

High Commitment HRM and Employee Well-being: The Mediating Role of Work Engagement and the Moderating Influence of Supportive Leadership

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ABSTRACT

Purpose— The enrichment of employee well-being is a crucial aspect of high-commitment HRM in the context of the hospitality sector. This study examined work engagement as a mediator between the relationship of high-commitment human resource management practices and employee well-being. Furthermore, the role of supportive leadership as a moderator is examined based on job demands-resources theory.

Study Design/methodology/approach—The data were collected from the employees of Pakistan hotel industry with the cross-sectional survey approach. It was analyzed with SPSS and Hayes' PROCESS macro with a quantitative survey design.

Findings—The findings reveal that high-commitment human resource management practices were positively related to work engagement and to employee well-being. The indirect effect of high-commitment human resource management practices on well-being through work engagement was positive and significant, thus supporting the mediation. The high-commitment human resource management practices and supportive leadership interaction was, however, non-significant, and the moderation hypothesis was therefore not supported.

Practical Implications—Hotel managers are encouraged to invest in high-commitment human resource management practices to maintain a healthy frontline workforce. Supportive leadership may play an imperative role in strengthening the relationship between high-commitment human resource management practices and work engagement.

Originality/Value—This study contributes to the prior literature by bridging the gap and offering practical insights for organizations to design high-commitment human resource management practices that promote employee well-being through the mediation of work engagement.

Keywords: High Commitment HRM, Work engagement, Employee's well-being, Supportive leadership, (JD-R) theory, Hospitality sector.

JEL Classification Codes: M54, M12, I31, L8

1 | INTRODUCTION

1.1 | Background and Context

The psychological condition and service value in hotels, restaurants, resorts, and catering firms are produced at the moment of encounter, by employees whose energy, warmth, and composure are themselves part of the product ([Baum, 2018](#); [Bichler et al., 2020](#)). The hospitality sector is unusually labor-intensive and experiences unusually exposed rotating shifts, unpredictable customer demands, irregular hours, and sustained emotional labor ([Abdou & Albohnayh, 2026](#); [Salin et al., 2023](#)). These demands increase without satisfactory organizational support, result in emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and a lessened sense of personal accomplishment; they can disintegrate service quality, increase turnover, and challenge organizational sustainability ([Bakker & Demerouti, 2018](#); [Karatepe et al., 2020](#)). Recent indications from Pakistan's hotel sector suggest that burnout among frontline employees now threatens both individual health and firm continuity ([Ahmad et al., 2026](#)). Employee well-being (EWB) has subsequently shifted from a welfare reflection to a strategic one from the perspective of hospitality administration. The guests/customers infer that a fatigued employee provides an imperfect service; thus, well-being in this sector is not distinguishable from competitive performance ([Breevaart & Bakker, 2018](#); [Diep & Horváthová, 2026](#)). Many questions arise for the hospitality sector: whether EWB matters, which organizational pedals reliably produce it, and through what psychological direction those levers operate.

One answer that has attracted sustained scholarly attention is the human resource system. Organizations have increasingly shifted from control-oriented HR practices towards commitment-based tactics, of which high commitment human resource management (HCHRM) is the most prominent ([Cooke et al., 2022](#); [Jiang & Messersmith, 2018](#)). HCHRM shapes long-term employment associations through investment in training and development, procedural justice, job safety, employee involvement, job autonomy, performance-associated and equitable reimbursement ([Li et al., 2024](#); [Zhao et al., 2025](#)). This model is theoretically well harmonized to hospitality's specific pathologies. The sector is widely characterized by reasonably low pay, thin career ladders, contingent contracts, high turnover, and commitment-based practices. Each of these situations unswervingly signals to frontline staff that the employment relationship is robust rather than transactional ([Peccei & Van De Voorde, 2019](#)). Contemporary HRM scholarship reinforces this position, treating HCHRM systems as pivotal enablers of employee vitality and learning at work ([Jiang et al., 2026](#)).

The Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) model provides the theoretical apparatus for connecting HR system design to employee psychological states ([Bakker & Demerouti, 2017](#); [Demerouti et al., 2001](#)). JD-R holds that job demands deplete energy and precipitate strain, while job resources both buffer those demands and initiate a motivational process that sustains EWB ([Bakker & Demerouti, 2018](#); [Lesener et al., 2019](#)). Viewed through this lens, HCHRM constitutes an organizationally embedded bundle of job resources, and work engagement, the positive, fulfilling state of vigor, dedication, and absorption ([Gull et al., 2022](#); [Schaufeli, 2021](#)), is the motivational state through which those resources should translate into EWB. Work engagement (WE) is a principally substantial construct in hospitality, and employees must be psychologically devoted in every guest

collaboration and disengagement is immediately noticeable to the customer ([Ilies et al., 2024](#); [Karatepe et al., 2020](#)).

Despite this theoretical rationality, the prior empirical literature on HCHRM and EWB remains a research gap in earlier literature. Some studies report reduced burnout and enhanced psychological health under commitment-based systems, whereas others' research findings are conditional, weak, or even contrary, with escalation and exhaustion emerging along with the projected benefits ([Cooke et al., 2022](#); [Diep & Horváthová, 2026](#); [Van De Voorde & Beijer, 2015](#)). This disagreement indicates that the HCHRM and EWB relationship is neither direct nor unvarying, and that the dominant psychological mechanism has not been sufficiently stated. Empirical findings of WE as the transmission mechanism are still rare and under examined still within the hospitality sector ([Salin et al., 2023](#)). A second anxious issue is the conditions under which HR systems support their intended effects. HR policy influences employees through first-line managers, who function as the explainers and enactors of recognized practice; the contents inscribed in policy and experienced on the floor may swerve substantially ([Roodbari et al., 2025](#); [Zhai et al., 2026](#)). Supportive leaders' behaviours, user-friendliness, inspiration, and confirmed anxiety for subordinates are related to delicate perceptions of organizational support ([Breevaart & Bakker, 2018](#); [Kurtessis et al., 2017](#)). In hospitality, where supervisors control shift allocation, break scheduling, and guest-complaint escalation, this informative role is specifically proximal to the employee's daily experience. Supportive leadership (SPL) reinforces the adaptation of HCHRM into work engagement is therefore an essentially imperative, yet it has seldom been verified ([Salin et al., 2023](#); [Wang & Tsai, 2026](#)).

