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KEYWORDS	ABSTRACT
<p>Employment Security, Employees' Competencies & Organizational Performance, Mediation, Higher Education</p>	<p>This study aims to investigate mediating role of employees' competencies in relationship amid employment security and organizational performance. The study adopted a quantitative research design, and data was collected through questionnaire from 322 teachers as working in the selected higher institutions. The statistical tools were used to analyze the data with respect to the hypothesized relationships and test hypotheses. The results of study indicated that employment security has positive and significant relationship with employees' competencies, and employees' competencies have positive and significant relationship with organizational performance. Study found that employees' competencies partially mediate the links amid employment security and organizational performance. Thus, these findings suggest that organizations should invest in employment security measures to enhance employees' competencies, which, in turn, can positively affect organizational performance. Also, the organizations should focus on developing employees' competencies to improve performance, and ensure employment security to retain competent employees. This study adds to existing literature upon the relationship between employment security, employees' competencies, and organizational performance.</p> <p> 2023 Journal of Social Sciences Development</p>
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INTRODUCTION

The concept of employment security has gained significant attention in HRM literature as it is associated with various positive outcomes like job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and retention (Akhtar, Javed & Ramzan, 2022). On other hand, organizational performance has been focal point for researchers as it is the foremost determinant of organizational credibility, standing and ultimate success in different situations and contexts (Alqudah, Carballo & Ruzo, 2022). The previous studies examined relationship amid employment security and organization performance, however, little is known about mediating mechanism that provide linkages amid both phenomena

(Pavlopoulos, & Chkalova, 2022). In this linking, mediating role of employees' competencies in linking employment security and organizational performance requires further exploration as the employees' competencies are essential for employment security while employment security is essential for organizational desired developments and success (Mahmood, Hee, Yin & Hamli, 2018). This study aims to examine potential relationships among research variables in higher educational context in developing countries.

In higher educational context, employees' competencies, employment security and organizational performance foremost predictors toward organizational desired standing, reputation and success (Rashid & Shah, 2016). The higher education institutions require highly competent and skilled employees to deliver the quality education and realize their strong mission and desired objectives (Sheikh, Chandler, Hussain & Timmons, 2022). The employment security is vital for employees as it contributes towards the job satisfaction, commitment, and retention (Paraschi, Georgopoulos & Papanikou, 2022). The employees' competencies play the vital role in delivering quality education to students. The competent and dedicated employees are better equipped to design and deliver courses, conduct research, and provide student support, leading toward improved outcomes and institutional reputation (Yafi, Tehseen & Haider, 2021). The competent employees can contribute to innovation and research in respective fields, leading to new knowledge creation, employment security, professional growth and development that are vital for institutional credibility, standing and ultimate success.

The effective performance leads to desired success, however, inconsistent performance results in undesirable failure (Faiz, Samma, Zhao & Zhang, 2019). In this drive, in the contemporary viable environments, success of organizations is phenomenal and dependent upon the numerous factors, including effective utilization of the human resources (Gull & Idrees, 2021). Thus, human resource management is vital to the desired success in diverse situations. The human resource management depends upon numerous practices considered significant building blocks for managing human resources in organization (Salman, Ganie, Ganaie, Imran & Khan, 2020). Existing research provides valuable guidelines about relationships between human resource practices and diverse outcome variables (Wright & McMahan, 1992). The employment security is important practice of human resource practices as it is effective tool for employees and organizational high performance as and when employees feel secure, will show their unstinting performance; thus, higher organizational performance will be the only result (Hassan, Hashim & Ismail, 2006) overwhelmed at the desired development and success.

The job security surges satisfaction and increases commitment as the committed employees shows higher performances and consequently, organizational credibility and success will be the output (Alas, Karrelson & Niglas, 2008). Therefore, the leadership and management must offer career development opportunities to employees to increase their motivation and performance (Anitha & Kumar, 2016). The commitment and motivation are overwhelmed by increased performances; thus, quality education will be only output. The employees' competencies have a significant impact on organizational performance as it refers to knowledge, skills and abilities that employees possess and use to perform jobs effectively (Salman, Ganie, Ganaie, Imran & Khan, 2020). These competencies

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are vital for employees' performance and contribute toward organizational success as competent employees are productive, leading to increased productivity and output for organization (Gull & Idrees, 2021). The study emphasizes importance of developing employees' competencies to improve organizational performance, ensuring employment security to retain competent and committed employees within institutions.

