

EMPLOYEES' WELL-BEING AS A MEDIATOR OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HR PRACTICES AND JOB MOTIVATION IN MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY

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Article history

Received date : 21-10-2021
Revised date : 22-10-2021
Accepted date : 28-11-2021
Published date : 21-12-2021

To cite this document:

Jalil, N., Abd Rahman, I., & Aziz, A. (2021).
Employees' Well-Being As A Mediator of The
Relationship Between Hr Practices and Job
Motivation In Manufacturing Industry. *International
Journal of Accounting, Finance and Business
(IJAFB)*, 6(38), 84 - 95.

Abstract: *This study was conducted to assess the relationship between HR practices and job motivation mediating employees' well-being. Recent studies from the perspective of social exchange which focus on the HR practices and job motivation have a significant impact towards positive employees' well-being. The nature of this relationship is emphasized in human resource management models. The evidence is used as a foundation to develop a conceptual schema for this study. The data was collected using survey on 136 usable questionnaires from employees who worked in manufacturing industry. The findings from the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) using a stepwise regression analysis revealed that this study contributes to 51% variance on the proposed model. This result confirms that employees' well-being does act as a full mediating variable in the HRM models of the organizational sector sample. In addition, the implications of this study to social exchange theory and practice, methodological and conceptual limitations and directions for future research are discussed.*

Keywords: *HR practices, Employee well-being, Job motivation*

Introduction

Over the last 30 years, Human Resource Management has attracted attention across many fields due to its contribution to the effectiveness and efficiency of employee management (Nickson, 2013). In today's global economy, organizations are operating in a dynamic and fast-changing environment. In order to maintain competitive advantage, achieve organizational strategic goals, adapt and change to respond quickly to market needs and demands, it is vital for contemporary organizations to have HR professional or HR managers who have sophisticated and advanced HRM skills and knowledge (Du Plessis, 2015). Human resource management can make a direct contribution to the performance of an organization and this imperative means that HR professionals should focus on strategic human resource management (SHRM), which goes beyond administrative and bureaucratic approaches in the management of people. HR practitioners need to shape rather than merely support business strategy, it has considerable implications for skills and approaches to HRM (Bailey et al., 2018).

In this study contributes to the discussion HR practices are associated with job motivation through the role of well-being. HR practices are defined as a group of internally coherent and consistent HR practices that are designed to promote employee competence, motivation as well as commitment (Eirehail et al., 2019). Particularly, it draws on the Ability (A), Motivation (M), and Opportunity (O) AMO model (Appelbaum et al., 2000). The AMO model posits that employee performance is a function of three essential components, the ability, motivation and opportunity to perform (Obeidat et al., 2016). According to the model, the use of HR practices that are aimed at strengthening employee performance can be viewed as a composition of three dimensions: the skill, motivation and opportunity enhancing HR practices (Lepak et al., 2006). Skill-enhancing HR practices aim at facilitating increased levels or types of employee knowledge and abilities, helping employees with career development and expanding their promotion opportunities (Tharenou et al., 2007). The impact that different dimensions of human resource (HR) practices have on employee performance has attracted a lot of attention in the human resource management (HRM) literature over the past 25 years (Van De Voorde and Beijer, 2015). In the past two decades, researchers also began to focus more directly on employee-centered outcomes such as employee well-being and to look more closely at the effect that HR practices have on employee well-being (e.g., Jiang et al., 2012). The role of employee well-being as a mechanism through which HR practices affect employee motivation to perform a job has also been studied (Van De Voorde and Beijer, 2015). In HRM motivation refers to an individual's need to work to their full potential to carry out a specific job or task.

Thus, motivation is highly important when it comes to retaining and recruiting employees. The process of motivation begins with a need. For example, an employee may feel the need of a challenging task, in return for higher pay or time off (Armstrong and Taylor, 2014). Motivation-enhancing HR practices are intended to boost employee motivation (Jiang et al., 2012). Motivation-enhancing HR practices direct employee efforts toward the accomplished. An individual is motivated to do what they do by extrinsic and intrinsic factors. This means an individual can be motivated or driven by forces within an individual or forces outside an individual. Motivation can be generated from inside the individual. This is known as intrinsic motivation (Gerson, 2006). For example, if an individual has a strong desire to achieve some goals or do something in order to accomplish such desire or goals, an individual has to act in some particular way to help them reach such desired goals. Intrinsic motivation is a form of self-actualization in which a person needs to accomplish something worthwhile. In other words, it is self-generated or self-motivated and is free from financial reward. Motivation can also stem from outside the person and influences their behavior and actions and is known as extrinsic

motivation. When applying the idea of extrinsic motivators to a working context, it is clearly seen that this kind of factor influences most employees to come to work as the employees think that their work as the main source of income (Neely, 2007; Pullins, Haugtvedt, Dickson, Fine & Lewicki, 2000).