Research already shows that, when reasonably well assessed, commitment is linked to positive employee attitudes ([Hu et al., 2025](#)) and the prevailing evidence base has been generated in Western, developed economies whose institutional protections, labor-market conditions, and power-distance norms differ materially from those of emerging economies ([Jiang et al., 2026](#); [Peccei & Van De Voorde, 2019](#)). Pakistan's hospitality sector operates with weaker formal employment protection, constrained career mobility, and a rapidly professionalizing service standard, so the meaning employees attach to HR practices may not replicate Western findings ([Khan et al., 2025](#)). Context-sensitive investigation of HCHRM systems in such settings has been explicitly called for future investigations ([Jiang et al., 2026](#)).

1.1 | Research Gap and Objectives

The present study addresses these three gaps through an integrated moderated-mediation framework in which HCHRM, as a bundle of job resources, influences EWB through WE, with SPL specified as a contextual resource conditioning the first stage of that pathway. Accordingly, the study pursues four objectives: to examine the relationship between HCHRM and EWB among hospitality employees in Pakistan; to examine the relationship between HCHRM and WE. Further, this study examines WE as the mediating mechanism linking HCHRM to EWB and investigates SPL as a moderator of the HCHRM and WE relationship. Thus, the study contributes an empirical specification of the JD-R motivational pathway within a service setting, extends HCHRM into an under-researched region and sector, and clarifies the limits of leadership as a boundary condition on HR system effectiveness.

2 | LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 | Theoretical Foundation

The theoretical framework underlying this study is based on the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) theory of employee health, motivation, and employee performance ([Bakker & Demerouti, 2017](#); [Demerouti, 2025](#)). JD-R classifies each of the occupational contexts into two general categories: job demands and job resources. Job demands are a physical, psychological, social, or organizational requirement that must be continually endured and which causes physiological or psychological costs, while job resources are aspects of the job that facilitate the attainment of work goals, decrease demands and their associated costs, or promote personal growth and development ([Bakker & Demerouti, 2018](#)).

During the motivational process, resources satisfy individuals' basic psychological needs, enhance their willingness to invest effort in their work, and foster work engagement, ultimately contributing to positive attitudinal outcomes, employee well-being, and improved job performance ([Lesener et al., 2019](#); [Zada et al., 2025](#)). In addition, resources mitigate the strain exerted by the demands, which means that the same strain is experienced completely differently with and without the resources ([Bakker & Demerouti, 2018](#); [Galanakis & Tsitouri, 2022](#)).

The present study has two characteristics for which JD-R is suitable. First, the model is explicitly generic; that is, the resources can be found in the task, in the team, with the supervisor, or in the organization, which allows one to theorize an HR system as a resource package operating at the organizational level ([Breevaart & Bakker, 2018](#); [Hayat et al., 2025](#)). This is done with HCHRM, a coordinated set of methods that provides lasting resources for jobs, in the form of training, security, equality, and autonomy. Second, there is not enough theoretical basis in JD-R to test energy use in a direct effects model, because work engagement represents how resources are applied in the workplace, leaving room for mediating influence ([Ilies et al., 2024](#); [Schaufeli, 2017](#)). Based on JD-R theory, supportive leadership is expected to be a third relational work resource at the managerial level; based on resource theory, this may be a resource that enhances the motivating effect of other resources in the organization ([Breevaart & Bakker, 2018](#)). An environment of high demand and limited resources characterizes a demanding pragmatic test of these claims, which in many respects is encountered in the hotel and restaurant industry ([Salin et al., 2023](#)). The hypothesized conceptual framework is presented in Figure 1.

2.2 | High Commitment HRM and Employee Well-being

According to JD-R theory, job resources reduce the negative impact of demands on mental health, and at the same time, they have a positive effect on mental health in themselves ([Bakker & Demerouti, 2018](#)). High Commitment Human Resource Management (HCHRM) is a set of coherent HR practices that aim to create long-term stable investment relationships (mutual investments) between employers and employees based on fair compensation, procedural justice, stable job security, significant investment (training), employee engagement, and job autonomy ([Ajmal et al., 2024](#); [Jiang et al., 2026](#)). HCHRM offers tools at all critical junctures in the hospitality industry. Extensive training increases perceived competence and leads to a reduction in unforeseen stress when interacting with guests; job security eliminates a chronic stressor in a

temporary employment industry; fairness assessment and pay equity restore perceptions of fairness that would otherwise likely turn excessive workloads into resentment, and it restores autonomy, meaning there is some control over how demands are met ([Jiang et al., 2026](#); [Salin et al., 2023](#)).