Problem Statement

A problem statement in a research study provides an overview of the issue addressed in particular context and its background support for influencing the ultimate beneficiaries. It could outline the goals for the necessary research to meet targeted leading goals. In light of this, the present study's objective is to provide new information regarding current problems by examining the relationship between research variables in a specific context. The employee's emotions, beliefs, behaviors, and views are any firm's productivity strengths since institutions think that HR is their lifeblood that keeps them alive and growing. Human resource management has taken on more central role inside enterprises, including gaining a competitive edge. Employees' abilities are improved by selecting best people, enhancing knowledge over appropriate training, developing the crucial remuneration system, and controlling performances. This study aims to examine the employees' competencies as mediator in lining employment security and organizational performance in the context of higher education institutions.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In the contemporary era, the success and failure of different organizations are dependent upon the effective use of human resources that are considered significant gears for smooth functioning, as well as practical implementation of various policies and strategies to realize the leading objectives toward success (Faiz, Samma, Wang, Zhao, Zhang, 2019). Organizations using an effective human resource management system are considered successful in attaining various and leading strategic objectives effectively toward realizing desired developments and success (Salman, Ganie, Ganaie, Imran & Khan, 2020). Literature revealed that HRM is significant toward various organizational outcomes and performance in the diverse contexts, including education, with diverse significant consequences (Anwar & Nawzad, 2021). Thus, human resources are essential towards the various significant outcomes, including the commitment, motivation and performance (Zafar, Memon, & Khan, 2018). It is expected that organizations with robust employee performance would deliver consistently focused yield from different parameters and thus several elements affect affiliation between employees and organization and consequently, innovative HR function is essential for institution to ensure success.

Human resource management is considered backbone of organizations' success of organizations and allied practices helps management of organizations to utilize and manage human resources in organizations effectively (Ahmad & Schroeder, 2003). These practices are part of the conceptual integration and execution of HR strategy and provide way to start the organizational activities (Aladwan, Bhanugopan & DNetto, 2015). Despite fact that employee harmony and organization stability are indispensable towards global attitudes of the human resource management towards

various outcomes in different contexts for different purposes towards development (Alas, Karrelson & Niglas, 2008). The organizations need highly talented workforces who can work efficiently and effectively to improve organizational activities and practices overwhelmed at expected standards towards developments and success (Cooke, Schuler & Varma, 2020). In contemporary competitive environment, institutions are required to effectively utilize human resources by applying required practices to increase institutions' performance and reach their desired objectives (Currie & Kerrin, 2010). Employees job security is vital for improving the employees' competencies culminates at the improved institutional performance.

The core duty of HRM is to coordinate human resources to accomplish organizational objectives as every organization needs human resources personnel to carry out organizational tasks through effective and efficient manners (Ahmad & Schroeder, 2003). Thus, essential practices about human resource management is the employment security, as researchers consider the most effective tool towards high performance of the employees and organization (Alqudah, Carballo & Ruzo, 2022). It is accredited fact that employees show their wholehearted performance when they feel secure, and thus the higher organizational performance will be the only result (David & Zhou, 2021). The employees' perception about job security is connected to their sense of confidence in their work environment as the more confident the employees are about job security, the more devoted they are towards the institutional strategic tasks (Pavlopoulos & Chkalova, 2022). The experimental research suggests that job security significantly influences organizational performance when the institutions offers it in different circumstances as per employees' demands. In this connection, the employees job securities improve their perceptions toward institutional fairness thereby providing reflection to desired outcomes.

The performance is multidimensional phenomenon that is used to quantify efforts, bringing to the face some negative aspects crucial to deciding an organizational realization towards desired and leading outcomes (Sheikh, Chandler, Hussain & Timmons, 2022). The performance serves as the fulcrum for all organizational methods and procedures that are crucial in defining the corporate credibility, making it solely liable for the desired organizational achievement and long waiting development (Anwar & Abdullah, 2021). The institution also need individual to demonstrate their abilities and expertise when pursuing the high-priority projects and objectives that are regarded highly by the organization (Chand & Katou, 2007). In this linking, when assessing and gauging the performance of individuals and relevant organization, performance as multidimensional concept signified significant features that matter greatly towards desired outcomes (Mahmood, Hee, Yin & Hamli, 2018). In face of intense competition, this is vital to maintaining the organizational efficacy and competitiveness. The concept has developed into crucial phenomenon that outlines long-term development perspective and survival standards that helps in taming desired standards required toward anticipated developments.