The organization should try to create a link between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. This is because providing employee rewards and standard employment benefit packages cannot motivate employees to devote their best effort and produce a good performance in the long run. However, HR practices may trigger higher levels of stress, burnout, exhaustion and work intensification, which are elements that negatively affect employee physical well-being (Van De Voorde and Beijer, 2015). In line with the social exchange perspective (Blau, 1964), this study also explores the mediating role of the different dimensions of well-being in the organization between the perceived use of different dimensions of HR practices and different dimensions of motivation to perform the job in figure 1 shows the conceptual model. Hence, this study focuses on four main objectives, first to investigate the relationship between HR practices and job motivation. Second, to investigate the relationship between HR practices and employees' well-being. Third, to investigate the relationship between employees' well-being and job motivation. Lastly, to investigate the relationship between HR practices and job motivation mediating employees' well-being.

Theoretical Framework of Relationship among HR Practices, Employees' Well-Being and Job Motivation

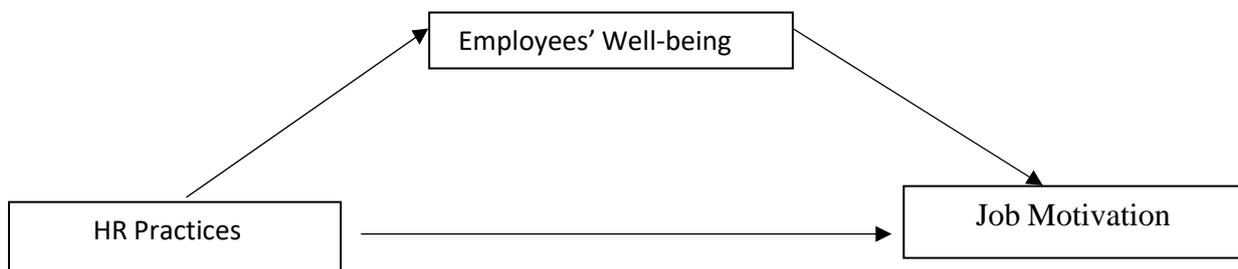


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Relationship between HR Practices and Job Motivation

The AMO framework of Appelbaum et al. (2000) provides a basis for a stronger conceptualization of high-performance HR practices (Obeidat et al., 2016). The AMO model proposes three dimensions of practices that boost employees' abilities, motivation and opportunities (Huselid, 1995; Jiang et al., 2013). The Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory may constitute a helpful lens through which to understand the association between HR practices and employee job motivation. In the context of labor-intensive industry traditionally, research assumption that perceptions of HR practices can generate job motivation because workers often believe that HR practices provide opportunities for them to grow and achieve their job-related goals (Harley et al., 2007; Harley et al., 2010). Workers with a strong promotion focused orientation to view firms HR practices, orientation desire growth, development and accomplishment. In general, workers with a promotion focused orientation tend to find their job more enjoyable and be more willing to engage in job related tasks when they view their firms HR practices. Thus, perception of HR practices leads to higher job motivation.

Martin et al., (2018) studied on 83 HR managers, 83 R&D managers and 262 R&D employees in Spanish firms in Castellon, Spain. This study examined the mechanisms that explain the effects of skill enhancing (e.g., training and staffing practices), motivation enhancing (e.g., rewards and promotion) and opportunity enhancing (e.g., employee autonomy, power and participation) that influence employee to perform a job in the organization based on intrinsic job motivation (e.g., employee satisfaction) and extrinsic job motivation (e.g., bonus, salary, promotion) .