According to previous meta-analyses of strategic human resource management, motivation and skills development are the mediating variables between HRM systems and employee performance ([Hayat et al., 2025](#); [Jiang & Messersmith, 2018](#)). Specifically in the hospitality industry, there has been a link between commitment and goal-oriented work and lower feelings of emotional exhaustion as well as high levels of success among frontline employees ([Farrukh et al., 2024](#); [Salin et al., 2023](#)), and evidence from the hotel sector in Pakistan suggests that the relationship between organizational and leadership efforts and reduced burnout is direct ([Ahmad et al., 2026](#)). Employee well-being refers to the overall quality of an employee's psychological and emotional understanding of work ([Hassan et al., 2022](#); [Peccei & Van De Voorde, 2019](#)). As with most research in hospitality, well-being can be defined along three dimensions: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment ([Hayat & Afshari, 2022](#); [Karatepe et al., 2020](#)). Successful well-being is therefore characterized by reduced fatigue, depersonalization, and high levels of satisfaction with one's work performance, a pattern that is primarily diagnostic of jobs related to stressful, high-contact service roles ([Selem et al., 2025](#)).

However, the evidence is not conclusive. It is argued that in high-involvement systems, high expectations and internalized obligations can create more intense work, leading to both a state of work engagement and work burnout, as confirmed by a recent systematic review ([Diep & Horváthová, 2026](#); [Hu et al., 2025](#)) of several studies. In the current context, the direction and strength of the relationship is an empirical question, largely because most of this divergent evidence comes from outside the emerging economy hospitality industry. However, the scarcity conditions of the sector suggest that the contribution of an additional organizational resource should be significant and that the prediction of mutual gains is likely to hold.

***H1:** High commitment human resource management is positively associated with employee well-being.*

2.3 | High Commitment HRM and Work Engagement

The HCHRM model places this reciprocity at a systemic level, just as training establishes an investment in the next performance cycle for the employee, security fosters a lasting relationship with the employee, participation encourages the employee to value their judgment, and successful reward sets reinforce the predictability of the employee's contribution ([Ajmal et al., 2024](#); [Boon et al., 2018](#); [Zada et al., 2025](#)). A significant difference between HCHRM and HRM with control is that the former relies on trust, development, and psychological safety, whereas the latter is more focused on monitoring compliance ([Boon et al., 2018](#); [Cooke et al., 2022](#)). If reliable with the strategic HRM construct, it is hypothesized at the level of the employee consciousness of the custom as a whole, and not as individually viewed practices, because it is the perceived pack ([Hu et al., 2025](#)) that transmits the attitudinal meaning.

Employees who understand HR practices as if they are about well-being are expressing greater work engagement compared to employees who understand those HR practices as resources to achieve performance ([Hu et al., 2025](#)). A set of work engagement is a solid solution for the hospitality industry, where the gap

between the set services and real working conditions is frequently very large, without the integrity a statement of service can promise. To align with this, empirical findings yield that high commitment and work-engagement work practices lead to an increase in the motivational states of hotel employees ([Farrukh et al., 2024](#); [Salin et al., 2023](#)), and, more recently, evidence shows that employee-centric HR suites have a positive impact on the motivational states in the hospitality industry in high-touch-service organizations ([Wang & Tsai, 2026](#)). Current syntheses also situate work engagement – oriented HR systems as important precursors of work vitality and wellbeing ([Jiang et al., 2026](#)).

Work engagement is reported as a state of active, satisfying, work-related thoughts that include vigor, commitment, and absorption ([Schaufeli, 2017](#)). As a work motivation construct, vigor refers to high levels of energy and mental toughness, dedication to a sense of meaning, enthusiasm, and pride, and absorption to a high level of focus and absorption in work, all of which are characterized as enduring affective-motivational states, rather than a temporary feeling, and in JD-R, as a proximal outcome of work resources ([Bakker & Demerouti, 2018](#)).

H2: *There is a strong association between HCHRM and work engagement.*

2.4 | Work Engagement and Employee Well-being

It is important to note that work engagement and burnout are not two sides of the same coin, but the JD-R model postulates a directionality towards work engagement, in which, with an "activation" of energy, meaning, and absorption, the draining effect of the demands is counteracted. ([Ilies et al., 2024](#); [Schaufeli, 2017](#)) Vigor provides the energy buffer to prevent burnout, dedication provides the meaningfulness to ward against depersonalization by customers, and absorption allows the experience of competent and smooth performance that ultimately leads to personal fulfillment, a complicated and complex process ([Bakker & Demerouti, 2018](#); [Selem et al., 2025](#)).

The previous meta-analytic signal in the longitudinal direction also confirms this direction: the resources predict engagement, and the work engagement postulate assumes that work engagement will lead to successful well-being and to stress reduction ([Galanakis & Tsitouri, 2022](#); [Lesener et al., 2019](#)). In the hospitality industry, it has been seen that a more engaged workforce, while providing better service, also benefits from an increase in their psychological well-being ([Farrukh et al., 2024](#); [Karatepe et al., 2020](#)). Therefore, it is postulated that:

H3: *Work engagement is positively related to employee well-being.*

2.5 | The Mediating Role of Work Engagement

The authors of the JD-R model did not mean for results to be a direct consequence of the organization's resources; the JD-R model posits that it is through an alteration of the motivational state of the individual employee that these results are reached ([Bakker & Demerouti, 2018](#); [Schaufeli, 2017](#)). HR practices are distal, systemic, and impersonal, while well-being is a proximal psychological experience; thus, some distal

intermediate state, which is described by the JD-R model as work engagement, must be situated between HR practices and employee well-being.

The findings from the meta-analytical evidence in strategic human resource management (HRM) also agree with and highlight the same logic: in the process of bringing the human resource systems and outcomes together, employee motivation and attitudes play the central role ([Hayat et al., 2025](#)). In the modern landscape of HRM, motivating the state of vitality and absorption is also seen as a pivotal link between the human resource systems and overall employee flourishing, as outlined by ([Jiang et al., 2026](#)). In the context of the hospitality industry, the mediating position of work engagement between high commitment work and positive performance is known ([Farrukh et al., 2024](#)); however, the mediating position of work engagement between engagement-based human resource management and decreased dimensions of burnout well-being is not clear, particularly outside of Western contexts ([Cooke et al., 2022](#); [Salin et al., 2023](#)). The relief that is expected from mediation will also include non-motivational assistance from HCHRM in the form of less job insecurity.

