

HR Practices In The Post-COVID-19 Era And Their Impact On The Psychological Capital Growth Of Employees

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Abstract

The study investigated the impact of flexible working hours, remote work norms, and the post-COVID-19 era on the psychological capital growth of employees in the banking sector in Pakistan during the post-COVID-19 era. This study investigated the mediating role of emotional commitment in the relationship between HR practices and psychological capital growth. The study utilized a sample of 180 private banking employees who participated in a survey, and the data analysis was conducted using SPSS and Smart PLS 4.0 M4 statistical software. The findings of the study revealed that flexible working hours, remote work norms, and the post-COVID-19 era have a significant impact on psychological capital growth among banking employees. The study also found that emotional commitment is a mediator in the relationship. Furthermore, it was concluded that HR practices and emotional commitment can contribute to psychological capital growth among banking employees. The findings of this study support all the direct and indirect hypothesis linkages, which have significant implications for theory and practice regarding HR practices, employees' emotional commitment to their job, and their psychological growth.

Keywords: flexible working hours; remote work norms; post-COVID-19 era; employees' emotional commitment; psychological capital growth.

1. Introduction

Things have been digitized all over the world (Shibuya 2022), leading to organizations being in a state of constant competition and seeking mutually beneficial outcomes. Employees'

emotional commitment in relation to their psychological capital growth is critical (Khalid et al., 2020). In the digital world, remote work has allowed for the effective control of employee performance. Organizations are helping their employees enhance their psychological capital

growth and emotional commitment to their work, leading to better performance and productivity (Tang et al., 2019; Luo et al., 2022). With support from their organization, employees can enhance their psychological capital, leading to increased motivation, intrinsic and extrinsic job satisfaction, and overall happiness in the workplace (Mziwao & Mbogo, 2022). Employees who aim to receive good rewards put forth their best efforts and strive for competitive performance in their assigned tasks (Van et al., 2021). They are also motivated to create a better work environment for the post-COVID-19 era (Subramaniam et al., 2022). These practices enhance employees' emotional commitment, leading to increased productivity (Nayak et al., 2022). Flexible working hours enable employees to strike a balance between their personal and professional lives (Stamm et al., 2022) and, in turn, can motivate them to enhance their productivity and contribute to the organization's profitability.

In the post-COVID-19 era, there is a growing demand from organizations for quick and increased productivity (De Smet et al., 2020). As a result, organizations are in the habit of obtaining work from their employees efficiently and effectively, whether at home or in the office (Krajcsák & Kozák, 2022). Employees should also be attentive to and focused on their work so that managers may succeed in achieving their collective goals (Grajfoner et al., 2022). Further, managerial roles have been challenging due to remote work norms and flexible working hours (Kaduk et al., 2019). In today's fast-paced business environment, remote work has become increasingly popular. However, to ensure that the organization's goals, employees' performance must remain optimized even while working remotely. Further, it is also essential for managers to motivate and satisfy their employees so that they can maintain effective performance in the post-COVID-19 era (Tristan 2022).

Organizations are in urgent need of obtaining work from their employees using professional and proactive methods (Wang et al., 2021). Furthermore, in the context of competitive performance, employees are expected to be solely responsible and self-directed (Yasmin et al., 2019). Employees are made self-sufficient in remote working norms in order to achieve their professional goals (Hilkenmeier et al., 2021). Employees should also be solely responsible for their professional growth (Wallin et al., 2022). Moreover, employees must strive to fulfill both their intrinsic and extrinsic goals (Locke & Schattke 2019). Further, employees must strive for professional growth and wellbeing by performing tasks remotely but effectively (Swanson et al., 2022). Satisfied employees benefit both themselves and their organization (Hennicks et al., 2022). In this context, organizations are always searching for energetic, professional, and dedicated employees (Maryani et al., 2022). organizations can attain sustainable competitiveness and foster employee development through these efforts (Locke & Schattke 2019). That's why it is said that the better the employees, the more effective the output. The employees also have better opportunities to balance their workloads and personal life engagements with the offered flexible working hours (Rodríguez-Modroño 2022). Married men and women may also benefit from having ample time to attend to household responsibilities due to flexible working hours (Ferguson et al., 2022). Furthermore, remote work becoming more common, women may be able to combine work with household duties, child care, and handling social matters (Paksi et al., 2022). Employees with flexible working hours can improve their work-life balance (Chung & Van, 2020). Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, organizations have introduced numerous innovative methods to engage their employees and train them for the growth of their businesses (Akindele et al., 2022). By utilizing

