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Research Article

Examining the role of HR practices to get competitive advantage in the manufacturing sector of Pakistan

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the research is to examine the family firms HRM. Family firms are considered the most common type of firms globally and in Pakistan. Almost 90% of the business are a family firm. Family Firms are the key contributor to the economy of the country. Therefore, based on the above facts researcher studied the HR Practices of Family Firms. To develop the study's conceptual framework, the researcher used the Ability Motivation & Opportunity (AMO) and Resource-Based View (RBV) perspective. For data collection, the researcher visited the industrial estates of Lahore, Faisalabad, Gujranwala and Sialkot. Textile and Leather units are the population of the study. The researcher distributed the questionnaire containing 56 items. As a result, the researcher received 255 responses. Out of that, 230 samples have used for statistical analysis. The remaining 25 samples were irrelevant and had missing values. After carefully collecting the data, SPSS software examined the relationships among different variables. The results stated that HR Practices significantly correlate with the dependent variable, a competitive advantage. It shows that effective organizational commitment partially mediates the relationship between HR Practices & competitive advantage. It also indicated that moderating variable, which was Familiness resources, moderate the relationship between HR Practices & Competitive advantage.

Keywords: *Family Firms HRM; Affective Organizational Commitment; Competitive Advantage; Familiness Resources*

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

In this era, the family firm is considered the most common type. Almost 90% of the businesses are family businesses (Daspit, Madison, Barnett, & Long, 2018). If we talk about Asia, specifically, family businesses have contributed a lot to the economy (Tomizawa, Zhao, Bassellier, & Ahlstrom, 2020). However, the research on Family firm HRM attracts the researchers' attention. Nevertheless, the research on Human Resource Management (HRM) regarding family firms is still limited (Combs, Jaskiewicz, Shanine, & Balkin, 2018). Therefore, the researcher develops a theoretical framework to examine the HR Practices in Pakistani Family firms. Family firms are unique. They have family employees and non-family employees working together. However, the complicated issue is how family firms treat non-family members. The literature stated that some extant favouritism exists in family firms towards the family members working in a firm. This favouritism would create bifurcation bias between employees and enhance the performance of non-family employees (Daspit et al., 2018).

Mostly in family firms, they have less structured HR Practices as compared to non-family firms (Sánchez-Marín, Meroño-Cerdán, & Carrasco-Hernández, 2019). It prevents the family firms from developing healthy relationships among their employees. As we know, employees are a critical asset for organizations to create a competitive advantage over their competitors. Studies indicated that families often create hurdles not to formalize the HR Practices to protect their interests. It was not ideal for family firms to maintain or develop a healthy financial position in the long run. It would decrease the organizational commitment level of the employees and prevent the firms from getting maximum from their internal resources.

The researcher has examined 'Familiness' resources to study family firms' family factors. Familiness resources are the unique and internal bundle of resources created in family firms. It was first introduced by (Habbershon,

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& Williams, 1999). Familiness resources are unique resources in a firm that are difficult to replace for others. Because in family firms, two different systems are interacted with each other, that are family & business. These resources help organizations to get a competitive advantage. Familiness resources have been categorized into different ways by researchers. However, the researcher adopted the Irava's virgin of Familiness resources for this paper. They have divided the resources into three groups: human resources, organizational resources, and Process Resources (Irava, & Moores, 2010). Each group contains two dimensions e.g Human resources (reputation & experience), Organizational resources (decision-making & learning), and Process resources (relationships & experience). Based on the previous literature of Barney on Resource-Based View, they have developed the above groups. Therefore, by considering AMO theory and Resource-Based View, the researcher develops a theoretical framework to investigate family firms HR practices and mediator and moderator effect on competitive advantage.

1.2. Problem Statement

This paper focuses on family firms HRM in the Pakistani context. The researcher addresses two research problems; examining the Family firm HRM and research in the Pakistani context. Hyder (2019) found that enlightening the importance of the HR Department and academic research is imperative in the Pakistani context. In this global world, the HR Department is working as a strategic partner, and HR professionalization is beneficial for firm performance (Madison, Daspit, Turner, & Kellermanns, 2018). Therefore, to point out the importance of HRM researcher is examining the HR Practices in the local context. There is a gap and an opportunity for researchers to study HR Practices in family firms (Daspit et al., 2018).