H1: HR practices (i.e., skills, motivation and opportunity) is positively related with job motivation (i.e., intrinsic and extrinsic)

Relationship between HR Practices and Employees' Well-Being

Defining well-being presents one of a number of challenge when examining well-being at work. Various types of well-being, perhaps the most commonly referred to are physical, psychological and social (e.g. Grant, Christianson & Price, 2007). Khoreva (2017) studied on a sample based of 300 employees and 34 immediate supervisors within a professional service company in Finland. This study examined HR practices on skill enhancing (e.g., employees' knowledge and abilities), motivation enhancing (e.g., compensation, extensive benefits, promotion and job security) and opportunity enhancing (e.g., share knowledge, learn new skills and seek out challenge) that led employee psychological (e.g., experiences and function work), social (e.g., relationship among employees) and physical well-being (e. g., health).

H2: HR practices (i.e., skills, motivation and opportunity) is positively related with employees' well-being (i.e., psychological, social and physical).

Relationship between Employees' Well-Being and Job Motivation

Self-determination theory (SDT) is a macro theory of human motivation and personality that concerns people's inherent growth tendencies and innate psychological needs. It is concerned with the motivation behind choices people make without external influence and interference. SDT focuses on the degree to which an individual's behavior is self-motivated and self-determined (Ryan, 2017). Considering the different reasons individuals invest effort into their job is important given that, compared with controlled regulation, autonomous regulation leads to a host of favorable outcomes such as well-being and performance (Manganelli et al., 2018). According Bosch et al., (2018) based on sample of 546 respondents in Cultural, Human and Organizational Psychological, University of Utrecht, Netherlands. This study showed psychological and social well-being (e.g., job dedication and job absorption) and physical well-being (e.g., health and work engagement among employees) contributes to employees' motivation to perform a job (i.e., intrinsic and identified motivation).

H3: Employees' well-being (i.e., psychological, social and physical) is positively related with job motivation (i.e., intrinsic and extrinsic).

Relationship between HR Practices and Job Motivation mediating Employees' Well-Being

Social exchange theory is a sociological and psychological theory that studies the social behavior in the interaction of two parties that implement a cost-benefit analysis to determine risks and benefits. Also, the theory involves economic relationship, it occurs when each party have goods that the other parties' value (Roedelein et al., 2018). Bowen et at., (2004) that propose that HR practices affect employees' by supporting them or by functioning as 'signals' of the

organization's intentions towards them. Sivapragasam et al., surveyed 626 knowledge professionals working at IT companies in Chennai city, Tamil Nadu. The study found enhancing employees' skills (i.e., selection of employees based on person-organization fit), motivation (i.e., provide rewards and compensation) and opportunities (i.e., ensuring performance growth and providing faster career growth) had invoked employees' physical well-being (e.g., employee health), social well-being (e.g., employee engagement) and psychological well-being (e.g., emotions and mood). As a result, this situation could lead to a higher intrinsic job motivation (e.g., flexible performance goals and training opportunities) and extrinsic (e. g., rewards and benefits) in organizations.

H4: Employees' well-being (i.e., psychological, social and physical) mediates the relationship between HR practices (i.e., skills, motivation and opportunity) is positively related with job motivation (i.e., intrinsic and extrinsic).

Sample and Procedure

The respondents for this study consisted of employees of manufacturing industry. The manufacturing industry is one of the largest and most influential sectors of the Malaysia economy. The manufacturing industry helps support the global and national economies, as well as individuals and families. Research has shown that manufacturing ranked among the most important industries in maintaining a strong U.S. economy and eight in 10 Americans believe U.S. manufacturing is important to maintain Americans' standard of living. Clearly, manufacturing is having a big impact on jobs, livelihoods and the economy. That's something to be proud of. The manufacturing and services sectors played dominant roles in the Malaysia's economy, and the contribution of the agricultural sector to economic growth seems to be trivial. It can be explained by the effects of transformation from agricultural economy into industrial economy of Malaysia since 1970s. Since late 1970s, Malaysia's economic development strategy is based on three long-term policies which are the New Economic Policy (NEP) 1970–1990, the National Development Policy (NDP) 1990–2000, and the National Vision Policy (NVP) 2001. By 1990, Malaysia had met the criteria as a Newly Industrialized Country (NIC) which means 30 % of exports consisting manufactured goods (Hussin and Ching 2013). Under current Prime Minister Dato' Seri Najib, Malaysia is attempting to achieve high-income status by 2020 and to move farther up the value-added production chain by attracting investments in Islamic finance, high technology industries, biotechnology, and services.