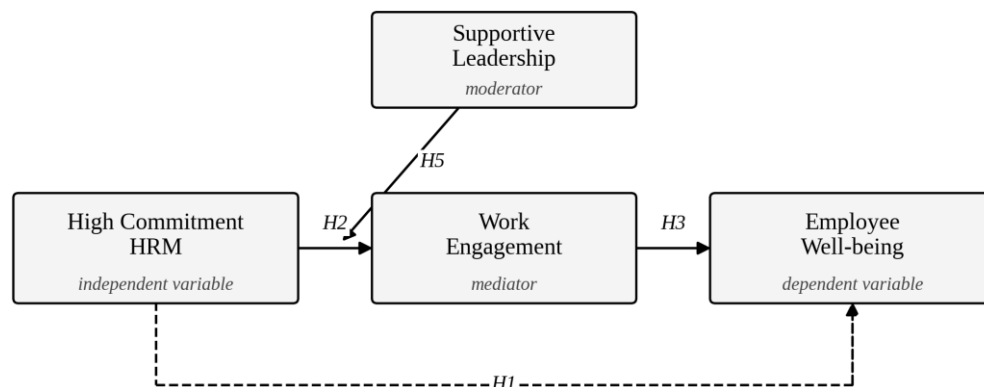
H4: *Work engagement mediates the relationship between high-commitment human resource management and employee well-being.*

2.6 | The Moderating Role of Supportive Leadership

Supportive leadership is defined as behaviors a leader undertakes that demonstrate their concern for the well-being of their subordinates: promoting psychologically safe and considerate work environments, making the leader available, and responding to subordinates' needs ([Gartzia, 2024](#); [House, 1996](#)). Supportive leadership is a job resource phenomenon that influences the interpretation and experience of the formal HR system on the job ([Breevaart & Bakker, 2018](#); [Kurtessis et al., 2017](#)). When viewing job resources as interactive, rather than additive, supportive leadership is hypothesized as a conditioning resource that shifts the strength of the HCHRM–work engagement relationship, so the moderator specification tested here is intended as a direct test of the HCHRM–work engagement interaction.

Supportive leadership style supports a human resources system comprehensible and trustworthy; they clarify the criteria, implements procedures reliably, and validates that the organization's specified concern for employees is actual ([Kurtessis et al., 2017](#)). If the support is vague, employees might label even an elegant system as pomposity ([Hu et al., 2025](#)). Regarding JD-R, this is a resource-by-resource construct in which supervisory support is another relational resource that, like the other HR resources, should be capable of augmenting the motivational returns from organizational HR resources ([Breevaart & Bakker, 2018](#); [Sharif et al., 2026](#)). The forecast is especially reasonable in the hospitality field, as they are probably the most apparent personality of an organization's intention in terms of supervisor's workout immediate breaks and complaint boom ([Karatepe et al., 2020](#)). In terms of leadership, hospitality evidence recently indicated that embedding a positive relationship between leaders and subordinates would enhance the impact of HR mechanisms on the subordinates' motivating states ([Wang & Tsai, 2026](#)), and suggested that rivalry and leadership could both moderate and intervene in the HCHRM–work engagement relationship ([Diep & Horváthová, 2026](#)). Supportive leadership influences the work engagement of employees by their compassionate behavior. Therefore, it is assumed that:

H5: *Supportive leadership moderates the relationship between HCHRM and Work engagement.*

Figure 1*Hypothesized Conceptual Framework*

H4: indirect effect of HCHRM on employee well-being through work engagement

3 | METHODOLOGY & DESIGN

3.1 | Research Design

A quantitative, cross-sectional survey design was adopted to examine the proposed model as per the earlier research study of [Gull et al. \(2023\)](#) and [Qaiser et al. \(2025\)](#). This design is standard in strategic HRM and organizational behaviour research where repeated measurement is impractical, and it permits the simultaneous estimation of direct, indirect, and conditional effects ([Hayes, 2022](#); [Salin et al., 2023](#)). Data were collected through a self-administered online questionnaire distributed to employees of the hospitality sector in Pakistan. Respondents were volunteers and anonymous; no recognizing data were recorded, participants were informed of the study's purpose, and withdrawal was allowable at any point ([Resnik, 2024](#)).

3.2 | Target Population and Sampling

The target population encompassed employees of hospitality sectors in Pakistan, settings characterized by intensive guest contact. Convenience sampling was used, a common method where organizational access is controlled ([Cooke et al., 2022](#)). The sample was mainly males (52.4%), aged under 25 years (59.7%), working full-time (65.3%), and drawn mainly from restaurants (36.3%) and hotels (25.8%); most worked 8 to 10 hours per day (55.6%). Full demographic details are described in Table 1.

3.3 | Measures

All constructs were measured with well-known prior scales, adapted and rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) as per the prior research studies of [Bukhari et al. \(2026\)](#) and [Qaiser et al. \(2026\)](#). HCHRM was assessed with fifteen items, adapted from [Xiao and Björkman \(2006\)](#). WE was measured with 9 items adapted from [Karatepe and Karadas \(2016\)](#). SPL was assessed with 3 items drawn from [House \(1996\)](#) and adapted from [Gartzia \(2024\)](#). EWB was assessed with nineteen items [Zheng et al. \(2015\)](#). The internal consistency is described in Table 2.