these innovative methods, organizations can promote employee growth and personal development (Chien et al., 2020). Therefore, organizations are incorporating digital and technological solutions to ensure that their employees receive proper training and stay updated (Nikou et al., 2022). This allows employees to have more autonomy and control over their work environment, with technology providing a safer and healthier workspace within their homes (Grzegorzczak et al., 2021). This increased autonomy leads to personal and professional growth for their employees (Arka et al., 2022). Flexible working hours, remote work norms, and the post-COVID-19 era share some similarities with regard to working practices (Adekoya et al., 2022). Digital and communication advancements have contributed greatly to business growth, leading to improved flexible working hours and remote work options for employees.

Flexible working hours result in reduced absenteeism (Shifrin & Michel 2022). Furthermore, this eliminates problems such as tardiness and time card discrepancies. Remote work norms also eliminate the need for daily commutes to the office. The digital world has

greatly influenced working styles and performance trends (Lee & Trimi 2021). In the context of Pakistan and considering the impending threats of climate change, adopting remote work practices is a positive step. Employees who work remotely may experience reduced stress and anxiety in the workplace (Orsini & Magnier-Watanabe 2022). Additionally, remote work provides the possibility for manager-free workplaces and increased self-reliance in job responsibilities (Jones et al., 2022).

Furthermore, a heavy workload can lead to demotivation and disengagement among employees, while a manageable workload promotes commitment and loyalty (Ngotngamwong 2020). The widespread adoption of digital and computational technologies in the post-COVID-19 era calls for the implementation of flexible work hours and remote work norms to enhance emotional commitment among employees. This will foster psychological capital growth and increase motivation levels. Further, the loyalty of employees to work can be understood in terms of personal growth and organizational goals for which they work.

Conceptual Framework (Figure 1)



1.2. Research Objectives:

- a. To determine the impact of flexible working hours on employees' psychological capital growth, with their emotional commitment playing a mediating role.
- b. To determine the impact of remote work norms on employees' psychological capital

growth, with their emotional commitment playing a mediating role.

- c. To determine the impact of the post-COVID-19 era on employees' psychological capital growth, with their emotional commitment playing a mediating role.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Perceptions Regarding Psychological Capital Growth

Psychological capital growth occurs when an employee's attitude toward their work is positive, and they feel a sense of satisfaction with their contribution (Luo et al., 2022). Psychological capital growth is a sign of employees' personal and professional development. This allows employees to showcase their potential and leads to their success over time. An increase in psychological capital growth has a beneficial effect on both personal growth, leading to enhanced quality of life, and organizational growth, contributing to the overall success of the organization. The improved morale of employees and the organization's long-term competitiveness lead to a flourishing of psychological capital. This positive psychological growth is reflected in the hope and satisfaction of talented employees. Psychological capital growth also emphasizes the need for organizations to invest more in their employees. Further, psychological capital also increases employees' sense of self-efficacy, optimizing their productivity and increasing their effort levels (Fachria & Rachmawati 2022). Psychological capital fosters a positive outlook in employees, encouraging them to embrace new responsibilities (Schuckert et al., 2018). The psychological capital approach also enables employees to balance their personal achievements with organizational goals. It helps to redirect the energy of an employee as and when necessary. Psychological capital growth empowers employees to tackle challenges and adversities within the organization, promoting resilience and facilitating the attainment of their goals. It also motivates them to work at optimal levels (Huang & Zhang 2022). Psychological capital not only expands an employee's experience and abilities but also enhances their knowledge and skills. It boosts an employee's social, relational, and network capital (Huang et

al., 2021). Many studies have proven that psychological capital and all its interventions reduce work stress. Additionally, psychological capital growth is associated with positive organizational practices, making it a source of intrinsic motivation (Ali & Qazi 2018). This approach encourages employees to be open to new ideas and innovation, and those with strong motivation and self-efficacy generally learn more actively and attentively. Further, it promotes employee creativity, innovation, and adaptability. Positive psychology, on the other hand, increases their working potential. Therefore, they experience increased hope, resilience, and self-efficacy, which eventually leads to overall improved performance, satisfaction, and personal growth (Su & Hahn 2022). The psychological capital approach further cultivates these qualities among employees.