The study aims to investigate HR Practices on affective organizational commitment as the commitment play their role in getting a competitive advantage. The study also examines the moderating role of Familiness resources between affective organizational commitment and competitive advantage.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Family Firm HRM

Family firm HRM is a new emerging topic in the HR domain. Researchers are more interested in understanding the family's influence in the HR system. The literature stated that HR professionalization benefits firm performance (Madison et al., 2018). High-performance work Practices "HPWP" were developed to improve the performance level of organizations. HPWP may implement in a firm in a formalized or structured manner; non-family firms adopt mainly these practices. They have structured interviews, specific selection criteria, career development plans, proper compensation, and performance appraisal systems (Kehoe & wright, 2013). However, in this paper, the researcher focuses on Family firm HR Practices that are less formalized or unstructured. In this paper, our operational definition for the family firm is "Any firm would be considered a family firm when at least two family members are working in it, and the firm's CEO should belong to the business family" (Kellermanns, & Eddleston, 2006). Family firms mostly like in-formal practices. It would create bifurcation bias among employees because favouritism may exist in the family firm. The nature of family firms is much more different than non-family firms. Family firms are more family-oriented and complicated. Therefore, the researcher aspires to fill the family firm HRM literature gap by examining HR Practices in family firms.

HR Practices includes selection, career development, performance appraisal and compensation. In Pakistan, the above mention practices are performing more in family firms (Hyder et al., 2019). Another article related to HR Practices in family firms highlighted the most affected HR practices: selection, career development, performance appraisal, and compensation (Daspit et al., 2018). Sanchez-Marin et al. (2019) stated that HR Practices have no generic list, multiple practices examined in the literature. Khan, Bhatti, Obaid, Sami, & Ullah, (2020) confirmed that green HR practices enhance sustainable performance of employees in manufacturing industries. But the most frequently used practices are selection, career development, performance appraisal and compensation. The above facts help us select the HR practices bundle for the current study. However, multiple

HR practices highlighted in the literature could be considered a limitation of the study. Therefore, the researcher finds the Human Resource mentioned above Practices for the current study.

2.2. Affective Organizational Commitment

Organizational commitment is a process through which employees' commitment is summed up physically (Deconinck & Bachmann, 2012). Employees' performance depicts their commitment to the organization to perform a particular task, mindset, and attitude showing the commitment level. Organizational commitment determines the employees' chances of success and failure in achieving their goals directly associated with the firm's vision (Farndale, Ruiten, Kelliher, & Hope Hailey, 2011). There are three dimensions for organizational commitment: affective organizational Commitment, normative Organizational Commitment, and continuance Organizational Commitment. In this paper, the researcher studies affective organizational commitment's mediating role. Affective organizational commitment is an employee's emotional belongings towards their organization. An increase in affective commitment would positively increase the employee's performance graph (Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch, & Topolnytsky, 2002). Lean and supply chain practices also play important role to increse organizational performance and commitment (Manzoor, Baig, Sami, Rehman & Nazam, 2021). Literature indicated that HR Practices were not the direct source of competitive advantage (Alserhan, & Shbail, 2020). Employees need motivation, satisfaction or maybe a commitment to enhancing their performance. Employers should provide a healthy working environment for employees to get their best. Formalized HR Practices could be the helping stone for employers in maintaining a good atmosphere. Selection on merit, career development opportunities, fair performance appraisal and proper compensation should increase the commitment level of employees. Before reaching any conclusions, one should test the relationships for final recommendations. In this paper, a researcher examines the mediation role of affective organizational Commitment between HR Practices and competitive advantage.

2.3. Familiness Resources & Competitive Advantage

Familiness resources are the unique internal resources that a family firm has. In simple words, Familiness is a specific Resource that emerges in family firms by the intersection of two systems, which are family & business. These resources may lead to competitive advantage if, by nature, they are inimitable, matchless, and notably challenging to copy (Habbershon et al., 1999). Family involvement in the family firm is the base for Familiness resources; these resources are hard to replicate. Therefore it would help firms to get a sustainable competitive advantage. Past papers stated multiple versions of Familiness resources; some are as follows. Pearson, Carr, & Shaw (2008) defined three dimensions of Familiness resources: structural, cognitive, and relational. Irava et al. (2010) divided Familiness resources into three groups: human resources, organizational resources, and Process resources. Each group consist of two dimensions e.g Human resources (reputation & experience), Organizational resources (decision-making & learning), and Process resources (relationships & networks). Only a few articles tested the Familiness Resources in HRM research.

Family firms in HR are one of the emerging domains. Familiness Resources are the unique set of resources generated in family firms. Researchers should study the impact these resources have on a family firm. May it could be the source of competitive advantage for the firms. However, there is a need for more studies on family firm HRM (Marler, Vardaman, & Allen, 2021). Familiness resources may be the source of competitive advantage in family firms. Therefore, it should be studied more to help employers understand the phenomena. The researcher decided to follow Irava & Moores version because it was considered the most vigorous and seemed more consistent in our local context. In this study, the researcher investigates the moderating role of Familiness resources on affective organizational commitment and competitive advantage.