3.4 | Data Analysis

The data analyses were conducted with the help of SPSS Statistics and with the PROCESS macro version 4 (Hayes, 2022) as per the earlier research study of . Internal consistency was assessed by means of Cronbach's alpha, with 0.70 accepted as the least acceptable threshold. Pearson correlations were calculated to find the path and magnitude of bivariate relations and to provide an initial indication of discriminant validity among constructs. Hypotheses were examined using PROCESS Model 7, which estimates a first-stage moderated-mediation path. Direct and indirect relationships were projected using 5,000 bias-corrected bootstrap resamples with 95% confidence intervals; effects were considered significant as the interval excluded zero. The interaction was investigated at the 16th, 50th, and 84th percentiles of supportive leadership. Statistical significance for regression coefficients was measured at $p < .05$.

4 | RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

4.1 | Demographic Analysis

Table 1 summarizes the composition of the sample, which spans a range of departments, positions, and tenure within the hospitality sector.

Table 1

Demographic Profile of Respondents

Characteristic	Category	n	%
Gender	Male	66	53.2
	Female	58	46.8
Age group	Under 25 years	74	59.7
	26–40 years	43	34.7
	41–55 years	7	5.6
Marital status	Single	94	75.8
	Married	29	23.4
	Other	1	0.8
Education	Bachelor's degree	80	64.5
	Master's degree	24	19.4
	MPhil / PhD	9	7.3
	Other	11	8.9
Organization type	Hotel	32	25.8
	Restaurant	45	36.3
	Resort	11	8.9
	Catering/food service	13	10.5
	Other	23	18.5
Department	Front office	14	11.3
	Food & beverage service	10	8.1
	Food production/kitchen	10	8.1
	Sales & marketing	20	16.1
	Human resources	20	16.1
	Finance & accounts	13	10.4
	Engineering & maintenance	12	9.6

Employment status	Information technology	10	8.1
	Management	15	12.2
	Full-time	81	65.3
	Part-time	31	25.0
	Contract-based	12	9.7
Experience in hospitality	Less than 1 year	60	48.4
	1–3 years	39	31.5
	4–6 years	11	8.9
	7–10 years	5	4.0
	More than 10 years	9	7.3
Organizational tenure	Less than 1 year	61	49.2
	1–3 years	40	32.3
	4–6 years	19	15.3
	7–10 years	4	3.2
	More than 10 years	10	8.1
Daily working hours	Less than 8 hours	45	36.3
	8–10 hours	59	47.5
	More than 10 hours	10	8.1

4.2 | Demographic Analysis

Internal consistency was acceptable for all four constructs, with Cronbach's alpha ranging from 0.77 to 0.88 and exceeding the conventional .70 criterion in every case (Table 2). The measurement instruments were therefore judged reliable for hypothesis testing.

Table 2

Internal Consistency of Study Measures

Construct	Items	Cronbach's α	CR
High commitment HRM	15	.86	.88
Work engagement	9	.82	.86
Supportive leadership	3	.77	.87
Employee well-being	19	.88	.89

Note. Values of $\alpha \geq .70$ indicate acceptable internal consistency. CR = composite reliability ($\geq .70$ acceptable).

Harman's single-factor test was executed for the four instruments employed in the research, with all 46 items corrected for the four measures. The first, unrotated component had only a 24.8% contribution to variance, which is less than the 50% cutoff that is considered a single dominant factor, and twelve components had an eigenvalue > 1 (see Table 3). Common method bias, thus, is not deemed to be a major source of threat to the findings of the study.

Table 3*Harman's Single-Factor Test*

Component	Eigenvalue	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	11.415	24.81%	24.81%
2	5.479	11.91%	36.73%
3	2.281	4.96%	41.68%
4	2.132	4.64%	46.32%
5	1.838	4.00%	50.32%

Note: Unrotated principal component analysis on the correlation matrix of all 46 measurement items. Twelve components had eigenvalues greater than 1 (Kaiser criterion); the first five are shown above for brevity. These values were independently cross-validated against the identical Factor Analysis output already on file for this dataset.

The convergent validity was also examined by using the standardized loadings on the first unrotated principal component for each construct in the composite reliability (CR) table, which was reported (Table 2). Beyond Cronbach's alpha, there was strong internal consistency as all four constructs had a composite reliability greater than .70 (CR = .88 for HCHRM, .86 for WE, .87 for SPL, and .89 for EWB).

To assess discriminant validity, the heterotrait-monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT) was also analyzed to support the traditional AVE criterion, considering this to be a more reliable indicator of discriminant validity than AVE when assessed with the Fornell-Larcker approach ([Henseler et al., 2015](#)). As displayed in Table 4, all six pairwise HTMTs between the four constructs were below .85 and ranged from .48 to .81, suggesting an empirical separation of the four constructs.

Table 4*Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) Ratios*

Variables	1	2	3	4
1. High commitment HRM				
2. Work engagement	.81			
3. Supportive leadership	.60	.61		
4. Employee well-being	.62	.64	.48	

The value of HTMT is < .85 (or < .90 using the lenient criterion) as a criterion of acceptable discriminant validity ([Henseler et al., 2015](#)). The results of CR and HTMT, in conjunction with the Harman's test result, are offered as evidence of the quality of the measure at this sample size.

