

# Human Resource Management Practices and Employee Performance in Pakistan

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## Abstract

*Human resource is an asset of an organization and necessary for its competitive advantage. However, human resource management can pose a greater challenge as compared to technology and capital management. Organizations also require an effective human resource management system. Many scholars have conducted research to establish the correlation between Human Resource Management (HRM) interventions and the performance of employees in developed countries. However, there is a lack of research on this issue in Pakistan. This research paper has examined the effect of human resource management practices such as job rotation, employee engagement, leadership, organizational politics, and harassment on employee performance. It also explains how decisions made by human resource management teams are likely to influence organizational performance. A survey research design was adopted to collect data from 305 respondents. The results suggest that human resource management practices have a profound effect on employee performance in Pakistan.*

**Keywords:** *Human resource management practices, human resource intervention, employee performance.*

## Introduction

The success and failure of organizations are largely dependent on employee performance. Successful firms have realized that human resource is one of the most critical factors affecting organizational performance (Shaukat, Ashraf & Ghafoor, 2015). Despite the nature and size of a firm, the achievement of its objectives depends on the attitude and behavior of its employees. The planning and evaluation of employees in an organization requires sound human resource management practices (Iqbal, Anwar & Haider, 2015).

Organizations are constantly striving to improve employee performance by enhancing

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their human resource management practices. Oparanma & Nwaeke (2015) suggests that the main source of a firm's competitive advantage are sound human resource management practices. Studies have found that there is a positive correlation between various components of human resource management and employee performance. It is argued that human resource management practices improve the general performance of the organization leading to high profits (Aycan et al., 2000; Tahir et al., 2014).

Despite the abundance of literature on human resource management practices and employee performance in developed countries, limited evidence is available in the context of Pakistan. Therefore, this study examines the relationship between human resource management practices and employee performance in Pakistan.

## **Literature Review**

Human resource is the most important asset of an organization. Its effectiveness and efficiency is dependent upon many factors, also known as the components of human resource management (Tahir et al., 2014). This study has examined the effect of these components on employee performance by carrying out a survey of both private and public organizations in Pakistan. It uses five components of human resource management, i.e. job rotation, employee engagement, leadership, organizational politics and harassment. The following sections contain a brief discussion of the components of human resource management that will be used for the development of the conceptual framework.

### **Job Rotation**

Job rotation involves the horizontal movement of an employee from one job, task or department to another in a firm. In such cases, workers are systematically transferred from one job to another (Leider et al, 2015). Tarus (2014) suggests that job rotation is carried out with the aim of allowing the employee to gain skills, knowledge and awareness. Awojo (1997) indicates that job rotation is one of the best devices for training employees in an organization. After training programs, employees are expected to have higher productivity which enhances firm performance (Oparanma & Nwaeke, 2015; Tarus, 2014).

### **Employee Engagement**

Employee engagement is the extent to which employees are committed to the organization (Dajani, 2015). It is an attitude which encourages the employee to go beyond his/her basic job description. According to the Harvard Business Review (2016), employee engagement has become a priority for top businesses. Many business leaders have understood the importance of a well-performing workforce for the growth and survival of a business. However, a few businesses have taken proactive steps for enhancing employee engagement (Harvard Business Review, 2016; Alfes et al, 2013).

A report released by Harvard Business Review (2016) indicates that a highly engaged workforce increases productivity, innovation and firm performance. Employee engagement also reduces the costs of hiring and retaining employees in a competitive marketplace. Therefore, companies with a high-level of employee engagement may outperform rival organizations with poor employee engagement (Dajani, 2015).

## **Leadership**

An effective leader creates a vision of the future and motivates and inspires employees to engage with that vision (Chen et al., 2014). An organizational leader provides direction to employees for efficiently accomplishing the firms' objectives. Leadership encompasses persuasion and the ability to recognize, affirm and enhance the performance of team members (Mulki et al., 2015). Effective leaders also have technical skills, managerial expertise and cultural literacy among other relevant skills and knowledge (Iqbal, Anwar & Haider, 2015). A good leader is responsible for providing guidance and sharing knowledge with his/her subordinates for improving organizational performance. An effective leader recognizes the fact that being in charge of a team is a great responsibility (Iqbal, Anwar & Haider, 2015; Men and Stacks, 2013). There are various leadership styles in an organization. Research suggests that every leader has a unique leadership style for promoting employee performance and achieving organizational goals (Iqbal, Anwar & Haider, 2015; Wong and Laschinger, 2013).

