

# AN INTEGRATIVE MODEL OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE, PSYCHOLOGICAL CAPITAL, PROACTIVE PERSONALITY, WORK ENGAGEMENT, AND JOB PERFORMANCE

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## ABSTRACT

*The workplace is increasingly becoming a setting where continued existence requires an above-average performance of the employees. A competitive advantage can no longer be obtained simply by increasing widespread technologies. By the same way, success can no longer be obtained by merely attempting to correct flaws of human resources. The pre-requisite of today's workplace is to understand the importance of human strengths rather than focusing on "fixing the flaws" paradigm. Therefore, the prime objective of this research is to propose an integrative model to study the impact of the positive strengths of employees on job performance. The present study used two different research approaches to get maximum possible relevant studies related to POB criteria. First, electronic databases and secondly indexed journals related to psychology, human resource management and organisational behaviour. An integrative model has been proposed linking emotional intelligence, psychological capital, and proactive personality to job performance via work engagement. The research argues that human strengths such as emotional intelligence, psychological capital, proactive personality, and work engagement are essential factors that can play a significant role in enhancing job performance of the employees. Based on JDR perspective, coupled with the POB theory, the researchers propose a novel framework pertinent to the banking sector of Pakistan. The conceptual framework has not yet been tested empirically. Hence, future studies are necessary to empirically test the framework using survey method.*

*Keywords:* Emotional intelligence, psychological capital, proactive personality, job performance, work engagement, JDR model, POB theory.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The study of positive organizational behaviour has gained more power and its workplace ramifications have not gone overlooked. Several recognisable areas and approaches to organisational positivity have been recently emerged. Also, there is a need that the world in general and our workplaces in particular need a more positive approach that takes the positive attributes into account, building on strengths and seeking to address positivity at the workplace. After the recent recommendations by Alessandri, Consiglio, Luthans, and Borgogni

(2018) regarding the study of positive attributes at workplace, our approach is to propose an integrative model of positive attributes of individuals and their impact on in-role and extra-role behaviours of employees that are necessary for overall job performance.

Employees can be a vital source of an organisation's competitive advantage (Chadwick, 2017). An organisation's success is highly dependable on how well employees perform their jobs (Dhani & Sharma, 2018). Hence, the present study seeks to answer a general question: Given employees' role has a broader effect on organisational performance and productivity, how do organisations ensure their employees deliver job performance? What are the relationships between employees' characteristics, such as emotional intelligence, psychological capital, proactive personality, and job performance in the banking industry in Pakistan? As researchers in this area continue to explore the effective ways to improve employee job performance for the benefits of the organisation, and given the fact that employees are the most significant asset to an organisation, it may be worth considering how employees' individual characteristics such as emotional intelligence, psychological capital, proactive personality, and work engagement influence job performance.

Banking is a service-oriented sector, and it is the prime source of financial support to all other economic sectors (i.e., manufacturing and agriculture) of the country (Waseem, Ali, Bilal & Khan, 2020). The banking sector of Pakistan has always been one of the most important sectors for the economy (Waseem, Ali, Bilal & Khan, 2020). Its significance as a lifeblood of economic growth in the collection of deposits and the provision of loans to states, individuals, households, and industries is inarguable (Waseem, Ali, Bilal & Khan, 2020).

Banks often focus on managerial practices to ensure service excellence. In this case, the employees' job performance is critical. Why? According to Gong and Yi (2018), employee job performance has a direct impact on the organisation's overall success. This impact works as a spill over effect: employees who are happy about their jobs can create value, and their enthusiasm will result in happy customers. These positive feelings spill over to customers, who become advocates for the organisation's products and services, which leads to increased performance (Gong & Yi, 2018).

Given the nature of the jobs in the service industry, banking organisations often require employees to hide their negative emotions (such as anger, sadness, anxiety, etc.) or negative behaviours (rude, impolite, discourteous, lack of good manners, etc.) because employees usually have direct contact with customers. Bank employees are required to manage their emotions well to complete their job successfully. Research on emotional contagion demonstrated that an individual could catch or be infected by another person's emotions (Jia & Cheng, 2020). If a bank customer service representative is angry and rude, the negative emotions could be transferred to his or her customers. If that transfer occurs, it becomes less likely that customers will view their experiences favourably, affecting bank performance. This shows that how bank employees perform their job could have significant implications for the organisations.