The concept of employees' competencies needs to be revised as sometimes becomes more complex as it is the mixture of different capabilities and skills that are vital in shaping employees' attitudes and performance per required standards which thus help organization in attaining its objectives (Gull & Idrees, 2021). The employee skills can be basis for developing organizational capabilities

that, over time, may result in more outstanding performance and thus employing the qualified personnel will allow businesses to produce high-quality goods and services, essential for fostering client confidence, goodwill, and contentment (Gull & Idrees, 2021). Based on resource-based view, employee skills substantially impact organizational performance over employment securities and commitment toward determinations in realizing important tasks for developments (Salman, Ganie, Ganaie, Imran & Khan, 2020). The employees have all qualities extraordinary talents that serve as primary sources of competitive advantage and main drivers of the organizational success (Sheikh, Chandler, Hussain & Timmons, 2022). So, employee competencies are better over employment security culminates at desired organizational performance overwhelmed at the desired outcomes required for ultimate development.

- H1: There is positive and significant association between predictor, mediator and criterion variables of study (Correlation).
- H2: The predictor and mediator have significant impact upon criterion variable (organizational performance) of study (Regression).
- H3: The employees' competencies significantly mediated link between employment security and organizational performance (Mediation).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The HRM practice (employment security) and its connection to organizational performance and success along with employees' abilities and competencies are current realities that are intended to be further investigated in the higher education setting using statistical trials to provide the new approaches, findings, and information (Hair, Black, Babin & Anderson, 2010). This study employs a survey methodology as surveys are prevalent in social research among the several techniques for gathering data (Gubrium & Holstein, 2000). The positivist approach also advises survey strategy to conduct research projects methodically and get to more thorough conclusions (Palys & Atchison, 2014). In this linking, for the population-based surveys, cross-sectional designs are employed, and sample results are utilized to infer what the respondents think about various subjects (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010). Because the prevalent and leading circumstances need to be clarified, the survey approach involves filling questionnaire on google form in order to measure the variables through different leading attributes.

The faculty members from southern region educational institutions in KP, Pakistan, made up the population of current study. The sample was drawn using a statistical procedure for calculating sample size. The researcher chose higher education institutions in the southern area, and as a consequence, findings may be helpful in generalizing conclusions to all universities. There were total 2129 faculty members in the selected institutions and as ample of 322 was selected through sampling formula (Yamani, 1967). The data was collected through two different important sources like secondary source (available literature) and primary source (questionnaire) thereby analyzing the data through different statistical procedures to conduct the research, extracting the desired information and reaching the conclusion used for decision-making through measured scales and

desired ethical considerations to ensure the transparent procedures and methods along with the supporting techniques.

RESULTS OF STUDY

The results provided material describing research variables in terms of significant traits essential in determining the study variables. The subtotals relating to data collected from the respondents and standard deviations supplied in this section to help readers understand variables in sense of rates, percent, lowest and highest participation rates, percentage distribution, and intensities to describe the variables.

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics & Alpha Reliabilities

Scales	Item	M	SD	a	Range		Skewness	Kurtosis
					Potential	Actual		
Employment Security	10	36.09	4.20	.69	1-5	5-50	-1.47	1.07
Employees' Competencies	10	36.59	.92	.89	1-5	5-50	-.75	.45
Organizational Performance	10	36.37	4.57	.71	1-5	5-50	-1.23	1.08

Note 1. Standard error is .26 for all instruments.

The information on describing research variables is provided by descriptive statistics, that is vital information for assessing the description of the research variables. Table 1 shows that the alpha reliability coefficients for HR procedures are noticeably high. Organizational performance is .71, and employee competency is .89, ethical atmosphere is .69, and .86. All scores were found to be normally distributed, with values of kurtosis and skewness less than 2. The univariate normality analysis confirmed this.

