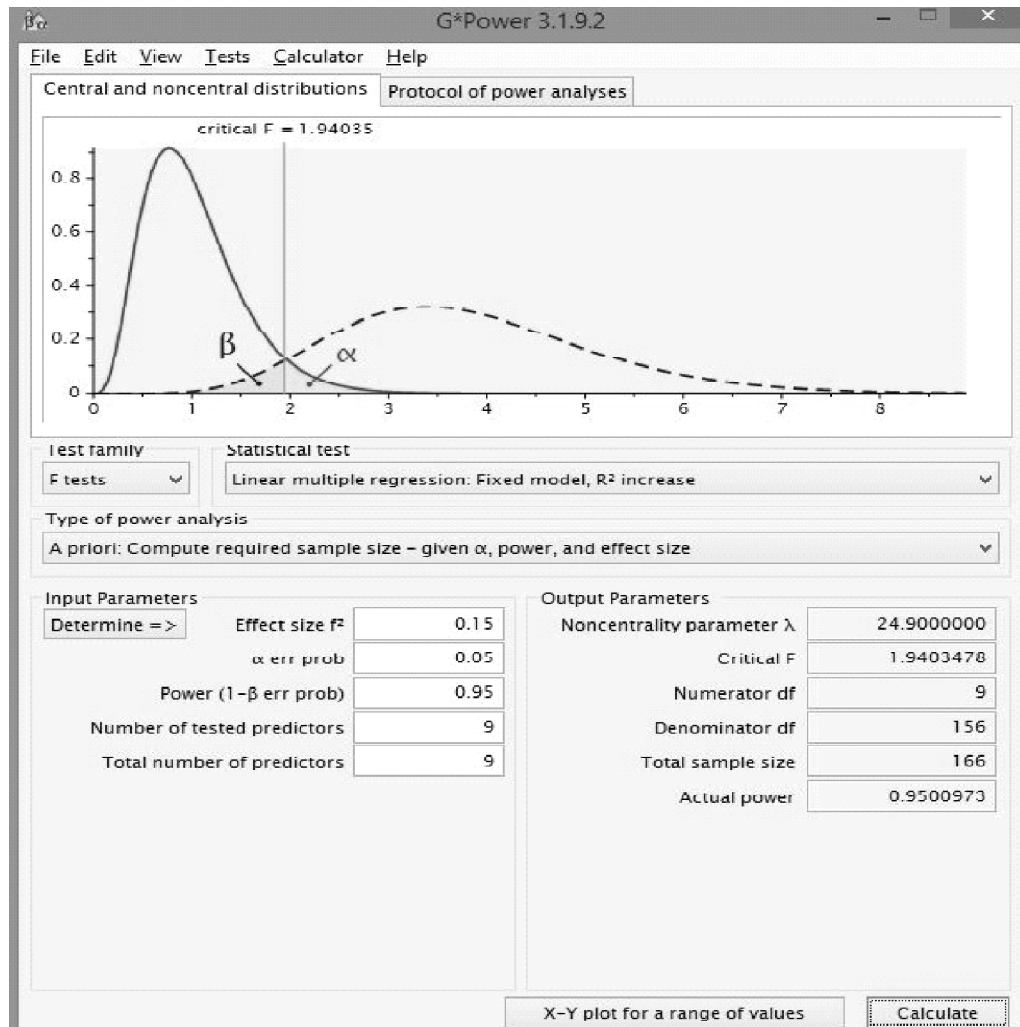
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**APPENDIX A**  
**Priori Power Analysis Results**



**APPENDIX B**  
**Sample Size and No of Respondents from each Bank**

<i>Bank</i>	<i>No of Staff</i>	<i>% of Population against the Total</i>	<i>Required Questionnaire from each bank</i>	<i>Round Off Total</i>
Habib Bank Limited (HBL)	14,123	16.25	87.26	87
National Bank Limited (NBP)	24,871	28.61	153.60	154
United Bank Limited (UBL)	13,771	15.84	85.60	85
Muslim Commercial Bank (MCB)	12,301	14.15	75.98	76
Allied Bank Limited (ABL)	10,194	11.73	62.99	63
Bank Alfalah Limited (BAF)	11,670	13.42	72.06	72
<b>Total</b>	<b>86,930</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>537</b>	<b>537</b>