## **Organizational Politics**

Some employees do not believe in hard work. These employees use politics for securing their jobs. In many cases, employees are involved in organizational politics for gaining attention of their superiors (Kroeze & Keulen, 2014). Gull & Zaidi (2012) define organizational politics as the activity that allows employees to accomplish their goals and objectives without following the proper channels in an organization. In developing countries, employees of many public sector organizations also have political affiliations. Such employees are a major concern as they pursue their selfish interests at the expense of other workers and organizational objectives (Gull & Zaidi, 2012). Workplace politics generally leads to a decline in the overall productivity of an organization. Anecdotal evidence suggests that employees who are involved in workplace politics pay little or no attention to their official responsibilities (Balci et al., 2016).

## **Harassment**

Workplace harassment in any form is not permissible. It is an unwanted behavior on grounds of race, gender, religious beliefs and so on (Mainiero & Jones, 2013). The most common form of harassment is sexual harassment with female employees in the workplace. Unfortunately, sexual harassment is very common in organizations (Malik & Farooqi, 2014).

While some cases of harassment are reported, others remain unreported for various reasons (Merkin & Shah, 2014). There is an abundant literature on the impact of sexual harassment on employee performance (Merkin & Shah, 2014; Malik & Farooqi, 2014). Research suggests that sexual harassment is negatively associated with psychological wellbeing, physical health and employee performance (Tarus, 2014). In addition, sexual harassment enhances distress and reduces the physical productivity of employees (Merkin & Shah, 2014; Neall & Tuckey, 2014).

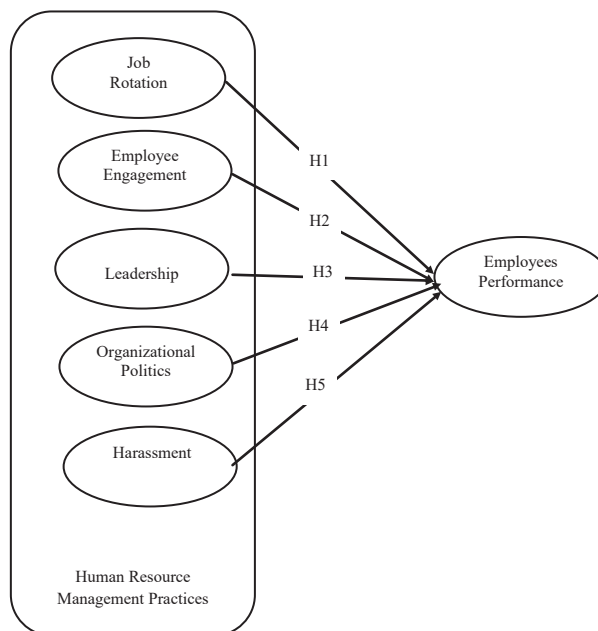
## Employee performance

Employee performance involves the execution of defined duties, meeting deadlines, competence of the workforce and the efficiency in work operations (Chen et al., 2014). In other words, good employee performance requires workers to execute their job related activities efficiently (Reb, Narayanan & Chaturvedi, 2014). Employee performance is affected by many factors including human resource management practices (Iqbal, Anwar & Haider, 2015).

## Theoretical Grounding of the Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework has been developed and presented in Figure 1. It is followed by a discussion of the relationships depicted in the conceptual framework.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework



## Job Rotation and Employee Performance

In a study of job rotation at the Lake Victoria North Water Board, Tarus (2014) found that the job rotation strategy resulted in high employee performance. The effects of job rotation also depend upon how employees perceive it (Leider et al, 2015). If employees view it positively, they are more likely to benefit from the strategy with an improvement in knowledge and skills. Job rotation should enrich employees by offering them opportunities for learning and growth (Awojo, 1997).

Oparanma & Nwaeka (2015) also found that job rotation improves the overall productivity of both an organization and employees. Job rotation not only enhances the skills and knowledge of employees, but it also improves management (Oparanma & Nwaeka, 2015; Tarus, 2014). Through this strategy, the management is able to assess and evaluate the hands-on skills possessed by their workers. Frequent and strategic job rotations also provide an effective internal control system with benefits for both employees and management (Awojo, 1997).