Babar (2018) researched ten banks in Pakistan to investigate the loss caused by negative behaviour. Only large banks with more than 300 operational branches were included in his study. He reported a loss of 4 percent in the banking business because of negative behaviour. A study conducted by Bilal, Waseem, and Ali (2020) in commercial banks of Pakistan reported some negative behaviours in Pakistan banking industry. These behaviours include verbal abuse, discourteousness and disrespectfulness, aggressiveness, lack of responsibility, interpersonal conflict, showing little interest while conducting the know-your-customer (KYC) and customer due diligence (CDD) procedure. Ali (2020) stated that State Bank of Pakistan had levied a fine on 15 Pakistani commercial banks, 12 of which have been fined for CDD and KYC misconduct. The researcher of the present study interviewed HR managers of the private commercial banks to get insight into the importance of positivity at workplace and its impact on job performance of the employees in the banking industry of Pakistan. The HR managers shared a common concern "Employee job performance is always the primary concern of bank. Apart from employee formal job description, bank places a greater premium on high citizenship behaviour levels (OCB) because employees with OCB are more likely to show positive behaviours than negative behaviours".

The HR manager of ABL bank, expressed his views that "Employee job performance is a complete set of behaviours that impact the banks' employee efficiency and success. He explained while preparing employee appraisal report at the end of the financial year, the rating is assigned to each employee

as per KPI (core/in-role behaviours) and the four needed attributes for overall performance. These attributes consist; how efficient is the employee in providing reliable and timely services to the customers? How efficient is the employee communicating information and listening to others to consider issues, problems, or needs? How effectively does an employee contribute to an enthusiastic and positive work environment? And finally, is the employee a self-starter who demonstrates a willingness to take on new challenges, responsibilities, and assignments? An employee with positive attributes is facilitating a better working environment and contributing to the bank's reputation and productivity.”

These interviews shed light on the significance of positivity of the employees at the workplace and the importance of employees' in-role and extra-role behaviours (OCBs).

Recent research has given considerable attention to positive psychology in the workplace (Biricik, 2020; Chan, 2018; Chong, Falahat, & Lee, 2020; Feng, 2020). This growing research stream has led to a more specific interest in the topic of positive organisational behaviour (POB) (Alessandri et al., 2018; Biricik, 2020; Chan, 2018; Chong, Falahat, & Lee, 2020; Feng, 2020; Kim et al., 2018). Considering the idea of POB, the present study suggested the requisite solution, to the current banking scenario in Pakistan, is positive attributes of employees such as emotional intelligence, psychological capital, proactive personality, and work engagement. A brief literature will provide literature to support the positive impact of these attributes on performance of the employees.

### **1.1. Emotional Intelligence and Job Performance**

Emotional intelligence (EI) is defined as the ability to keep an eye on one's own and others' emotions, to distinguish among them, and to use them to guide one's thinking and action (Wong & Law, 2002). The abilities involved in EI are self-emotional appraisal, others emotional appraisal, regulation of emotion and use of emotion. Emotional intelligence was an important element that fits POB criteria (Luthans, 2002). In recent times, it has become a catchphrase in organisational behaviour and human resource management all over the world. A recent report by the World Economic Forum (2016) also reinforced that EI is one of the top ten skills required by employees in 2020. The survey included 350 executives across 9 industries in 15 countries' biggest economies.

The report indicated that it is the time to take emotional intelligence seriously at workplaces. Without embracing the finer nuances of human emotion in the work environment, organisations may not have practical benefits, such as better collaboration among employees (Cuéllar-Molina et al., 2019; Rezvani, Khosravi & Ashkanasy, 2018).

Several studies have tested the relationship between EI and performance empirically. Bradberry, Greaves, and Sousa (2017) tested the emotional intelligence (EI) alongside 33 other essential workplace skills and found that EI is the most vital ability that can improve performance, explaining a full 58% of success in all types of jobs. They found that 90% of top performers are also high in EI among all the people they have studied at work. Newman (2017) strengthened the idea and completed a global study of 8,000 people in 11 regions worldwide, particularly focusing on people whose roles have been shifted from technical responsibilities to services. He found that people who score high on EI manage these jobs much more effectively than people with low EI levels.