The respondents varied from human resource, finance, marketing, operation and other departments from one manufacturing company. The design of the quantitative method used for this study is a questionnaire using google forms application and distributed to employees through WhatsApp. In this study, structured questionnaires were utilized to collect cross-sectional data from the respondents. The design of this study is very useful for collecting accurate, relevant, less biased and quality data (Cresswell, 2015; Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). The sample of this study consists of 136 respondents and were selected through non-probability purposive sampling technique. This sampling technique was selected because the Movement Control Order (MCO) in Malaysia, there are some employees in the management group are instructed to Working from Home (WFH) or Working from Office (WFO) and employees from operating group can work as usual. Therefore, this situation causes the researcher to not able to randomly select the participants for this study.

Measures

This survey questionnaire consists of three parts. First, to measure the perceived use of HR practices following (Jiang et al., 2012), the items were grouped into skill-, motivation-, and opportunity-enhancing HR practices. Second, following prior research (Appelbaum et al., 2000), psychological well-being was measured by job satisfaction. Hence, physical well-being was measured with job strain, which refers to responses to stressors (Van De Voorde et al., 2012) and social well-being was measured by perceived organizational support using the short version of the scale of the Survey of Perceived Organizational Support (Eisenberger et al., 1986). Third, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation to perform a job was measured following (Amabile et al., 1994). All items were measured using a 5-item scale ranging from “strongly disagree / unmotivated” (1) to “strongly agree / motivated” (5). Demographic variables were used as controlling variables because this study emphasizes on employee attitudes.

Data Analysis

The Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 16.0 was used to analyze the levels psychometrics from questionnaire data based on guidelines recommended by Hair, Anderson, Tatham and Black (1998) and Nunally and Berstein (1994). Firstly, exploratory factor analysis was used to access the reliability of measurement scales (Hair et al., 1998). Secondly, Pearson correlation analysis and descriptive statistics were conducted to determine the collinear problem, further confirm the validity and reliability of constructs and thus test research hypothesis (Tabachnick et al., 2001; Yaacob, 2008). Lastly, stepwise regression analysis was used to assess the magnitude of each independent variable, the relationship between many independent variables and one dependent variable and the contribution and influence of each independent variable on dependent variable (Baron & Kenny, 1986; Foster et al., 1998). In this regression analysis, standardized coefficients (standardized beta) were used for all analysis (Jaccard et al., 1990).

Demographic Data

Table 1: Demographic
Participant Characteristics (n = 136)

	Item	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	42	30.9
	Female	94	69.1
Age	18 – 28 years old	62	45.6
	29 – 39 years old	45	33.1
	40 – 50 years old	12	8.8
	51 years old and above	17	12.5
Marital status	Single	63	46.3
	Married	67	49.3
	Divorced	6	4.4
Level of education	Diplomas	49	36.0
	Bachelor Degrees	46	33.8
	Master’s Degree	5	3.7
	Others	35	25.7
Position in the company	First Level	54	39.7
	Middle Level	76	55.9
	Upper Level	6	4.4

Work experience	1 – 10 years	97	71.3
	11 – 20 years	21	15.4
	21 – 30 years	7	5.1
	31 years and above	11	8.1
Department	Human Resource	19	14.0
	Finance	15	11.0
	Marketing	7	5.1
	Operation	40	29.4
	Others	55	40.4
Monthly Income	Below RM1,000	9	6.6
	RM1,001 – RM5,000	113	83.1
	RM5,001 – RM10,000	13	9.6
	RM10,001 – RM15,000	1	0.7
	Above RM15,001	0	0

Table 1 shows the demographic analysis of the respondents where the majority respondents were female (68.4%) over males (30.9%), ages between 18 – 28 years old (45.6%), employees' marital status which is married (49.3%) and the highest level of education is Diplomas holders (36.0%). Next, position in the company the highest is middle level which is (55.9%), work experience between 1 – 10 years (71.3%), employees work in others department is (40.4%) and lastly the highest employees' monthly income is RM1,001 – RM5,000 which is (83.1%).