H1: Job rotation has a positive impact on employee performance.

## Employee Engagement and Employee Performance

Dajani (2015) investigates whether employee engagement has an impact on job performance. The study found that leadership of the organization affects employee engagement (Alfes et al, 2013). When employees are more involved in decision making and have responsibilities, they become more engaged (Burton, Chen, & Schultz, 2017). Moreover, the relationship with supervisors also affects employee attitude and engagement level. However, training and development had the least impact on employee engagement (Dajani, 2015). On the contrary, it is argued that compensation and organizational policies are pivotal for employee engagement. Executives should also play a major role in enhancing employee engagement. High employee engagement is likely to reduce staff turnover within the organization (Mishra, Boynton & Mishra, 2014).

H2: Employee engagement has a positive impact on employee performance.

## Leadership and Employee performance

The leadership of an organization is a key element for its success. Several studies have been carried out to investigate how the leadership of an organization affects employee performance (Carter et al., 2013; Sharif & Scandura 2014). Ikenga et al, (2015) examines the relationship between leadership style and employee performance. Plowman et al, (2007) points out that for effective leadership, leaders must possess various skills. They should be

able to act as coaches, connectors, builders, innovators and even explorers.

Leadership skills must also be applied appropriately. Good leadership also depends on communication skills and interactions between the leaders and their team (Carter et al., 2013). Many employees tend to shy off from sharing new ideas or admitting their mistakes. They may either leave or exert more efforts for completing the assigned tasks (Shaukat et al, 2015).

Alternatively, a leader who allocates time for employees and engages in meaningful interactions is likely to receive good performance. Good leadership lies not only in possessing necessary skills but also adherence with the organizational culture (Ikenga et al., 2015). Research suggests that a democratic leadership style encourages employee participation (Carter et al, 2013).

H3: Leadership has a positive impact on employee performance.

## **Organizational Politics and Employee Performance**

Organizational politics is defined as the activity that allows employees to accomplish their goals and objectives without following the proper channels in an organization. Politics in an organization can be due to pay and promotion policies as well as other factors (Abbas, Raja, & Bouckenoghe, 2014). Gull and Zaidi (2012) suggests that employee perception of organizational politics will affect job satisfaction and performance. The job satisfaction of an employee is a key factor that affects performance. For instance, if an employee perceives that organizational politics will reduce his/her chances of a promotion, job satisfaction and performance are adversely affected (Carter et al, 2013). Moreover, when promotions and pay increments become politicized then employee effort and commitment towards the job is reduced (Gull& Zaidi, 2012).

H4: Organizational politics has a negative impact on employee performance.

## **Harassment and Employee Performance**

Harassment of employees takes place in most organizations. These may vary from bullying to sexual harassment. Leider et al, (2015) suggests that sexual harassment tends to occur in many organizations. The frequency of harassment adversely affects the wellbeing of employees and makes them concerned about other forms of mistreatment (Dajani, 2015). Bullying and sexual harassment is mostly common with minorities and women. Merkin and Shah (2014) observed that sexual harassment is not a standard practice and varies from country to country. In some countries, women tolerate sexual harassment due to cultural pressures. Moreover, the extent and nature of sexual harassment varies across countries

and cultural environments (Merkin & Shah, 2014).

Past studies have found that sexual harassment adversely affects employee satisfaction across cultures. Victims of harassment are affected psychologically which negatively influence their wellbeing and perception (Wong and Laschinger, 2013). Harassment at the workplace sometimes leads to absenteeism. Employees who are regularly harassed at work have high absenteeism. Regular absenteeism has a direct impact on employee performance (Merkin & Shah, 2014).

H5: Harassment in an organization has a negative impact on employee performance.

## **Research Methodology**

This study has used a quantitative research approach. This type of research is suitable when the number of respondents are high. The sample size for the study was 305. The sampling technique used in this study was judgmental sampling. The data was collected through a pre-developed questionnaire adapted from earlier studies. The questionnaire had seven items related to demographics and 28 items based on the five point Likert scale. Regression analysis was used for estimating the effect of independent variables on the dependent variable.

## **Respondents Profile**

The respondents of the study include employees from selected private and public sector organizations in Pakistan. Table 1 provides a summary of the respondents' profile.