2.2 Flexible Working Hours and Psychological Capital Growth

Flexible working hours allow employees to work from home as required or to be present at the workplace during their designated working hours. (Shiri et al., 2022). They provide employees with the opportunity to balance work and personal commitments and also meet managerial requirements (Choi 2018). Flexible working hours provide employees with the ability to balance their work and personal responsibilities. This allows employees to effectively manage their time between work and family/social obligations (Truter 2018). Flexible working hours also optimize the utilization of an employee's skills and job demands (Rani & Furrer 2021). It also enables employees to optimize their productivity and time. This leads to a reduction in the burden of workload and responsibilities, allowing employees to better manage their work schedules (Li & Griffin 2022). Flexible working hours allow both male and female employees to balance their paid and unpaid work responsibilities both inside and outside of the workplace, leading to a better work-life balance

and allowing them to spare some time for their children (Murabula 2022). Flexible working hours also save employees time, money, and anxiety at work. When employees have flexible working hours, they are more motivated to do their personal and professional work (Ab Wahab & Tatoglu 2020). This allows them to have plenty of time to be at the workplace or home. This leads to increased job satisfaction and motivation among employees, as they feel comfortable and engaged in their workplace (Gabriel & Aguinis 2022). Additionally, flexible working hours benefit both men and women as they are able to participate in both paid and unpaid work, leading to a more equitable distribution of household responsibilities (Chung et al., 2021). As a result, managers and organizations have changed their perceptions of flexible working hours and have started offering it as a way for employees to have a better work-life balance and reduce workload intensity. (Jauhar & Suratman 2022; Soga et al., 2022). Consequently, this shift has led to a more productive and motivated workforce (Aksoy et al., 2022). With a flexible work schedule, employees are able to efficiently manage their time and perform their job duties to a high standard (Johnson et al., 2020). Flexible working hours have changed the perception of managers, allowing employees to perform their job responsibilities on their own time, either in the office or remotely, with equal benefit to individuals across all aspects of the workforce, regardless of gender or job position (Stamm et al., 2022; Kesavan et al., 2022). They also provide employees with the ability to balance work and leisure time more effectively (Nnko 2022). By providing flexible working hours, employees are given the opportunity to balance their work and personal lives, leading to increased performance and output. It also addresses gender equity issues for female employees and helps managers manage their workforce effectively. Additionally, flexible working hours provide the necessary reset for work schedules and allow for a better

distribution of work hours (Groen et al., 2018; Battini et al., 2022; Williamson et al., 2020). It has a psychological impact, allow employees to be committed to their assigned tasks, and perform well for their personal growth.

H1: Therefore, flexible working hours have a positive impact on psychological capital growth.

2.3 Remote work Norms and Psychological Capital Growth

Due to digitalization, remote work norms have gained much popularity (Van & Vanthienen 2022). In this digital age, every employee remains in instant and constant contact with their friends and family. Every organization motivates and helps its employees perform remotely (Delfino & Van 2021). Remote work norms have allowed organizations to create innovative methods to overcome challenges (Jallow et al., 2021). Hence, a line manager's ultimate goal is to ensure high employee retention rates and keep them motivated for better output (Tampi et al., 2022). Employees should perform well and strive to enhance their overall productivity, even when working remotely (Rachmawati et al., 2021). Additionally, new work norms have also taught managers new and novel ideas for supervising their employees (Hassard & Morris, 2022). Managers should also have some qualities that help them organize their employees and ensure effective and frequent communication. Further, new working styles have driven the increased usage of modern technology (Jiao et al., 2021). It has never been easier to be in contact with employees, which allows managers to monitor their employees' performance and resolve any issue promptly. Managers must navigate new challenges and find ways to effectively manage and monitor their teams' work. Digitization and remote work norms have increased the use of technology such as laptops and cellular phones and online communication tools for individual and conference calls, allowing employees to have more autonomy and flexibility in their work.