Result of Validity and Reliability Analysis for The Measurement Scale

Table 2: Measurement validity and reliability of measurement scale

Measures	Items	Factor Loadings	KMO	Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Eigen Value	Variance Description	Cronbach Alpha
HR Practices	9	0.60 to 0.80	0.89	563.36, p = 0.000	4.73	52.53	0.885
Well-Being	7	0.64 to 0.81	0.83	507.20, p = 0.000	3.818	54.55	0.858
Job Motivation	8	0.53 to 0.77	0.76	540.06, p = 0.000	3.953	49.41	0.850

Table 2 shows the result of validity and reliability analysis of the measurement scale. Exploratory analysis was performed on 24 items representing the construct from the study model, namely HR practices (e.g., skill, motivation & opportunity-enhancing) (9 items), Well-being (e.g., job satisfaction, job stress & perceived organizational support)(7 items) and Job motivation (e.g., intrinsic & extrinsic) (8 items). Specifically, test result statistics confirm that all items have factor loadings value range of 0.5 to 0.8 indicates that the items have a high level of validity. Next, for the Kaiser Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's test was performed to check the level adequacy of the study sample whether it is appropriate or inappropriate to conduct validity and reliability tests of measurement scales. All variables have a KMO value exceeding 0.60, with a significant Bartlett's sferas test for all variables. Furthermore, all variables have an Eigen value exceedingly more than 1.0 with a value variance description of more than 45 percent (Hair et al., 1998) and the Cronbach's alpha value for all variables is more than 0.70,

indicating that the study variable has a high level of reliability (Nunally & Bernstein, 1994). Overall, the test results of this statistical analysis confirm that the instrument of this study has achieved a high level of validity and reliability for analytical purpose.

Descriptive Statistic and Pearson Correlation Analysis

Table 3: Descriptive Statistic and Pearson Correlation Analysis

Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation	1	2	3
HR Practices	4.10	0.64	1		
Well-Being	3.99	0.65	0.535**	1	
Job Motivation	4.10	0.56	0.591**	0.607**	1

Note: Level of significant at *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

Analysis of the Constructs

Table 3 shows the result of descriptive statistic and Pearson correlation analysis. The mean value for all variables were between 3.99 and 4.10, signifying that the HR practices, Well-being and Job motivation are from high level (3.99) to very high level (4.10). As for standard deviation, the value for all variables in the range between 0.56 and 0.65. The correlation coefficients for the relationship between independent variable (HR practices) and the mediating variable (Well-being) and the relationship between the dependent variable (Job motivation) has a value less than 0.90, indicating the data were not affected by serious collinearity problem (Hair et al., 1998; Sekaran, 2000).

Results of Stepwise Regression Analysis

Table 4: Results of Stepwise Regression Analysis

Variables	Dependent Variable (Job Motivation)		
	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
Gender	-0.15	-0.11	-0.08
Age	-0.02	-0.01	0.04
Marital	-0.17	-0.07	-0.13
Education	-0.05	-0.01	-0.08
Position	-0.02	-0.04	-0.01
Experience	0.10	0.06	0.03
Department	-0.03	-0.01	-0.06
Income	0.06	0.05	0.09
Independent Variable		0.58***	0.32***
HR Practices			
Mediating Variable			0.46***
Well-Being			
R ²	0.05	0.37	0.51
Adjusted R ²	-0.01	0.33	0.47
F	0.85	8.23***	12.74***
Δ R ²	0.05	0.32	0.14
FΔ R ²	0.85	63.88	33.98

Note: Level of significant at *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

Table 4 show that demographic variables were entered in Step 1, then followed by entering independent variable (i.e., HR practices) in Step 2 and Step 3 entering mediating variable (i.e., Well-being). Job motivation was used as the dependent variable. An examination of multicollinearity shows that the variance inflation factor (VIF) value for the relationship between HR practices and employees' well-being was 1.04, ($\beta = 0.57, p < .001$), therefore H2 was fully accepted and VIF value for the relationship between employees' well-being and job motivation is 1.05, ($\beta = 0.64, p < .001$) therefore H3 was fully accepted. Means that the data of this study were free from multicollinearity seriously problems and the VIF tolerance values were less than tolerance value of 5.0 (Hair et al., 2017).