4.3 | Correlation Analysis

The analysis of Pearson correlations among the study variables is presented in Table 5. All associations among the study variables are positive and statistically significant at $p < .01$. HCHRM correlated most strongly with WE ($r = .67$), consistent with the theorized proximity of HR resources to the motivational process, and moderately with EWB ($r = .47$) and SPL ($r = .48$). WE correlated with EWB at $r = .51$, the strongest predictor–outcome association in the matrix. SPL showed a moderate association with work engagement ($r = .49$) but only a weak association with employee well-being ($r = .24$), an early indication that support operates closer to

the motivational process than to EWB outcomes. Inter-construct correlations remained below the .85 threshold at which multicollinearity becomes a concern.

Table 5

Pearson Correlations

Variables	1	2	3	4
1. High commitment HRM				
2. Work engagement	.67**			
3. Supportive leadership	.48**	.49**		
4. Employee well-being	.47**	.51**	.24**	

Note. ** $p < .01$ (two-tailed).

4.4 | Hypothesis Testing

We estimated the moderated mediation model by PROCESS model No. 7 using bias-corrected 95% confidence intervals with 5000 bootstrap resamples (Table 6). In Portion A, with work engagement as the outcome, HCHRM emerged as a strong and significant predictor ($B = 0.79$, $SE = 0.22$, $t = 3.65$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [0.36, 1.22]; standardized $\beta = .76$), supporting H2. There was a supportive leadership direct effect that was non-significant and fell within a confidence interval that includes zero ($B = 0.34$, $p = .09$, $SE = 0.06$, $t = 0.97$, $p = .33$, 95% CI [-0.18, 0.06]). The HCHRM*supportive leadership interaction was also non-significant, with a confidence interval that includes zero ($B = -0.06$, $p = .06$, $SE = 0.06$, $t = -0.97$, $p = .33$, 95% CI [-0.18, 0.06]). It was decided that H5 would not be supported at the initial stage.

Both predictors were significant in Portion B, where the goal was employee well-being. Work engagement predicted well-being positively ($B = 0.32$, $SE = 0.09$, $t = 3.41$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [0.14, 0.51]), supporting H3, and HCHRM retained a significant direct effect on well-being ($B = 0.22$, $p = .03$), supporting H1. The total effect of HCHRM on well-being estimated in simple regression was likewise significant ($B = 0.45$, $SE = 0.08$, $\beta = .47$, $t = 5.84$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [0.30, 0.60]). The analyses here focused on examining the bootstrapped indirect effect and associated confidence intervals (Table 6) to determine whether any indirect paths were significant. The bootstrapped indirect effect and corresponding confidence interval (I) were analyzed at each level of supportive leadership, with results shown in Table 6, to determine if any indirect paths were significant (Hayes, 2022).

All the model-fit statistics were calculated from the item-level survey data and are ordinary least-squares regression fits of each PROCESS portion; the resulting parameters (coefficients, SEs, t's, etc.) were compared for exact match to the ones given above for each of the three portions. For the total effect of HCHRM on well-being (Portion C), $R^2 = .218$ and $F(1, 122) = 34.07$, $p < .001$. The full interaction model for HCHRM and supportive leadership to predict work engagement had an R^2 of .488 and an $F(3, 120)$ of 38.15 ($p < .001$). The unique variance associated with the HCHRM $\times$ supportive leadership interaction term was small, $\Delta R^2 = .004$, which is in line with the small power analysis for this interaction term. For the Portion B model (work

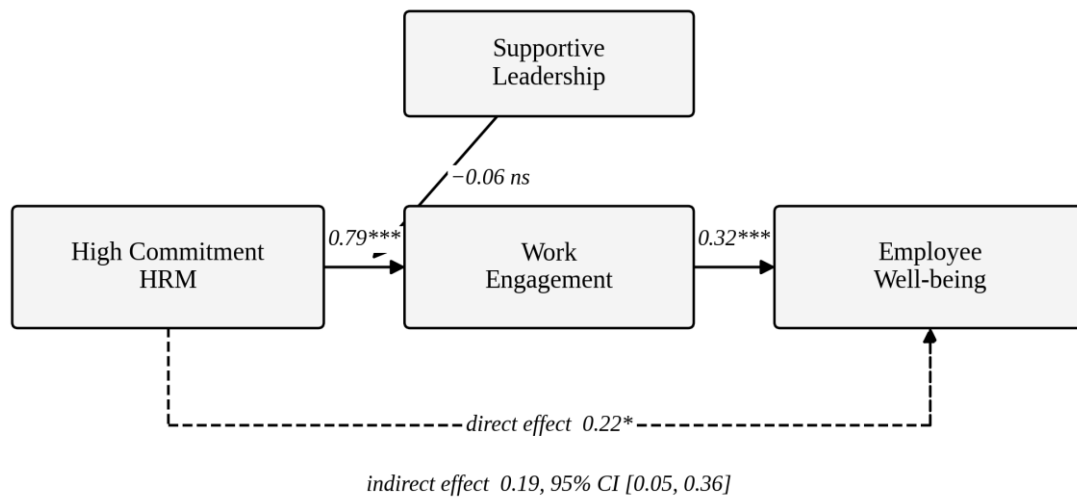
engagement and HCHRM predicting well-being), $R^2 = .287$ and the $F(2, 121) = 24.33$, $p < .001$, with variance inflation factors (VIFs) of 1.31 (HCHRM) and 1.09 (interaction model term), making multicollinearity not a concern for interpretation of Portion B.