However, the shift away from traditional office culture has also presented new challenges for managers to achieve their goals (Elavarasan et al., 2020). Leaving the office culture has created new challenges for managers in achieving their goals. In addition, working remotely or from home is not suitable for every type of job (Deng et al., 2020). The nature of the job, the job responsibilities, and accountability must be taken into consideration. Remote work is more suitable for certain industries, such as the service sector, the education sector, and the manufacturing sector. (Maddikunta et al., 2022). Remote work can also be beneficial for reducing traffic congestion and physical space issues (Hopkins & McKay 2019). Remote work can provide benefits for some jobs in terms of reducing costs and overhead expenses. When employees have more control and freedom in their work environment, such as when working remotely, they may experience greater happiness and job satisfaction. Remote work provides employees with greater autonomy and reduces work-related stress, leading to higher job satisfaction and performance (Klemme & Amrouch, 2022; Hopkins & McKay 2019). A higher level of happiness leads to increased productivity. Remote work also reduces workplace pressure and enhances overall job satisfaction. The remote work environment provides multiple workplaces, including cars, cafes, balconies, bedrooms, and so on (Greenhalgh et al., 2022). Each space offers its own unique benefits and relaxed atmosphere, which boosts employees' psychological wellbeing. The combination of individuality, multiple work environments, and autonomy creates a relaxing and empowering work environment that enhances Even the employees can perform by having coffee at café, at parking place by sitting in cars, resting in balconies or in bedrooms etc. Further, each place has its own effects, merits and relax environments for working. Therefore, individuality, multiple working environments and autonomy offer a

relaxing working environment to employees to enhance their psychological capital growth.

H2: Therefore, remote work norms have a positive impact on psychological capital growth of the employees.

2.4 Post-COVID-19 Era and Psychological Capital Growth

The COVID-19 pandemic has transformed the business world into a hybrid and Outbreak digital era (M PuaSchunder 2022). Companies are continuously seeking faster and more efficient ways to work remotely and keep up with technological advancements (Kabadayi et al., 2020). The working culture is adapting to the technological revolution and evolving with innovative work environments. As a result, the way employees work is changing with the introduction of new technology. Currently, businesses are undergoing a transformation as they adopt and integrate new technological advancements (Burke & Morley 2022). In the post-pandemic era, they are redesigning their working models, services, and business modules. Organizations are rapidly adapting to a digitalized world and revising their values and norms (Noorit et al., 2020). The pandemic has affected employees' attitudes, approaches, performance, and motivation in the post-pandemic era. The pandemic has particularly affected small and medium-sized organizations, leading to changes in their work styles and schedules. Hence, organizations in China, India, and Pakistan have also altered their business models after the COVID-19 pandemic (Kaakeh & Gokmenoglu 2022). In the post-pandemic era, working modules and modified and digitalized working styles are also of utmost importance. Many organizations have developed and incorporated advanced technologies to cope with the changing business world. The transition from offline to online operations by many organizations has resulted in a rise in the usage of online calls and communication tools aimed at

improving performance. Consequently, businesses are embracing the use of online calls and communication trends to drive better results (Susanto et al., 2021). Furthermore, they are using Internet tools, such as 5G internet facilities, digital currencies, cloud computing, artificial intelligence, and so on. (Mahmood 2020). Many organizations are also using e-agriculture modules, digital services, and Industry 4.0. Moreover, some organizations utilize robots and more advanced technologies and techniques to streamline their processes and increase their overall business performance. Organizations are keeping pace with technological advancements and adapting to emerging trends to remain competitive and efficient. The trend toward a workplace without a physical office has revolutionized businesses globally (Baum et al., 2022). As a result, organizations are adopting strategies to maintain their operations and stay competitive. The post-COVID-19 era has highlighted the significance of technology integration (Arora et al., 2022). The pandemic has greatly impacted all aspects of life and work, leading organizations to provide training for their employees on the effective use of digital tools and gadgets. The post-COVID-19 era has presented significant changes and challenges for every type of organization. However, there has been a rapid evolution in working styles, manufacturing speed, and supply-chain management globally (Parvanda & Kala, 2022). Customer service and collaboration with colleagues have also been transformed with innovative methods. To stay competitive, organizations are adopting innovative technologies, novel ideas, and effective working methods in the post-pandemic era (Malhotra 2021), aiming to improve production speed, quality, and output. Further, organizations should ensure customer responsiveness and enhanced managerial capabilities. Moreover, the performance of employees and their motivational levels can also be improved. Cost-effectiveness, a better return

in the shape of capital, and sustainable competitiveness can be materialized in the post-COVID-19 era. It can be concluded that the post-COVID-19 era has a positive effect on employees' psychological growth capital.