Outcomes of Testing Hypothesis

Table 4 (above) shows the results of hypothesis testing of well-being as a mediating between HR practices and job motivation. Step 1 showed that demographic variables were found not significant predictor of job motivation. Step 2 showed that before the inclusion of well-being into the analysis, HR practices ($\beta = 0.58, p < .001$) was significantly correlated with job motivation. Step 3 revealed that well-being was validated as a mediating variable for HR practices and job motivation ($\beta = 0.46, p < .001$), therefore H4 was fully accepted. The variable in this measure have explained 37% of the variance in the dependent variable. Next, as shown in Step 3 after the inclusion of well-being into the analysis, the previous significant relationship between HR practices and job motivation was significant ($\beta = 0.32, p < .001$) but the strength of such relationship was decreased. This result confirmed that the strength of HR practices and job motivation relationships was strongly influenced by well-being, signifying that well-being played a full mediating role in the relationship between the variables.

Discussion, Implications, Limitations and Directions for Future Research

The findings of this study indicate that the well-being is able to act as an important intermediary variable in the relationship between the HR practices and job motivation. In the context of this study, most respondents argued that the involvement in HR practices (i.e., skill, motivation and opportunity-enhancing) and well-being tends to increase and determinant for employees to increase their job motivation. The implication of this study can be divided into three major aspects such as theoretical contribution, robustness of research methodology and practical contribution. In terms of theoretical contribution, this study shows the important findings which is different dimensions of HR practices has increased employees' well-being and job motivation in the organization. This result is consistent with studied conducted by (Khoreva et., 2017). Therefore, the findings of this study have found that well-being playing important role as a full mediating variable in the relationship between HR practices and job motivation. Well-being has been successfully applied within the organization. Next, for robustness of research methodology, psychometric assessments able to verify the validity and reliability of measurement scale. This can help produce accurate and reliable findings. For practical contribution, the significance of this study may be used a guideline by human resource management to sustain employees' well-being that led to increase the job motivation. The organization leaders could enable more efficient and effective human resources policies by embracing employees as assets instead of liabilities, investing in them and paying attention to their survival, growth and personal development. In the meantime, leaders can polish more employees' skill, grant opportunities and motivation for employees to actively participate in the workplace, so that the value of human resources could be tremendously increased for the organization whereby. If these criteria were implemented, we advocate organization need to improve the psychological well-being of employees' and encourage them to be more creative and innovative. In order to reduce stress among employees and boost their job motivation, it

may wiser organization to instruct employees' how to complete the work effectively and encourage their involvement in decision making. Eventually the organization could obtain the organizational goals and employees could have their overall well-being, creating win-win situation.

This study has several limitations. First, this study was a cross-sectional research design in which the data were collected with the limited time. It only describes the respondents' perceptions in general and is not detailed on the study of the relationship between the intermediate variables, independent variables and dependent variables. Second, during pandemic it is not easy to get the respondents to answer the questionnaire because some employees had to work from home, work from office, quarantine, difficult to distribute the questionnaire and companies had difficult time to survive during pandemic where they had to terminate or reduce the labor to cut the cost. Convenient sampling technique is the fastest and best way to collect the data in the future research. Third, the outcome of multiple regression analysis focused on the level of performance variation explained by the regression equations and it was also helpful to indicate the amount of dependent variable variation not explained (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001). Although a substantial amount of variance in dependent measure explained by the significant predictors was identified, there were still a number of unexplained factors that could be incorporated to identify the casual relationship among variables and their relative explanatory power. Therefore, one should be cautious about generalizing the statistical results of this study.

First, longitudinal studies should be utilized because they are able to collect data and describe the patterns of change, as well as the direction and magnitude of causal relationships between variables of interest. Second, future research should also study the examined associations in other industry and sector settings. Third, other potential organizational and personal characteristics should be used in future researches because they may provide meaningful perspective in understanding the way individual similarities and differences affect participation in compensation system. Lastly, we were able to illustrate only a fragmented picture of employee well-being by measuring its dimensions in terms of the proxies used in previous research. However, other scales can be utilized in future studies (cf. Fisher, 2010; VanDe Voorde et al., 2012)

Conclusions

The conclusion is human resource practices plays a great role to lead the organizations. The finding of the study has revealed a positive relationship, well-being as a mediating variable in the relationship between HR practices and job motivation. Thus, current research and practice within job motivation model need to consider perceptions of well-being as an aspect of employees' motivation in an organizational. This study highlights a series of important pathways for enhancing employee well-being and employee performance. Researcher hope this study will stimulate more theoretical and empirical research on how to make employees happy, healthy and social. Thus, generating employee performance synergies and this may lead employees to maintain and support organizational strategy and goals.

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