Additionally, case studies on world-leading organisations like Amadori, Momentum4 and Global Tech also revealed that EI leads to better performance (Goodman, 2017; Stillman, 2017; Williams, 2017). According to the researcher of the present study, EI is one of the important workplace skills for employees working in the Pakistani banking sector, as mentioned by Pervez and Sabir (2019). Pervez and Sabir (2019) reinforced that the bankers' emotional intelligence in Pakistan is essential, given that EI is a fundamental ability for improved results at both individual and organisational levels. A survey conducted by Career Builders (2011) reported that nearly three-quarters (71%) of HR managers said they valued an employee's EI over their IQ (Intelligence Quotient). This shows the importance of EI at the workplace.

Makkar and Basu (2017) argued that EI influences on employees' job performance in banking in India. This is supported by Nanayakkara, Wickramasinghe, and Samarasinghe (2020) who claimed that EI plays a vital role in employee job performance in the banking industry in Sri Lanka. In short, EI assists employees in better performance, and it allows the employees to use their mental abilities to do their job rather than being impaired by negative emotional experiences. It also helps them to diligently deal with the circumstances that lead to negative behaviours (Meisler, 2020). Thus, based on

these justifications, the researcher of the present study has proposed EI as one of the independent variables for employees' job performance in the Pakistani banking sector.

## **1.2. Psychological Capital and Job Performance**

Another variable that attracted the researchers towards POB is psychological capital (Psycap). Luthans et al., (2015) defined Psycap as “an individual’s positive psychological state of development that is characterized by (1) having confidence (efficacy) to take on and put in the necessary effort to succeed at challenging tasks; (2) making a positive attribution (optimism) about succeeding now and in the future; (3) persevering toward goals and when necessary, redirecting paths to goals (hope) in order to succeed; and (4) when beset by problems and adversity, sustaining and bouncing back and even beyond (resilience) to attain success”. Dubey, Ruparel, and Choubisa (2019) suggested that the four positive capacities of efficacy, hope, optimism, and resilience (named psychological capital) work together to form a unique component that positively impacts job performance in the banking sector of India. Harunavamwe, Nel, and Van (2020) recommended that four positive psychological resources have the most substantial impact on the employees' engagement in South African banks that can lead to better job performance.

Many empirical researchers have identified the positive relationship of Psycap to performance (Alessandri et al., 2018; Dubey, Ruparel, and Choubisa (2019); Kappagoda et al., 2014; Kim et al., 2018). According to these studies, the four positive capacities predict a higher level of performance. Durrah et al., (2016) investigated the connection between Psycap and performance. The outcomes brought up a significant positive relationship between Psycap and performance, however, job satisfaction intervened the link between Psycap and performance. In addition, it was discovered that hope and resilience statistically affect all dimensions of performance. Alessandri et al., (2018) examined the relationship between Psycap and performance. The results of the investigation uncovered that increase in every component of PsyCap (efficacy, hope, optimism, and resilience) increased work engagement which in turn predicted supervisor rated performance.

Moreover, Tüzün et al., (2018) utilized AMOS to look at the connection between Psycap and performance and tested the relationship on a sample of

235 academicians in Turkey, results demonstrated that PsyCap significantly positively affects the performance of academicians. Gupta et al., (2017) found in their investigation that the PsyCap positively influences OCBs. Muthukumar et al. (2017) found in their investigation a positive relationship between four dimensions of Psycap and performance. This was supported by Kim et al. (2017) in a study in Busan, Korea, that the impact of Psycap on performance is indirect by means of quality of work life. Employees high on PsyCap feel that they can positively deal with the circumstances and therefore participate in OCBs. Udin and Yuniawan (2020) conducted a study in Indonesia to test the relationship between Psycap, task performance and OCB. The findings indicted that Psycap positively affected employee's task performance and appeared to be more significant on OCB. Thus, Psycap, with its four key resources (efficacy, hope, optimism, and resilience) is the second independent variable of the present study.

### **1.3 Proactive Personality and Job Performance**

In addition to EI and Psycap, Islam at al., (2018) suggested that a positive self-starting proactive behaviour is increasingly important in today's working environment for better performance. The banking industry is facing continuous change as the digitalization is boosting the banking industry. With today's work environment's rapid pace, employees increasingly need to work faster and collaborate more effectively to get their jobs done. The present study researcher believes that proactive personality (PP) is essential for banking employees who eventually can serve as a source to the competitive advantage stated by Zafar and Kayani (2019). This is supported by a study conducted by Johari and Subramaniam (2020) in Malaysian banks, and they concluded that employees with proactive personality initiate changes, take action, and stay positive can deliver the best services. PP has been empirically linked to superior performance in some studies (Bakker, Tims, & Derks, 2012; Belwalkar & Tobacyk, 2018; Islam et al., 2018; at al., 2017). In other words, proactive personality can help an individual to effectively deal with situational pressures, identify opportunities for advantage, make proactive moves, and thereby influence the environment to improved performance (Islam et al., 2018).