H3: There is a positive relationship between the post-COVID-19 era and the psychological capital growth of employees.

2.5 Emotional Commitment of Employees

Employees' emotional commitment is how they are psychologically attached to the assigned task (Suhartini et al., 2023). When employees are emotionally committed, they do their work to the best of their abilities. Employees take responsibility for top performance in innovative ways (Singh et al., 2021). Performance reflects employees' emotional engagement and is characterized by vigour, dedication, and commitment to their work (Louzao & Crespi-Vallbona 2022). Further, vigor can be defined as an employee's high level of energy and drive, which can impact their overall wellbeing. This energy and drive can also reflect an employee's ability to bounce back and handle challenges while on the job (Rapanta et al., 2021). Emotional commitment to work involves the employee's willingness to put forth their best effort and be productive (Hussein et al., 2022). They are invested in their work and believe that their efforts will lead to positive outcomes. Dedication, however, refers to a strong level of engagement and involvement in the tasks assigned to them (Panteli et al., 2019). Employees are currently facing some challenges and committing to their work. The same experience also gives them pride and teaches them the significance of work. Moreover, when employees are emotionally committed to their job, they are more likely to show a positive attitude and be motivated toward their work tasks. This results in increased productivity and job satisfaction, leading to improved overall performance (Jing et

al., 2021). Emotional commitment is demonstrated through an employee's attachment to their work and their commitment to performing the job with professionalism (Lightning et al., 2022). Emotional commitment to work refers to an employee's strong attachment and loyalty to their job, as well as their willingness to remain with the organization for a long period of time. This emotional connection to work can lead to increased productivity and contribute to the overall growth and success of the organization (Kessi et al., 2022). Emotional job commitment is often demonstrated by employees who show loyalty and have a long-term working tenure (Camilleri 2022). Employees who are physically and emotionally invested in their work play a crucial role in helping organizations reach their goals. Their emotional commitment demonstrates their full dedication and understanding of the tasks they have been assigned (Wang et al., 2021). Emotionally committed employees also care about their jobs and their personal growth. They enhance their emotional wellbeing and strive for professional growth as well as that of the organization for which they work. Employee loyalty can be a double-edged sword. On the one hand, loyal employees demonstrate their reliability and professionalism. On the other hand, they may not prioritize reducing burnout, leading to conflicting loyalties to the organization (Lee & Liu 2021). Employees who are emotionally committed to their work experience greater work-life balance, reduced conflict, and a focus on a supportive work environment. This commitment has been shown to increase productivity and decrease burnout while boosting psychological capital and resulting in improved job satisfaction and performance.

H4: There is a positive relationship between employees' emotional commitment to flexible working hours, remote work norms, and the post-COVID-19 era, and it also mediates the psychological capital growth of employees.

2.6 Theoretical Underpinnings

Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory

The conservation of resources (COR) theory, proposed by Dr. Stevan E. Hobfoll in 1989, posits that resources are not stationary and can exist in various forms. The theory explains the motivations of employees to conserve their current resources and acquire new ones. It emphasizes the importance of preserving and developing resources at all stages, as resources are dynamic and constantly in motion. This theory offers a comprehensive approach to understanding stress as a construct and highlights the crucial role of resources in shaping employee behaviour and wellbeing. Therefore, they must develop the required skills and become adaptable. This theory also highlights the impact of an individual's cognitive orientation and intrinsic satisfaction on their behavior. It guides an employee's optimistic outlook and cognitive processes (Zhou 2022) and sheds light on how employees approach career advancement, skill development, work-related stress, and job demands. Additionally, it explains how employees respond when their professional careers are threatened and how poor sleep can affect their daily functioning (Federici et al., 2021). Therefore, poor sleep is negatively related to psychological capital (Sheng et al., 2019). Psychological capital is a positive cognitive resource that protects an individual's beliefs regarding their wellbeing and career development (Vîrgă et al., 2020). Therefore, higher levels of psychological capital can also affect employees' experiences and working behaviors. This theory further elaborates on the actions and reactions at the workplace and how employees carry out their daily job responsibilities (Raja et al., 2020). How employees react to other aspects of work within an organization can impact their personal and professional growth. Job resources can be classified as physical job activities and psychological job relatedness (Tulu et al.,

2022). The concept of relatedness can be further divided into social factors associated with personal life and organizational dimensions (Boterman et al., 2019). The alignment of employees' personal goals with organizational objectives is also important. However, the psychological cost of job demands can enhance employees' skills and promote career development and steady growth (Bakker & de Vries 2021). By building their skills and nurturing their wellbeing, hope, aspirations, and resilience (Galanti et al., 2022), employees can maintain their professional potential for a longer period of time. These resources are influenced by factors such as marital status and can be reflected in employees' energy levels, skills, knowledge, and educational backgrounds.