**Table 1: Respondents' Profile**

<b>Variables</b>		<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Gender	Male	210	69
	Female	95	31
Age	18 – 25 years	145	48
	26 – 35 years	80	26
	36 – 45 years	50	16
	46 – 55 years	25	8
	Over 55	2	2
Work Experience	Less than 2 years	105	34
	2 – 5 years	95	31
	6 – 10 years	70	23
	Over 10 years	35	12
Education	Primary	-	-
	Secondary	-	-
	Graduation	190	63
	Post-Graduation	115	37
Position	Jr. Management	110	36
	Middle Mgt.	155	51
	Sr. Management	40	13
Department	Sales & Marketing	25	8
	Ops & Facilities	30	10
	Supply & Distr.	35	11
	Finance/Audit	25	8
	HRM / HRD	85	28
	Info. Technology	70	23
	Others	35	12
Type of Organization	Public	152	75
	Private	50	25



## Results

### Descriptive Statistics

The descriptive statistics were computed in order to assess the statistical properties of the research variables/constructs. The descriptive statistics are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2: Descriptive Statistics**

Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Job Rotation	2.92	1.48	-0.11	-1.86
Emp. Engagement	3.43	1.45	-0.61	-1.59
Leadership	3.03	1.52	-0.02	-1.98
Org. Politics	3.28	1.40	-0.46	-1.70
Harassment	3.20	1.35	-0.15	-1.87
Emp. Performance	2.99	1.50	0.27	-1.99

Table 2 shows that Leadership (M= 3.03, SD= 1.52) has the lowest Skewness (SK=-0.02) followed by job rotation (M= 2.92, SD= 1.48), harassment (M=3.20, SD= 1.35), employee performance (M=2.99, SD=1.50), organizational politics (M=3.28, SD=1.40) and employee engagement (M=3.43, SD=1.45). In contrast, the highest Kurtosis (KR=1.99) is for employee performance (M=2.99, SD=1.50), and the lowest kurtosis (KR=-1.59) is for employee engagement (M=3.43, SD=1.45). As the Skewness and Kurtosis values ranged between  $\pm 3.5$ , therefore the constructs used in the study have univariate normality (Mardia, 1970).

### Reliability of the Constructs

In order to examine the reliability of the constructs, the Cronbach alpha values have been calculated and reported in Table 3.

**Table 3: Reliability Analysis**

Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation	Cronbach's Alpha
Job Rotation	2.92	1.48	0.93
Emp. Engagement	3.43	1.45	0.97
Leadership	3.03	1.52	0.95
Org. Politics	3.28	1.40	0.90
Harassment	3.20	1.35	0.93
Emp. Performance	2.99	1.50	0.99

Table 3 shows that the reliability of employee performance ( $\alpha=0.99$ ,  $M=2.99$ ,  $SD=1.50$ ) is the highest, followed by employee engagement ( $\alpha=0.97$ ,  $M=3.43$ ,  $SD=1.45$ ), leadership ( $\alpha=0.95$ ,  $M=3.03$ ,  $SD=1.52$ ), job rotation ( $\alpha=0.93$ ,  $M=2.92$ ,  $SD=1.48$ ), harassment ( $\alpha=0.93$ ,  $M=3.20$ ,  $SD=1.35$ ) and organizational politics ( $\alpha=0.90$ ,  $M=3.28$ ,  $SD=1.40$ ), and employee performance ( $\alpha=0.89$ ,  $M=2.99$ ,  $SD=1.40$ ). Since all the values of Cronbach Alpha are higher than 0.70, therefore, it is safe to assume that the constructs used in this study are reliable (Bryman & Bell, 2015).

## Correlations Analysis

Correlation analysis was performed to examine the degree of association between the variables and the presence of multi-collinearity (Bryman & Bell, 2015). The results are presented in Table 5.

**Table 5: Pearson Correlations**

Variables	EPP	JRR	EEE	LEADD	OPP	HARR
Employee Performance (EPP)	1					
Job Rotation (JRR)	0.31*	1				
Employee Engagement (EEE)	0.37*	0.36*	1			
Leadership (LEADD)	0.42*	0.31*	0.34*	1		
Organizational Politics (OPP)	0.32*	0.22*	0.38*	0.40*	1	
Harassment (HARR)	-0.12	0.23*	0.91	0.91	0.71	1

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

Table 5 shows that leadership has the highest correlation with employee performance ( $R=0.42$ ) followed by employee engagement ( $R=0.37$ ), organizational politics ( $R=0.32$ ), job rotation ( $R=0.31$ ) and harassment ( $R=-0.12$ ). The correlations suggest that the constructs are unique and distinctive. In addition, as the correlations are less than 0.90 in absolute value there is no statistical problem associated with multicollinearity (Bryman & Bell, 2015).