Jawahar and Liu (2016) in an investigation found proactive personality affect career satisfaction, which in turn impacts OCB. This investigation

proposed that proactive people are found to be satisfied with their career, which prompts more noteworthy OCB. Bergeron et al., (2014) have shown that employees can take part in all work activities, including both OCBs and IRB. Their investigation uncovered PP was significantly positively related to IRB and OCB. Wang et al. (2017) found that proactive personality associated with task performance and negatively associated with counter-productive behaviour. An investigation by Caniëls et al., (2018) found that proactive personality is related with job performance and innovative performance. Johari, and Subramaniam, (2020) examined proactive personality with job performance in employees working in Malaysian banks in Klang Valley found PP significantly influence performance of the bank employees. Therefore, PP is the third independent variable of the present study.

#### **1.4 Work Engagement As Mediator**

The present study proposes that work engagement (WE) is a potential mediator. Work engagement is defined as a positive behaviour or positive state of mind that leads to positive work outcomes (Schaufeli, et al., 2002). The study proposes to study WE because WE makes the work interesting as the employees gain a sense of gratification, enthusiasm, and fulfillment, ultimately leading to better performance at work (Chen & Fellenz, 2020). The study focuses on the potential of WE as a mediator for four reasons. First, the current pace and pressure of contemporary work in the banking context consistently constitutes stress, making WE a timely and vital variable of interest for researchers and practitioners. Second, the researcher considers WE as a potential source of strength for employees and a motivational construct as WE refers to a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind (Schaufeli, et al., 2002) where an employee bring all his or her cognitive and emotional energies into his or her organisation. WE is seen as an employee's involvement, commitment, passion, enthusiasm, absorption, focused effort, and energy at workplace (Schaufeli, 2012). Third, past research showed that WE has a strong link with employee work-related behaviours and well-being (Garg & Singh, 2019). Given the fact that WE affects employees' work-related behaviours, it is essential to determine what leads to variations in WE. Fourth, engaged employees experience positive feelings, such as dedication, enthusiasm, and joy. This positivity expands the scope of thought-action process at work that would aid in better job performance (Chen & Fellenz, 2020).



Bakker and Albrecht (2018) recommended that engaged workers show better performance because of their strong dedication and focus on their work. WE is a top priority of organisations, as it holds the keys to more robust performance. Guan and Frenkel (2018) supported this notion that employees who are engaged in their work will perform much better. Empirical research has shown that WE has been extremely valuable in the examining the mediating role in an organisational setting (Guan & Frenkel, 2018; Bakker & Albrecht 2018; Chen & Fellenz, 2020). These studies' findings revealed the potential mediating role of WE comprehends the relationship between antecedents and outcomes. Therefore, the present study proposes WE as a potential mediator between EI, Psycap, PP, and JP.

From the above discussion, it has been evident that performance is a set of behaviours to achieve desired objectives. Also, the employee performance in the banking industry of Pakistan is critical because the good behaviour sustains the banking industry's overall performance. Furthermore, for the employees' effective performance, it is important to consider psychological aspects to propose solutions focused on solving behavioural issues. Thus, the researcher of the present study believes that EI, Psycap, and PP with the mediating role of WE will improve JP, which is comprised of in-role behaviour (IRB), individual-directed organisational citizenship behaviour (OCBI), and organisation-directed organisational and organisation-directed organisational citizenship behaviour (OCBO) of employees in the banking sector of Pakistan.