3. Methodology

The current study examined the banking sector in Sindh, Pakistan, with a focus on employees working in the operational section. A total of 22 private banks and their operational offices are working in Sindh, Pakistan as per the data of State Bank of Pakistan 2019. The current study aimed

to sample only ten banks out of 22 whose operational office are located in Karachi City. So that the convenience sampling was used to identifying the total population of the employees working in operational offices of banks. Because it was difficult to include all the employees of all the operational banks in entire country (Henry 2009).

3.1. Data Analysis

All hypotheses were tested using the partial least structural model (Ringle et al., 2005) because this tool is more appropriate for multivariate data analysis. However, PLS-SEM is a more classical and effective tool to ensure conformity, the validity of the data, and the prediction hypothesis (Hair 2009).

4. Results

The present study used SPSS for initial data analysis, and then, we analyzed the data using partial least squares structural equation modeling SmartPLS 4 software (Ringle et al., 2015).

Table 1 Demographic

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Men	119	66%
Women	61	34%
Age		
20-30	58	32%
30-40	91	51%
30-50	22	12%
50-60	9	5%
Qualification		
MBA	75	42%
Masters & Others	32	18%
PhD	40	22%
Others	33	18%
Status		
Single	106	59%
Married	74	41%
Services		

1-year	70	39%
1-5 years	76	42%
05-10 years	21	12%
10-15 years	9	5%
Above -15 years	4	2%

4.1. Measurement Model

A measuring model was used to establish the validity and reliability of the constructs based on the recommendation of Hair (2009), given that

the primary goal of the study was to predict the relationship between the independent, dependent and mediating variables. First, we measured the internal reliability outer loading.

Measurement Model (Figure 1)