2.4. AMO & RBV

Define the characteristic bundle of resources and capabilities possessed by family firms. Barney (1991) presented the concept of VRIN (valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable); any resource is considered a resource only when it contains VRIN qualities. If a firm wants to achieve a competitive advantage over its competitors, it should have resources containing VRIN characteristics described by Barney. Only then, resources become a potential source of competitive advantage. One crucial construct developed from the Resource-Based View was 'Familiness' by Family business researchers. It is an emerging construct and has multiple definitions and dimensions presented in the literature. AMO framework has widely accepted in HRM research, linking the relationship between HR Practices & firm performance. As a result, several studies have documented a positive relationship between the use of HPWS and business performance (Block & Pickl, 2014). Most of the studies used the AMO framework to develop the study's theoretical framework. Bailey (1993) developed the Ability, Motivation & Opportunity AMO framework. The basic concept is that employees should have the ability and motivation to work; what they need is the right opportunity from the employer to perform.

2.5. Theoretical Framework

In this paper, the researcher develops the framework considering AMO theory and Resource-based View to test the HR Practices of family firms on competitive advantage. Affective organizational Commitment and Familiness resources would be regarded as mediators and moderators, respectively.

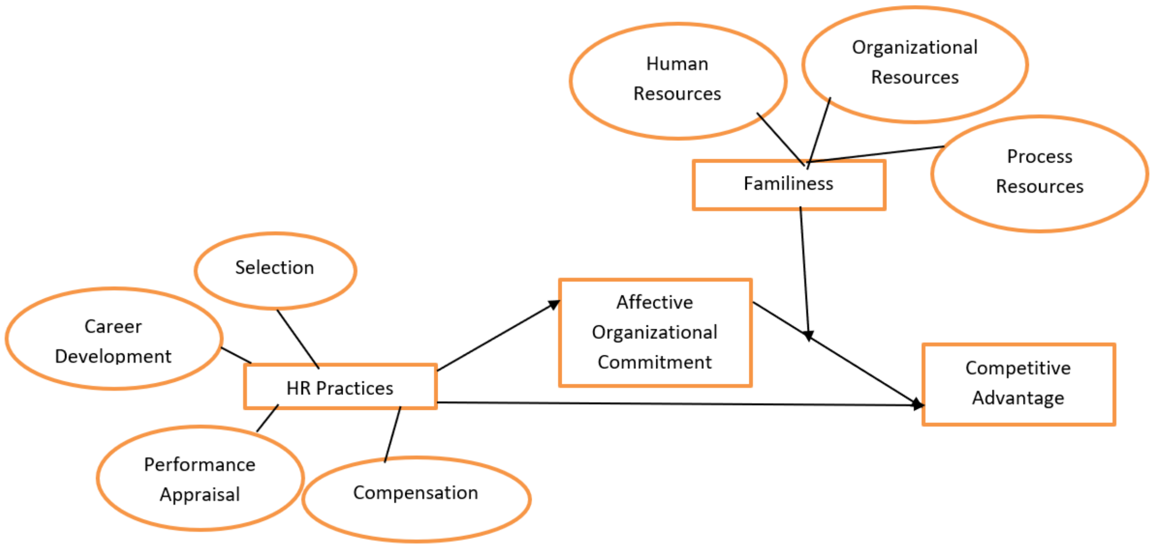

Fig. 1. Control variables: Firm Age & Firm Size

2.6. Research Hypotheses

H1: HR Practices have a significant effect on affective Organizational Commitment.

H2: Affective organizational Commitment has a significant effect on competitive advantage.

H3: Affective organizational Commitment mediates the relationship between HR Practices & competitive advantage.

H4: Familiness (Human, Organizational & Process Resources) moderates the relationship between affective organizational commitment & competitive advantage.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this paper, the researcher used a quantitative research design. The survey method is deployed for data collection. A 5-point Likert scale is used, which consists of 1= Strongly Disagree to 5= Strongly Agree. A detailed questionnaire consists of 56 items distributed in textile and leather units of Lahore, Faisalabad, Gujranwala and Sialkot textile and leather units. The respondents were family members and HR managers working in a firm. The researcher distributed the two hundred fifty-five questionnaires to different family firms. Out of those, 230 questionnaires were finalized for static analysis, and the remaining 25 have missing values or irrelevant data from non-family firms. Therefore, the final sample of the study consisted of 230 responses. In the questionnaire, a few filters were deployed related to industry, Cities, several family members working in a firm, and the firm's CEO belongs to the family or not—detail questionnaire, consisting of descriptive and 56 items for all variables.