Table 6

Moderated-Mediation Path Estimates

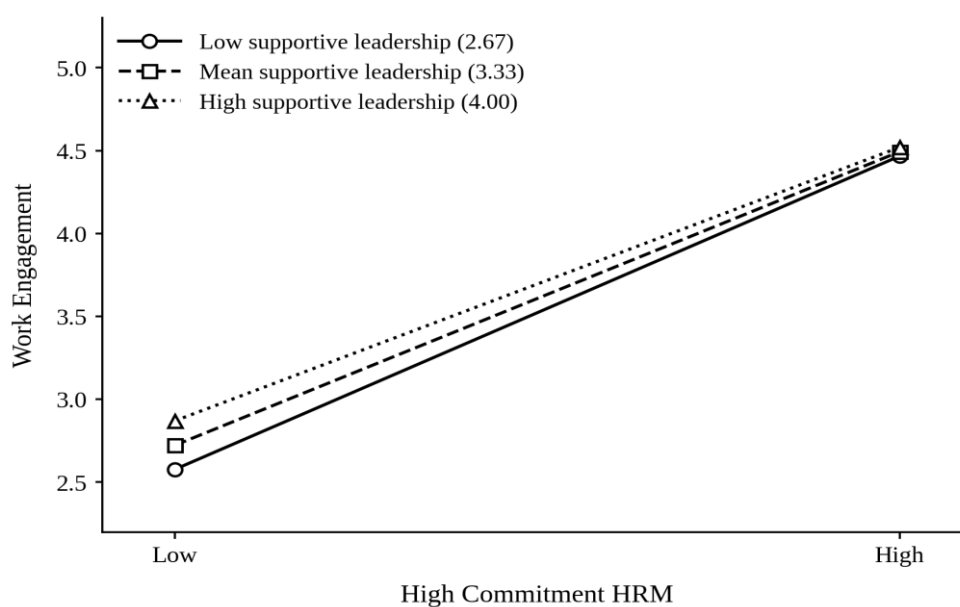
Predictor	B	SE	T	p	LLCI	ULCI
Portion A: Work engagement as outcome						
Constant	0.41	0.67	0.61	0.54	−0.91	1.73
High commitment HRM	0.79	0.22	3.65	< .001	0.36	1.22
Supportive leadership	0.34	0.20	1.69	0.09	−0.06	0.74
HCHRM × Supportive leadership	−0.06	0.06	−0.97	0.33	−0.18	0.06
Portion B: Employee well-being as outcome						
High commitment HRM (direct effect)	0.22	0.10	2.23	0.03	0.03	0.42
Work engagement	0.32	0.09	3.41	< .001	0.14	0.51
Portion C: Total effect of HCHRM on well-being						
High commitment HRM	0.45	0.08	5.84	< .001	0.30	0.60

For the simultaneous interpretation of regression coefficients (both unstandardized, B, and standardized, β), as the text describes these to be the same as those appearing in Portion A and Portion B in this table (such as in the HCHRM to WE path "H2"), then the standardized path ($b = .76$) has also been reported in this column by this name (H2), in addition to the unstandardized path (B); the standardized path H2 ($b = .76$) is additionally reported by the same name H2, next to the unstandardized path B (Path coefficient B = .82), to facilitate interpretive comparison. Unstandardized path coefficients in PROCESS Model 7 from the data in Portions A and B, and a simple linear regression (the endogenous variable is B, the exogenous variable is A) in Portion C ($B = 0.45$, standardized $\beta = .47$). For Portions A and B, the total effect is the estimated effect obtained from a full conditional (moderated-mediation) model, while the total effect of Portion C comes from the simpler regression model, and so the total effect of portion C adds up to the sum of its components (direct and indirect effects) in portion B would likely not be the same, the two are reported separately, and this is standard practice in PROCESS Model 7. The lower limit of the 95% bias-corrected bootstrap confidence interval was computed with 5,000 resamples. An Em dash will be used to show statistics that do not appear in the original output. To summarize the hypothesized paths, the coefficient of each was estimated as shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2*Estimated Model with Path Coefficients*

Note. Values are unstandardized path coefficients. The indirect effect is reported at the mean level of supportive leadership.
 $*p < .05$. $***p < .001$. ns = not significant.

The relationship between HCHRM and EWB was mediated by WE; thus, H4 was supported. Figure 3 illustrates the simple slopes of the HCHRM- WE relationship across each level of SPL, and the slopes are positive and close to being parallel, which corroborates the failure to find a significant HCHRM and WE interaction (as seen in Table 6).

Figure 3*Simple Slopes of the HCHRM–Work Engagement Relationship*

Note. Slopes are plotted at low (2.67), mean (3.33), and high (4.00) values of supportive leadership. The near-parallel slopes are consistent with the non-significant interaction term ($B = -0.06$, $p = .33$).

4.5 | Summary of Hypothesis Testing

Four of the five hypotheses were accepted. The direct pathway of HCHRM to EWB, the direct pathway of WE to EWB, and the indirect pathway of HCHRM to EWB through WE were supported. SPL was not supported as a moderator (Table 7).

Table 7

Summary of Hypothesis Testing

	Hypothesis	Outcome
H1	HCHRM is positively related to employee well-being.	Supported
H2	HCHRM is positively related to work engagement.	Supported
H3	Work engagement is positively related to employee well-being.	Supported
H4	Work engagement mediates the HCHRM–employee well-being relationship.	Supported
H5	Supportive leadership moderates the HCHRM–work engagement relationship.	Not supported

Note. HCHRM = high commitment human resource management.

5 | DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to examine the association between high commitment human resource management (HCHRM) systems and employee well-being in hospitality organizations. Our H1 indicates that HCHRM practices are positively related to employee well-being, which is in line with the mutual-gains perspective in the HRM–well-being discussion. Employees are regularly exposed to various job stressors while dealing with customers. Those who believed they had received reasonable due process and autonomy, and had been given fair wages, training, and job security, reported less emotional exhaustion and depersonalization, and had a higher sense of personal accomplishment leading to their well-being, supporting our hypothesis.