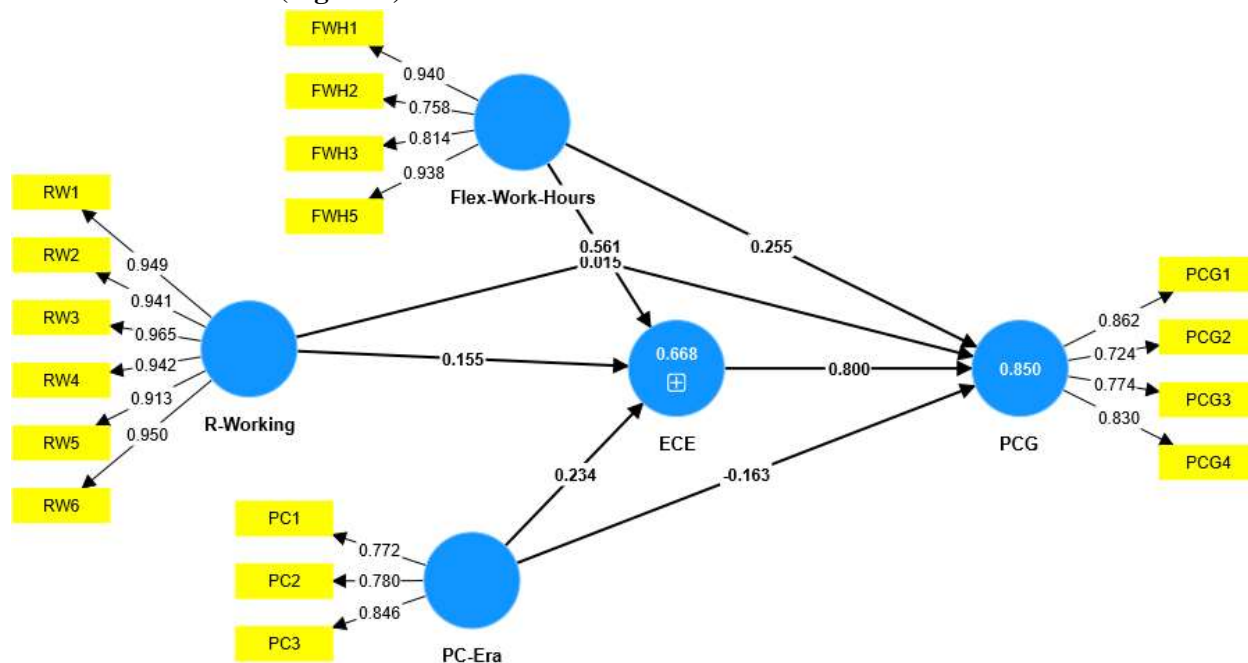


Table 2

Constructs	Items	loading	AVE	CR	R-square
Employee emotional commitment	ECE1	0.660	0.616	0.814	0.666
	ECE2	0.743			
	ECE3	0.764			
	ECE4	0.062			
	ECE5	0.618			
	ECE5	0.690			
	ECE7	0.693			
	Flexible working Hours	FWH1			
FWH2		0.758			
FWH3		0.814			
FWH5		0.938			

COVID-19		0.640	0.842	
	PC1	0.772		
	PC2	0.780		
	PC3	0.846		
			0.639	0.876
	PCG1	0.862		0.849
	PCG2	0.724		
	PCG3	0.774		
	PCG4	0.830		
			0.890	0.980
	RW1	0.949		
	RW2	0.941		
	RW3	0.965		
	RW4	0.942		
	RW5	0.913		
	RW6	0.950		

The measurement of the model's output is shown in **Table 2**. **Figure 1** displays the standards loading, average variance extracted (AVE), and composite reliability scores. According to the internal reliability study report, the loadings for all items in the constructs were 0.5 or higher (Hair et al., 2014), and the composite reliability was 0.7 or higher for all constructs (Chin 1998). The measurement model was considered appropriate for the study as it satisfied the suggested criteria, with all the constructs having AVE values above the acceptable threshold of 0.5.

4.2. Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity refers to the concept that each latent variable should be distinct and does not overlap each other (Henseler et al., 2015). It is ensured by comparing the correlation between latent variables with the square root of the AVE. In this study, discriminant validity was attained by linking the correlation between latent variables with the square root of AVE. The square root of AVE should be greater than the value of discriminant validity, which indicates its validity. Additionally, the external consistency of the model is accepted to ensure the reliability of discriminant validity (as shown in the table below, which are EEC= 0.611, FWH=0.576, and PCE=0.375, PCG =0.531. RWN=0.00).

Table 3 Discriminant Validity

	Employees Emotional Commitment	Flexible Working Hours	Post-COVID-19 Era	Psychological Capital Growth	Remote work Norms
Employees Emotional Commitment					
Flexible Working Hours	0.611				
Post-COVID-19 Era	0.003	0.576			
Psychological Capital Growth	0.346	0.533	0.875		
Remote work Norms	0.405	0.172	0.446	0.631	0.943

Table 4 Structural Model Assessment

	Beta- V	Error	t-values	P values
Flex-Work-Hours -> PCG	0.255	0.048	5.329	0.000
R-Working -> PCG	0.105	0.020	1.766	0.001
PC-Era -> PCG	0.163	0.031	5.168	0.000
Flex-Work-Hours -> ECE -> PCG	0.449	0.045	12.389	0.000
R-Working -> ECE -> PCG	0.124	0.045	2.788	0.003
PC-Era -> ECE -> PCG	0.187	0.034	5.500	0.000

The current study used a structural model to assess the hypotheses and applied the bootstrapping method to generate results. The results, shown in Table 4, indicate a positive and significant relationship between flexible working hours and psychological capital growth ($b = 0.255$, $t = 5.329$, $p = 0.000$). Thus, the hypothesis is supported. In second hypothesis, the remote work norms have a positive impact on psychological capital growth. Thus, the hypothesis was supported. ($b = 0.105$, $t = 1.766$, $p = 0.001$). Thus, the hypothesis was significant. In third hypothesis, the post COVID-19 era has a positive impact on psychological capital growth. Thus, the hypothesis was supported ($b = 0.163$, $t = 5.168$, $p = 0.000$). The current study also tested an indirect hypothesis based on the suggestions of Preacher and Hayes (2004). that the employees' emotional commitment mediates between flexible working hours, and positively effects the psychological capital growth of the employees. ($b = 0.449$, $t = 12.389$, $p = 0.000$). As a result, the hypothesis was supported. In context to hypothesis of mediating role of emotional commitment which stated that employee emotional commitment mediates between remote work norms and psychological capital growth, and positively effects the psychological capital growth of the employees. And as a result the hypothesis was supported statistically ($b = 0.124$, $t = 2.788$, $p = 0.003$). The last hypothesis, the sixth one, which stated that the post-COVID-19 era mediates psychological capital growth, was also supported ($b = 0.187$, $t = 5.500$, $p = 0.000$). All six hypotheses were found as significant.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