3.1. Instruments

All instruments were adapted from previous studies to cope with the needs of the current article. Independent variable, HR practices include selection, career development, performance appraisal, & compensation. The selection contains three items adapted from (Wright, Gardner, Moynihan & Allen, 2005). Career development includes four items adapted from (Pittino, Visintin, Lenger & Sternad, 2016). Performance appraisal contains three items adapted from (Wright et al., 2005). Compensation includes three items adapted from (Chen & Huang, 2009). Affective Organizational Commitment has eight items adopted from (Jaros 2007). Competitive advantage has sixteen items, adopted from (Zhang, 2001). Familiness (human, organizational, and process) resources contain six, seven, and six items, respectively, and adopted from (Irava & Moores, 2010).

3.2. Data Analysis

For data analysis, the researcher used the SPSS software to examine the descriptive analysis and run the Hayes Model number 14 to test the moderation and mediation effect as shown in the study's theoretical framework.

4. RESULTS

Table one includes the descriptive analysis of the study, which consists of four questions related to our research.

Table 1. Descriptive Analysis

		Manufacturing Sector	Family members are working in a firm.	Lahore, Faisalabad, Gujranwala & Sialkot	CEO of the firm belongs to a business family.
N	Valid	230	230	230	230
	Missing	0	0	0	0
Minimum		1.00	2.00	1.00	1.00
Maximum		2.00	2.00	4.00	1.00

The researcher used four descriptive questions. One was about the manufacturing sector includes textile and leather: 1= Textile sector and 2= Leather sector. Several cities from which data collects includes Lahore, Gujranwala, Faisalabad and Sialkot. Third, several family members work in a firm, 1= one and 2= more than 2. According to our operational definition, a firm is considered a family firm when ownership belongs to a family, and at least two family members work in it. The last question was about the firm's CEO belonging to a business family; 1=yes and 2=No.

Table 2. Manufacturing Sector

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Textile sector	105	45.7	45.7	45.7
	Leather Sector	125	54.3	54.3	100.0
	Total	230	100.0	100.0	

Data shows that 45.7 per cent of data belonged to the Textile sector, and 54.3 per cent of data was from the Leather sector.

Table 3. Demographics

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Lahore	73	31.7	31.7	31.7
	Faisalabad	57	24.8	24.8	56.5
	Gujranwala	56	24.3	24.3	80.9
	Sialkot	44	19.1	19.1	100.0
	Total	230	100.0	100.0	

Four cities are part of data collection; the table stated that 31.7 per cent of units belonged to Lahore, 24.8 per cent of units were from Faisalabad, 24.3 per cent of units were in Gujranwala 19.1 per cent units were located in Sialkot.

Table 4. Reliability of Measures

Variable	No of items	Values
HR Practices	13	0.759
Affective OC	8	0.700
Familiness Resources	19	0.762
Competitive Advantage	16	0.720

As stated in the above table, HR Practices have 13 items, and their reliability value is 0.759 that is considered acceptable. Affective organizational commitment has eight items, and the reliability value is 0.700, which is also good. Familiness resources have 19 items, and their reliability value is 0.762, considered accepted. Competitive advantage has 16 items, and the reliability value is 0.720, acceptable. Overall, values are exemplary and may consider for further analysis.

Table 5. Hayes Model 14 (Outcome Variable: AOC)

Model Summary						
R	**R-sq**	**MSE**	**F**	**Df1**	**Df3**	**P**
.332	.110	13.047	28.237	1.000	228.000	.000

Model						
	coeff	**se**	**t**	**p**	**LLCI**	**ULCI**
constant	-18.780	3.542	-5.302	.000	-25.759	-11.800
HRPrac	.363	.068	5.314	.000	.228	.498

As stated in the above table, the R-square value is 0.11, which means that eleven per cent change in Affective organizational Commitment is because of HR Practices. Results are significant because the p-value is 0.000, which is lesser than 0.05. Likewise, the co-efficient of HR Practices on Affective organizational Commitment is also substantial, with 0.00 and t value of 5.314 far greater than 1.96. The lower and upper limits of the confidence interval are on the same side, which means both values are positive. It means that HR practices significantly change the Affective organizational Commitment as an independent variable. Therefore, the first hypothesis accepted, which is HR Practices have a significant effect on affective Organizational Commitment.