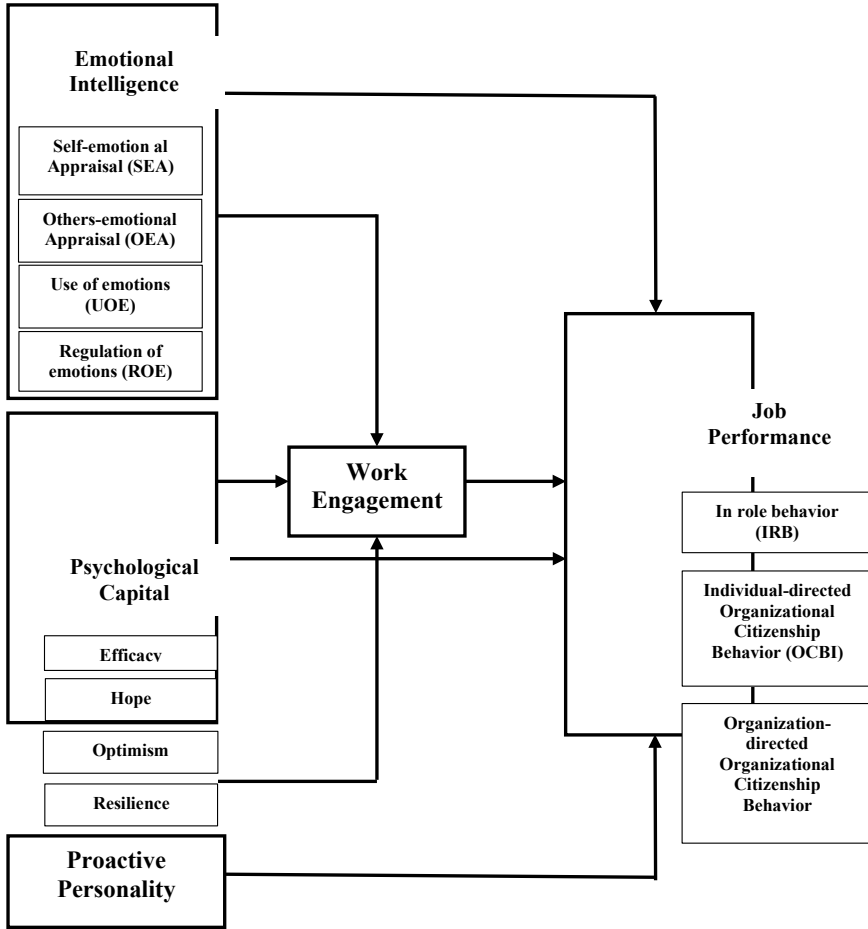
## **2. METHODOLOGY**

Psycap and EI has been previously mentioned in POB criteria but the researcher proposed proactive personality and work engagement also fit within the POB criteria. Moreover, according to the current banking environment of Pakistan, EI, PsyCap, proactive personality and work engagement are necessary factors for job performance of the employees. Furthermore, work engagement is proposed as a mechanism through which these positive personal strengths of employees may influence the job performance. The present study used two different research approaches to get maximum possible relevant studies related to POB criteria First, electronic databases of Wiley online library, Sage, Emerald, Elsevier and Google scholar were searched. Secondly, the indexed journals such as Journal of Personality Assessment, Human

Relations, Development and Learning in Organisations: An International Journal, Management Research Review, Psychological Reports, and Personnel Review etc., were searched using phrases, impact of emotional Intelligence, psychological capital, proactive personality and work engagement on job performance. Full research papers were selected, and a conceptual framework has been proposed to examine the relationships between the variables.

### **3. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

From literature review above, it has been proposed that EI, Psycap, and PP are positively related to perform ance. Therefore, mediating variable WE is introduced under the application of JDR model and POB theory to clarify the causal relationship between the independent (EI, Psycap, and PP) and dependent variable (job performance) as presented in Figure 1.



**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework**

### **3.1 Significance of the study**

The present study provides theoretical significance in the area of the job performance of employees, human resource management and organizational behaviour, and the practical significance for the banking sector of Pakistan.

## **4. DISCUSSION**

### **4.1 Theoretical Significance**

This study helps to plug the literature gap to benefit academics, although many empirical studies have been carried out on the factors that can impact JP. Ishaque, Tufail, and Farooq (2017), Alessandri et al., (2018), and Frieder et al.

(2018) suggested that further studies are needed to examine other performance dimensions, such as organisational citizenship behaviour. Thus, the present study will fill this gap by measuring three dimensions of job performance; IRB, OCBO and OCBI.