The current study revealed a relationship between HR practices and employee psychological capital growth, which mediates emotional commitment in the post-COVID-19 era. The result of the structural model showed a statistically positive correlation between HR practices, employees' psychological capital growth, and the mediating role of emotional commitment during the post-COVID-19 era. The present study supports the results regarding banking employees in the post-COVID-19 era. These findings highlight the importance of studying complex social issues and their relevance in the post-COVID-19 era. Flexible hours allow employees to better manage their time, enabling them to improve their work-life balance. Another study indicated that flexible working hours are one of the most effective ways that employers have supported their employees since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic (Schmidtner et al., 2021). Our study also suggested that working remotely has allowed employees to achieve a better work-life balance by improving their psychological capital. This study's findings are consistent with those of previous research by Giupponi and Landais (2018), which showed that remote work norms and flexible hours can lead to increased work-life balance, improved mental health, and growth opportunities. This study's findings are also consistent with those of Boamah et al. (2017), who also found that remote work allows employees to have a better work-life balance and increases capital growth. However, during the

COVID-19 pandemic, remote work norms had drastic alterations from traditional office settings, and their effects on psychology and capital growth are still being felt in the post-COVID-19 era. Although banning employees during the COVID-19 pandemic may have resulted in some capital growth, it is important to remember that employees' safety and morale must also be considered when making decisions. The current study also investigated mediating relationships, such as employee emotional commitment, between remote work norms and psychological capital growth in the banking industry. Emotional commitment is a key element in growing psychological capital and is necessary for employees to achieve a sense of job satisfaction. Emotional commitment is an important part of an employee's psychological capital as it helps to form a strong connection between other employees and the workplace. Research indicates that providing flexible working hours can have a positive impact on employees' emotional commitment and psychological capital. Therefore, employees' emotional commitment shows a significant relationship between flexible working hours and psychological capital growth. It suggests that flexible working hours will lead to higher emotional commitment and loyalty, which will help employees perform better. As a result of living in a digitalized world, it has become standard practice for managers to offer flexible working hours. With advancements in technology and telecommunication, remote work has become the norm in the post-COVID-19 era. This shift to digital work has provided employees with the freedom and opportunity to balance their personal and professional lives, leading to improved wellbeing and increased productivity. The shift toward a largely digitalized work environment in the post-COVID-19 era not only provides speed and reduces stress. Additionally, it reduces the need for daily commuting, which has a remarkable impact on the environment by addressing climate change. The concept of

psychological capital growth was studied in relation to flexible working hours, remote work norms, and the post-COVID-19 era, with a focus on the mediating role of emotional commitment. The results showed that employees can grow their psychological capital for their personal, professional, and overall wellbeing. A study found that psychological capital growth is positively correlated with the work environment, employee commitment, and the level of support and mentorship received in achieving both organizational and personal goals. Therefore, a supportive work environment that nurtures employee commitment and provides opportunities for mentorship and personal growth can positively impact employees' psychological capital and overall wellbeing.

6. Limitations and Future Recommendations

To strengthen the accuracy of the results, it is necessary to broaden the research scope and increase its coverage to all provinces in Pakistan. The current study is cross-sectional, which is a major limitation of this study. Thus, it was impossible to draw conclusions about the cause-effect relationship. Longitudinal studies are more effective in yielding accurate results. Future research should explore the impact of psychological capital on several dependent variables such as productivity, engagement, commitment, motivation, and job satisfaction. This study is limited in its use of emotional commitment as a mediating variable. Further the research may utilize a multi-method approach, incorporating interviews and experiments, to gain a better understanding of the issues at hand. To gain insights into the growth of psychological capital, future studies should also investigate the effect of individual differences in motivation and personality traits on psychological capital growth.

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