Table 6. Outcome Variable (Competitive Advantage)

Model Summary						
R	**R-sq**	**MSE**	**F**	**Df1**	**Df3**	**P**
.563	.317	12.829	26.157	4.000	225.000	.000

Model						
	coeff	**se**	**t**	**p**	**LLCI**	**ULCI**
constant	49.338	4.045	12.196	.000	41.367	57.310
HRPrac	.268	.078	3.426	.001	.114	.442
AffOC	.256	.089	2.885	.004	.081	.431
FamRes	.208	.060	3.465	.001	.090	.326
Int_1	-.006	.013	-.451	.652	-.031	.020

As stated in the above table, the r-square value of the model summary is 0.317, which means that 31 per cent of change in competitive advantage is predicted by HR Practices, Affective organizational Commitment, Familiness resources, and interaction terms. The results are significant because p-value is 0.00, which is lesser than 0.05. The co-efficient of HR Practices is substantial with a p-value of 0.00 and supported by t value of 3.426 greater than 1.96. Affective organizational commitment and Familiness resources co-efficient is also substantial with a p-value of 0.004 and 0.001, respectively. However, the result of the interaction term is negative and not significant. It means that all variables bring variation in competitive advantage except the last one.

Table 7. The direct effect of X on Y

coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
.268	.078	3.426	.001	.114	.442

The table shows the direct effect of HR Practices (X) on competitive advantage (Y). HR Practices significantly affect the competitive edge, and the size of effectiveness is 26.8 per cent, along with the t-value, which is 3.426 greater than 1.96. Overall, the results are significant because p-value is 0.001.

Table 8. Conditional indirect effects of X on Y:

INDIRECT EFFECT:				
	HR Practices ->	Affective OC ->	Competitive Advantage	
Fam Res	Effect	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI
-4.995	.104	.035	.044	.179
.000	.093	.043	.020	.185
4.995	.082	.061	-.030	.212

Index of Moderated Mediation				
	Index	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI
Fam Res	-.002	.005	-.013	-.008

As stated in the table, Familiness resources (moderator) affect affective organizational commitment (mediator) as the moderator values increase, the mediator values decrease. Therefore, an increase in moderator values decreases the mediator values. However, results suggested that moderated mediation effect occurs and is significant. Both upper and lower limit values are negative, which indicates the significance level of the model.

5. CONCLUSION

In this paper, the researcher develops the theoretical framework that indicates one independent, dependent, mediator and moderator variable. After scrutinizing the responses, a total of 230 questionnaires with 56 items was selected for analysis. Data were collected from four different cities of Punjab, Pakistan, from the textile and leather sector. The study contained four hypotheses and was tested using SPSS. Results stated that HR Practices have a significant effect on affective Organizational Commitment. Values are significant because the p-value is 0.00 that is less than 0.05. Reliability values are above 0.70, which was acceptable.

Hypothesis two is accepted, as results indicate that affective organizational commitment has a significant effect on competitive advantage, the values are significant. Affective organizational commitment partially mediates the relationship between HR Practices and competitive advantage. Results showed that a moderation mediator relationship occurs and values are significant. If we summarize the results, HR practices significantly affect affective organizational commitment, which means formalized Practices help develop employees' emotional ties with the organization. Formalized HR Practices would significantly impact the firm's competitive advantage. There is a moderation effect that exists as values are significant. Therefore, Familiness resources moderate the relationship between affective organization commitment and competitive advantage. Moderation mediation effect occurs, and results are effective, but the values are not positive. Family firms must develop structured HR practices to retain employees with healthy commitment levels. However, these employee's would become the firm's asset and provide them much needed competitive advantage. Competitive advantage leads to firm performance, success, and many more. A critical factor of the model is Familiness resources. These resources are unique and become the source of competitive advantage to firms. Family firms should develop these resources by implementing long-term and strategic policies. With time and it becomes a valuable source of profit for the organizations.

5.1. RECOMMENDATIONS

Employers should consider Formalized HR Practices to avoid favouritism among employees. HR Practices are the source of organizational commitment, and employees' dedication could lead towards competitive advantage. The study results indicate that Familiness resources positively moderate the relationship between organizational commitment and competitive advantage. Therefore, employers should pay more attention to unique resources that family firms have to get more out of it.

6. FUTURE RESEARCH

In this paper, the researcher examines the HR Practices in Family Firms to study the influence of families in family firms. The domain has multiple directions for future studies in which researchers can excel. According to Human Resource Management journals, there is a need to work on family firm HRM; the best approach is to study family science theories combined with management theories. One exciting theory is circumplex theory to learn family systems and understand how they affect family firm HRM. The theory defines different family systems, as we know that the family system is complex, and when it emerges as a business entity, it will increase its complications. Therefore, it is an excellent opportunity for researchers to fulfil the research gap.

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