Table 2 Correlation Analysis (H1)

		EMS	EMC
Employees' Competencies	Pearson Correlation	.416*	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	322	
Organizational Performance	Pearson Correlation	.659**	.552**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000
	N	322	322

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

The association between independent variables like the employees' competencies, employment security and organizational performance was first hypothesis (H1). Thus, the findings supported the hypothesis that the current study's independent, dependent, and mediating variables were significantly associated. The employment security and organizational performance (R = .659 & P = .000), employees' competencies and organizational performance (R = .552 & P = .000), as well as employment security and employees' competencies (R = .416 & P = .000). Thus, results confirmed

the association between research variables and therefore, H1 about association is thus accepted and substantiated.

Table 3 Regression Analysis (Model Summary) (H2)

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R2	SEE
1	.740a	.547	.538	.41293

Table 4 Regression Analysis (ANOVA) (H2)

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	
1	Regression	64.879	6	10.813	63.417	.000b
	Residual	53.710	315	.171		
	Total	118.590	321			

- a. Predictors: Employees' Competencies & Employment Security
- b. Dependent Variable: Organizational Performance

Table 5 Regression Analysis (Coefficient) (H2)

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	SE	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.230	.197		1.164	.245
	Employment Security	.089	.031	.118	2.894	.000
	Employees' Competencies	.107	.037	.116	2.874	.004

The second hypothesis was about the predictability of the organizational performance through the employment security and employees' competencies. The results exposed the significant influence of predicting variables (employment security,) mediating variables (employees' competencies) on criterion variable (organizational performance). The results in the regression procedure revealed 55% variance in criterion variable through predictors and mediator and confident and substantial impression of preceptors like employment security, (B = .089 & P = .000)), and the employees' competencies, (B = .107 & P = .004). Consequently, from these results, H2 about the cause-and-effect relationship among the research variables of the current study is consequently accepted as well as substantiated.

Table 6 Model Summary (H3)

R	R Square	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
.1159	.1134	.4284	4.3574	1.0000	320.0000	.0376

Table 7 Coefficients of Regression (H3)

Model	Coefficient	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	3.9878	.1449	27.5228	.0000	3.7028	4.2729
Employment Security	-.0947	.0453	-2.0874	.0376	-.1839	-.0054

Predicting Variable: Employment Security
 Criterion Variable: Employees' Competencies

Table 8 Model Summary (H3)

R	R Square	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
.3845	.1478	.3168	27.6713	2.0000	319.0000	.0000

Table 9 Coefficients of Regression (H3)

Model	Coefficient	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	1.7286	.2286	7.5602	.0000	1.2788	2.1785
Employment Security	.2205	.0393	5.6162	.0000	.1432	.2977
Employees' Competencies	.2642	.0481	5.4967	.0000	.1697	.3588

Predicting Variable: Employment Security, Employees' Competencies

Criterion Variable: Organizational Performance

Table 10 Model Summary (H3)

R	R Square	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
.2591	.1671	.3457	23.0264	1.0000	320.0000	.0000

Table 11 Coefficients of Regression (H3)

Model	Coefficient	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	2.7824	.1302	21.3757	.0000	2.5263	3.0385
Employment Security	.1955	.0407	4.7986	.0000	.1153	.2756

Predicting Variable: Employment Security

Criterion Variable: Organizational Performance

The third hypothesis was about mediating role of the employees' competencies in the relationship employment security and the organizational performance. The mediation procedure provides the different leading spheres from different paths. The first path revealed the important information wherein mediator like employees' competencies was used as criterion variable and employment security as predictor. Results revealed an 11% variance in ethical climate due to employment security. The second mediation path revealed that there is a 14% variance in the organizational performance due to the employee competencies and employment security to the significant and positive effect on the organizational performance wherein teaching and change ($B = .2205$ & $P = .000$) and employee competencies ($B = .2642$ & $P = .000$). Similarly, third path revealed that there is 17% variance in the organizational performance due to employment security as evident from mediation analysis about mediation sixth model in the data analysis in order to extract the desired leading information.

In order to make the desired decision regarding the mediation, whether partial or complete, it is vital to consider the mediation process via all four approaches. Findings showed that employees' competencies partially mediated the link between organizational performance and employment security as the coefficient value remained significant while the beta values in direct and indirect relationships decreased from significant to (.1905) and (.2205), respectively (.0000). The findings of

this study offer essential knowledge concerning mediation analysis. Through partial mediation, confirmed that both employees' competencies and employment security are vital in predicting performance, these results established that employees' competencies significantly influence the connection between performance and employment security. As a result, H3 is logically accepted and supported.