## Convergent Validity

Convergent validity was examined to ascertain how items of each construct are related to the theory. The results are presented in Table 6.

**Table 6: Convergent Validity**

Variables	Mean	Std. Dev.	Reliability	Variance Exp
Job Rotation	2.92	1.48	0.93	68.77%
Emp. Engagement	3.43	1.45	0.97	75.87%
Leadership	3.03	1.52	0.95	74.83%
Org. Politics	3.28	1.40	0.90	69.20 %
Harassment	3.20	1.35	0.93	72.32 %
Emp. Performance	2.99	1.50	0.89	69.07 %

Since variance explained for each construct is at least 0.40 and reliability values are greater than 0.70, therefore the adapted constructs fulfill the requirements of convergent validity.

## Regression Analysis

The impact of human resource management practices on employee performance was examined through regression analysis. The regression results are summarized in Table 7.

**Table 7a: Regression Results( Coefficients)**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.26	.27		4.62	.000
	Job Rotation	.18	.55	.18	3.28	.001
	Employee Engagement	.20	.06	.20	3.43	.001
	Leadership	.27	.05	.28	4.97	.000
	Organizational Politics	.12	.06	.11	2.12	.035
	Harassment	-.22	.06	-.24	-3.94	.000

*Dependent Variable: Employee Performance*

**Table 7b: Regression Results (Model Summary)**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.548a	.300	.288	1.26165

a. Predictors: HARR, OPP, JRR, EEE, LEADD

**Table 7c: Regression Results (ANOVAa)**

	Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	203.952	5	40.790	25.63	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	475.933	299	1.592		
	Total	679.885	304			

a. Dependent Variable: Employee Performance

b. Predictors: Harassment, Org. Politics, Job Rotation, Emp.Engagement, Leadership

The  $R^2$  value of 0.30 suggests that the model explains approximately 30% of the variation in employee performance. The results indicate that job rotation, employee engagement, leadership and organizational politics have a positive impact on employee performance. On the contrary, the negative coefficient of harassment indicates its adverse impact on employee performance. The coefficients of all the predictor variables are statistically significant at the 5% level. The F-statistic is also statistically significant at the 1% level suggesting that the predictor variables collectively explain employee performance.

## Discussion

This section will further elaborate the findings of the study and their significance in relation to the previous literature. Overall, the results of the study suggest that human resource management practices such as job rotation, employee engagement, leadership, organizational politics and harassment have an impact on employee performance.

### Job Rotation and Employee Performance

The regression results suggest that job rotation has a positive and statistically significant impact on employee performance. The finding is consistent with previous literature which argues that job rotation is an effective tool for enhancing employee performance at the workplace (Oparanma and Nwaeka, 2015; Tarus, 2014). Job rotation tends to enrich employees by offering them opportunities for learning and growth (Tarus, 2014). In addition, job rotation improves the overall productivity of an organization (Oparanma & Nwaeka, 2015)

## **Employee Engagement and Employee Performance**

The regression results suggest that employee engagement has a positive and statistically significant impact on employee performance. Our findings are consistent with prior studies which have found that employee engagement leads to higher employee performance (Dajani, 2015). When employees are more involved in decision making and have responsibilities, they become more engaged (Kroeze & Keulen, 2014). Moreover, the relationship with supervisors also affects employee attitude and engagement level. High employee engagement is also likely to reduce staff turnover and enhance performance (Wong & Laschinger, 2013).

## **Leadership and Employee Performance**

The regression results suggest that leadership has a positive and statistically significant impact on employee performance. Our findings are consistent with prior studies which have found that leadership leads to higher employee performance (Ikenga et al., 2015). A leader who allocates sufficient time for employees and engages in meaningful interactions is likely to receive good performance. Good leadership lies not only in possessing necessary skills but also adherence with the organizational culture (Kroeze & Keulen, 2014). Research suggests that a democratic leadership style encourages employee participation (Ikenga et al., 2015; Plowman et al., 2007).