Employees who perceive high-commitment HRM practices to become motivated to increase their challenging job demands are more likely to be involved in work engagement ([Schaufeli, 2017](#)). This is consistent with indications from the hotel and restaurant industry that showed a positive relationship between HCHRM practices and work engagement, which is aligned with our H2 ([Farrukh et al., 2024](#); [Salin et al., 2023](#)). Additionally, work engagement was assessed as a predictor of employee well-being (H3) ([Ilies et al., 2024](#); [Schaufeli, 2017](#)). This reflects and extends the existing features of the theory that work engagement should be linked to better well-being and lower stress levels ([Galanakis & Tsitouri, 2022](#); [Lesener et al., 2019](#)), in line with our H3. Since HCHRM also had a significant direct impact on employee well-being, it is more appropriate to consider work engagement as a mediating variable supporting our (H4).

Research in the field of high commitment human resource management has pointed to the importance of interpersonal relationships in the workplace, particularly with higher management. In line with this, the focus of this study is on identifying how high commitment human resource management creates and sustains employee relationships. Supportive leadership was examined as a moderating behavior between HCHRM practices and work engagement (H5). Supportive behaviors of leaders increase employees' self-reported satisfaction and work engagement supporting H5.

The findings represent an HCHRM system related to well-being in the hotel industry; work engagement serves as a link between the human resource system and employee well-being, and supportive leadership is a boundary condition.

5.1 | Practical and Theoretical Implications

The study makes many contributions to theory. First, it provides direct empirical evidence to support the motivational process of the JD-R model at the HR system level. The study showed that an organization-level bundle of practices can positively affect EWB in a proximal motivational state, which extends JD-R from task- and team-level practices to those that are strategically designed as HR architectures ([Bakker & Demerouti, 2018](#); [Hayat et al., 2025](#)).

Second, it reframes WE as a process instead of a product. Second, it shifts the focus from WE to the process of achieving it. Specifying engagement as a mediator provides theoretical grounding to explain the relationship between HR investment and well-being, and provides a psychological pathway between these constructs. Specifying work engagement as a mediator provides theoretical justification for the unexplained relationship between HR investment and well-being in the end and a psychological pathway between the two ([Jiang et al., 2026](#); [Salin et al., 2023](#)).

Organizations must focus on HCHRM practices for better employee well-being, and this is possible because of a facilitating environment to make employees more engaged in their work.

5.2 | Limitations of the Study

These findings are subject to many limitations and future directions of research. In terms of methodology, the cross-sectional study does not allow causal conclusions to be drawn, and no inverse or reciprocal conclusions can be made since a better evaluation of HR practices may also lead to an increase in WE. To determine temporal precedence, one should use longitudinal multiple-wave designs, a quasi-experimental assessment, or a qualitative study ([Shahid et al., 2024](#)) of HR practices. Convenience sampling for this research study was conducted from a diverse sample of different organizations in the hospitality industry in Lahore, and thus the results of this study are not generalizable beyond the population in this area of Lahore or to the entire population as a whole. The fact that the number of organizations approached, and the proportion that agreed to participate in this study, were not tracked, and the formal inclusion/exclusion criteria were beyond this convenience sampling, is another limitation to generalizability. The other measurement problem is that the EWB composite was scored simply as the mean combined score of the three sub-scales (emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment); the personal accomplishment subscale is posed positively and could lead to information under-reporting through some of this variance, whereas both depersonalization and emotional exhaustion are posed negatively and this variance might also be a source of

measurement imprecision for the well-being composite itself. Directional (reverse coded) scoring and/or modeling the 3 subdimensions as separate outcomes should be considered for future research to isolate their unique relationships between HCHRM and work engagement.

5.3 | Future Research Directions

The interaction test here was underpowered and needs to be strengthened with a larger sample or with multiple organizations in order to draw a definitive conclusion regarding whether supportive leadership conditions the HCHRM and WE relationship. The second is to replicate the mediation pathway longitudinally, as the cross-sectional approach cannot eliminate the possibility of reciprocal relationships between, WE, HCHRM and employee well-being. Further analysis can be carried out for other boundary conditions or independent constructs, such as transformational leadership ([Ahmad et al., 2026](#)), leader–member exchange ([Wang & Tsai, 2026](#)), spiritual leadership ([Parveen et al., 2025](#)) and organization-context variables (e.g., perceived organizational politics) ([Bukhari et al., 2026](#)). Further investigations can be carried out for other mediating mechanisms such as Perceived fairness ([Hassan & Gull, 2026](#)), and knowledge sharing ([Qaiser et al., 2026](#)).

6 | CONCLUSION

The study examined the relationship between the impact of HCHRM practices on employee well-being in Pakistan's hospitality industry and examined the mediation of work engagement and the moderating effect of supportive leadership. The study supported HCHRM as a positive predictor of WE and EWB, and results of a moderated-mediation analysis showed that SPL was not supported as a moderator between HCHRM and EWB.

At the level of the HR system, within the scope of a single cross-sectional sample, the study provides an empirically based investigation of the motivational process from the JD-R model as a transmission step instead of an endpoint, examines Supportive leadership as a possible boundary condition that was not supported as a moderator in the present investigation, and redefines WE as a transmission mechanism rather than a trait. These contributions should be viewed as a first step on the way to longitudinal, large-sample, or causal research studies. The findings suggest the positive interplay of the HCHRM system, EWB, and WE in the hospitality sector. Managers in the hospitality sector are stimulated to devote their attention to high-commitment human resource management (HCHRM) practices and WE to sustain a strong EWB. Thus, this study adds value to the existing literature by highlighting the theoretical and practical implications for organizations, specifically the hospitality industry, to modify and enrich HCHRM practices and work engagement to promote employee well-being.

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