Besides, the present study contributes and adds some knowledge to the application of Bakker and Demerouti (2007) Jobs Demands-Resources (JD-R) model. The JD-R model is based on job demands (physical, social, or organisational aspects of the job that require physical or mental efforts) and resources (physical, social, organisational, and personal aspects that aid in achieving work goals and reduce job demands) (Bakker, Demerouti, & Sanz-Vergel, 2014). Where job demands lead to burnout, resources lead to a performance at work (Bakker, Demerouti, & Sanz-Vergel, 2014). In the banking context of Pakistan, the steady pace and demand of work consistently add responsibilities and heavy workload, however personal resources can mitigate the job demands (workload, interpersonal conflict etc.), because personal resources are positively linked to employee well-being and mental health (Schaufeli & Taris, 2014). Thus, based on JDR model the present study focuses on personal resources of the employees such that employees who are high on personal resources (EI, Pscap and PP) display higher work engagement, which in turn leads to the better job performance of the employees in banking sector of Pakistan.

The present study also contributes and adds to Positive Organisational Behaviour (POB). Positive Organisational Behaviour (POB) is based on "the study and application of positively oriented human resource strengths and psychological capacities that can be measured, developed, and effectively managed for performance improvement in today's workplace" (Luthans & Youssef 2007). The purpose of POB is to bring a change in "instead of repairing the worst things only" to "focus on developing positive qualities of the employees". POB emphasised the necessity to focus more on positive attributes and behaviour of employees in the organisation (Bakker & Schaufeli, 2008). As the study aimed to examine the impact of emotional intelligence, psychological capital, and proactive personality (positive strength of the employee) that lead can to better performance (IRB, OCBI and OCBO). Additionally, the concept of work engagement, which is the antipode of burnout, is also a positive strength of the employee at the workplace, which is taken as the mediating variable in the present study.

Thus, the present study contributes theoretically to JDR theory (personal resources that can lead to work engagement which in turn lead to better job performance) and POB (emphasis on positive strengths of employees in the organisation) in one framework.

## **4.2 Practical Significance**

The present study seeks to address the job performance of the employees that is a real concern for the banking industry. As expressed by the HR managers of the private commercial banks in Pakistan that besides the official job requirements of the employees, the bank places a higher value on a high degree of citizenship behaviour. Because employees who accomplish targets and expedite the sale of banking products through positive behaviour help to improve the Bank's reputation. Consequently, the bank's productivity centres on employee performance. Thus, both bank management and policymakers would be interested in finding out the way in improving job performance of the employees in banking sector of Pakistan.

Furthermore, this study also provides insights to practitioners on the implications of EI, Psycap and PP on work engagement as the researcher considered WE as a potential source of strength for employees in the banking sector of Pakistan. WE is perceived as an employee's involvement, commitment, enthusiasm, and energy at workplace. With that, the bank management can gather the ideas from this study regarding the factor like EI, Psycap, and PP to increase the work engagement among employees in the banking sector of Pakistan. Finally, the present study would help bank authorities with the awareness whether EI, Psycap and PP would elevate work engagement, thereby helping employees boost their IRB and OCBs in a way that adds value in a context where technology and customers' needs are continually evolving.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

Employee's job performance is one of the most essential factors for any organisation. Under POB perspective the present conceptual model has added essential factors that can lead to job performance of the employees particularly in present scenario of banking sector of Pakistan. With a potential mechanism of

work engagement, the study has provided new insights and contributes to the body of knowledge in the field of human resource management and particularly in the field of organisational behaviour. Furthermore, it is recommended to test the relationships in the context of Pakistan, most specifically in the context of banking sector of Pakistan. The reason behind importance of this industry is that its is one of the largest subsectors in services sector contributes 5.14% GDP growth in the year 2019. Also, its significance as a lifeblood of economic growth in the collection of deposits and the provision of loans to states and individuals, households and industries is inarguable. The services rendered by the commercial banks are handled by employees. Therefore, the performance of the employees becomes the key concern for the Pakistan's banking industry. The conceptual framework looks carefully at each factor and explains the links between EI, Psycap, PP, WE and JP getting insights from POB coupled with JDR perspective. The framework is expected to be of greater value in the future if the relationships among variables are tested empirically. A correlational survey in quantitative research methodology will be appropriate in examining the relationships between predictors, dependent variable, and mediator of this conceptual framework. A structured questionnaire can be used to record the responses of the study participants. And the results can be analysed using statistical software in order to obtain a better understanding of the intensity of the relationships between variables.

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