## **Organization Politics and Employee Performance**

The regression results suggest that organizational politics has a positive and statistically significant impact on employee performance. Our findings are consistent with some studies which have found that organizational politics leads to higher employee performance (Gull and Zaidi, 2012). It has been argued that organizational politics help employees achieve their goals and targets which stimulates their effort and performance at the workplace (Shaukat et al, 2015).

## **Harassment and Employee Performance**

The regression results suggest that harassment has a negative and statistically significant impact on employee performance. Our findings are consistent with previous studies which have found that harassment has an adverse effect on employee performance (Merkin and Shah, 2014). It has been argued that victims of harassment are affected psychologically which negatively influence their wellbeing and perception (Wong & Laschinger, 2013).

Harassment at the workplace sometimes leads to absenteeism. Employees who are regularly harassed at work have high absenteeism. Regular absenteeism has a direct impact on employee performance (Kroeze & Keulen, 2014).

## **Conclusion**

This study has examined the effect of human resource management practices such as job rotation, employee engagement, leadership, organizational politics, and harassment on employee performance. It also explains how decisions made by human resource management teams are likely to influence organizational performance. The results suggest that human resource management practices have a profound effect on employee performance in Pakistan. This study has only considered the impact of a selected human resource management practices on employee performance. Future research in this area can consider how culture and external environmental factors interact with human resource management.

## QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire is part of the study on human resource management practices and employee performance in Pakistan. Candid and honest opinions are requested. The information provided will be kept confidential.

### PART A: SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. Gender of the respondents  
Male ☐ Female ☐
2. Age bracket of the respondents (in years)  
18 – 25 ☐ 26-35 ☐ 36– 45 ☐ 46 – 55 ☐ Over 55 ☐
3. How many years have you worked in your current position.....
4. Level of Education of respondents  
Primary ☐ Secondary ☐  
Graduation ☐ Post Graduation ☐
5. Position in the Organization  
Jr. Management ☐ Middle Management ☐ Sr. Management ☐  
Other (specify) .....
6. Which of the following option represents your Function/Department in Organization  
Sales & Marketing ☐ Operations & Facilities ☐ Supply/Logistics/P&S ☐  
Finance / Audit ☐ HRM / HRD ☐
7. I work in a ..... Organization  
Public ☐ Private ☐

<b>JOB ROTATION:</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
1. There is a job rotation policy in my org.					
2. Job rotation build multi-skilled workforce.					
3. I am rotated on different roles during last 5 years.					
<b>EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT:</b>					
4. I understand how my job contributes to achieving company's strategic directions.					
5. I have made changes in my work during the last year in order to improve persistence and completion.					
6. I review the measures and targets for our goals in order to make improvements.					
7. I am involved in the decisions that impact my work.					
<b>LEADERSHIP:</b>					
8. I like the leadership style assumed by those in high ranks in my organization.					
9. I believe my company's leadership addresses the issues/opportunities identified by employee.					
10. It is the leader's job to help subordinates find their "passion."					
11. I have frequent and supportive communication with my Superior.					
<b>ORGANIZATIONAL POLITICS:</b>					
12. Politics is not a major source of influence in my organization.					
13. Organizational politics compromise the objectives of the organization.					
14. Unfairness due to politics may create conflicts amongst employees.					
<b>HARASSMENT AT WORK:</b>					
15. I know where to report a problem of harassment of any kind.					
16. I would expect no reprisal/retaliation against me if I reported an incident of any harassment or abuse.					
17. Corrective actions would be taken if I reported a problem (discrimination, harassment, unfair treatment, etc.) to my immediate supervisor.					
18. Organization has code of conduct in place that gives me a sense of protection.					



**EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE:**

19. Training & Development helped me to achieve my targets during last 2 years.					
20. Job Rotation groomed me to prepare for higher responsibilities					
21. Empowerment positively correlates to employee performance in the					
22. Target positively correlates to employee performance in my organization.					
23. Diversity in workplace will enhance the employee performance.					
24. Coaching positively correlates to employee performance in my organization.					
25. Extrinsic and intrinsic benefits given to employees ultimately increase the retention level.					
26. Being satisfied with job enhances my performance.					
27. Engagement positively correlates to employee performance in my organization.					
28. Leadership positively correlates to employee performance in my organization.					

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