DISCUSSION

This study aimed to examine mediating role of employees' competencies in relationship between employment security and organizational performance in context of higher education institutions. The employment security is assurance and stability of employees' jobs within the organizations, while organizational performance relates to achievement of organizational goals and objectives however, competencies, on other hand, encompass knowledge, skills, abilities, and behaviors that employees possess and utilize in their roles (Paraschi, Georgopoulos & Papanikou, 2022; Salman, Ganie, Ganaie, Imran & Khan, 2020; Mahmood, Hee, Yin & Hamli, 2018). In this regard, when employees feel secure in their jobs, they are likely to be motivated to perform well as job security reduces fear of losing their positions, allowing employees to focus upon tasks and responsibilities. This motivation can translate into improved competencies, such as increased job knowledge, skill development, and willingness to go extra mile to contribute to organizational performance (Sheikh, Chandler, Hussain & Timmons, 2022; Akhtar, Javed & Ramzan, 2022; Anwar & Abdullah, 2021). The employment security can foster sense of loyalty and commitment among employees, leading to higher levels of engagement.

The engaged employees are more likely to invest effort and energy into their work, resulting in improved competencies as engaged employees tend to be more proactive in seeking opportunities for growth and development, which enhances their competencies and, consequently, improve the organizational performance (Faiz, Samma, Wang, Zhao, Zhang, 2019; Gull & Idrees, 2021). The organizations that provides employment security are inclined to invest in employees' development that offer training programs, mentorship opportunities, other initiatives to enhance employees' competencies and these investments can lead to the acquisition of new skills and knowledge, and refinement of the existing ones (Hassan Hashim & Ismail, 2006; Pavlopoulos & Chkalova, 2022). As employees become competent, they can positively impact organizational performance through their enhanced abilities and expertise. Employment security promotes a positive work environment where employees feel calm sharing knowledge and collaborating with colleagues (Rashid & Shah, 2016; Yafi, Tehseen & Haider, 2021). The employees may feel more empowered to adapt to change and overcome challenges. Therefore, this flexibility and agility in competencies can contribute to the organizational performance by enabling the organization to navigate uncertain times and seize opportunities for growth.

CONCLUSION

The results of study revealed that employment security positively influences the organizational performance by fostering employees' competencies in various manners towards the desired and leading outcomes. By providing job security, the organizations can enhance employee motivation,

leading to increased competencies and improved organizational performance. Additionally, the employment security promotes employee engagement, encouraging individuals to invest effort and seek opportunities for growth and development, thereby enhancing their competencies and contributing to organizational success. The higher institutions that offer employment security are more likely to invest in the employee development, enhancing competencies. The positive work environment created by employment security promotes knowledge sharing and collaboration among employees, which strengthens their competencies. Thus, by exchanging best practices and innovative ideas, employees can enhance their abilities and positively impact the organizational performance. While employees' competencies play a mediating role, it is important to recognize that other factors, such as leadership, organizational culture, resources, and external environment, can also influence relationship between employment security and organizational performance in particular context

Recommendations

1. Organizations should prioritize creating a culture of employment security by providing clear communication about job stability and opportunities for growth. When employees feel secure in their positions, they are likely to invest in developing their competencies and contribute to organizational performance.
2. The institutions need to allocate resources to invest in employee development initiatives such as training programs, workshops, mentorship, and coaching. These efforts should focus on enhancing employees' competencies and aligning them with organizational goals in different situations.
3. The institutions are required to create a learning environment where knowledge sharing, collaboration, and continuous learning are encouraged. This can be achieved through the implementation of knowledge management systems, cross-functional projects as well as platforms for sharing best practices.
4. The institutions are required to offer employees opportunities to expand their skills and knowledge over cross-training, job rotation, and exposure to different teams. By providing diverse experiences, employees can develop broader set of competencies that positively impact organizational performance.
5. The institutions are required to implement active recognition and reward systems that acknowledge and celebrate employees' competency and skills development as it include performance evaluations that assess both results achieved and competency growth toward desired leading consequences.

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