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# Impact of Employee Involvement Practices on Employee Performance in Public Sector Universities of Sindh

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**ABSTRACT**

This research is an attempt to explore the impact of employee involvement practices on performance of employees in public sector universities of Sindh, Pakistan. The approach applied in this research was quantitative and descriptive approach and the design was cross sectional survey. Stratified random sampling technique was used and a structured questionnaire was given to 198 academic and administrative staff of ten public universities of Sindh, Data was analyzed by using descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, pearson correlation, multiple linear regression, independent samples t-tests and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) in IBM SPSS Statistics Version 26. The internal consistency of the instrument was good with Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .93 to .94. All four research hypotheses were confirmed by the results. The individual involvement dimensions were all significantly positively correlated with employee performance ($r = .507$ - $.618$, $p < .001$) and the overall regression model accounted for 54.1% of the variance in employee performance (Adjusted $R^2 = .541$, $F (4, 193) = 59.101$, $p < .001$). Delegation of authority proved to be the most significant predictor ($\beta = .304$) followed by information sharing ($\beta = .267$), employee voice ($\beta = .214$), and performance-based incentives ($\beta = .151$). No significant differences in perceptions were found by gender, service designations, employment categories, age, qualifications or years of service, indicating that the involvement-performance relationship does not differ between various groups of people in the workforce. The results of the study show that employee involvement is a tangible and equitable factor in the performance in public universities of Sindh.

## Introduction

### Background of the Study

Within current organisational management, Employee Involvement has become one of the main drivers of how well an organisation works, how productive its staff are and how long it can sustain itself. Human capital is redefined in many industries such as manufacturing, services, health and education where organizations have changed their approach to thinking about and managing human capital. From the literature review, employee involvement (as a broad concept) is seen as mechanisms, processes, and norms that allow employees to make meaningful contributions to the processes of the organisation, to be informed about the changes in the organisation, to be delegated appropriate authority and to have their contribution rewarded according to the expectations of the institutions (Cotton, 1993; Wilkinson et al., 2020; Lawler, 1986).

## Problem Statement

Studies in many countries have looked at how employee involvement affects organisational performance, yet the higher education sector of Sindh has received almost no attention on this question. Public universities in Sindh are beset with a host of interrelated problems which have a direct impact on the issue of employee involvement and performance. They include hierarchical organizational structure which focuses decision making at the high level of administration, inconsistent and disjointed communication that leaves many faculty and staff poorly informed of institutional policies and priorities, mismatch between reward and recognition system and individual and departments' performances, and culture of administrative centralism which limits the autonomy of faculty and middle level administrators in the management of their work (Ezeanolue & Ezeanyim, 2020; Mambula et al., 2021).

### Research Objectives

- To assess the extent and type of employee involvement practices (employee voice, information sharing, performance-based incentives and delegation of authority) found in the public universities of Sindh.
- To examine the effect of these involvement practices on employee performance outcomes (motivation, productivity, job satisfaction and organisational commitment) among faculty and administrative staff in the public universities of Sindh.
- To establish the relative contribution of each of the four involvement dimensions, namely employee voice, information sharing, incentives and delegation, to employee performance.
- To suggest the way and means to address the identified challenges at institutional and policy level of effective participation of employees in Public Universities of Sindh.
- To contribute to the theory in the field in an empirical South Asian public HE context and the role of employees' involvement and organizational performance.

### Research Questions

**RQ1:** In public universities of Sindh what kinds of employee involvement practices are getting developed and what employees deem as adequate and effective employee involvement practice?

**RQ2:** What is the overall relationship between employee involvement practices and employee performance in the public universities of Sindh?

**RQ3:** How are the individual dimensions of employee involvement (voice, information sharing, performance-based incentives and delegation of authority), separately and together, associated with employee performance outcomes?

**RQ4:** What are the challenges in the adoption of practices of employee involvement in institutional, cultural and structural aspects of public universities of Sindh?

### Research Hypotheses

From the theory and literature review of the related literature, the following hypotheses are proposed:

**H1:** Employee voice has a positive and significant relationship with employee performance in the public universities of Sindh.

**H2:** Information sharing is positively and significantly correlated with employee performance in the public universities of Sindh.

**H3:** Performance-based incentives are positively and significantly related to employee performance in the public universities of Sindh.

**H4:** Delegation of authority is positively and significantly related to employee performance in the public universities of Sindh.

Taken together, employee involvement practices are expected to show a positive and significant relationship with overall employee performance in the public universities of Sindh.

## Review of Literature

This chapter discusses the theoretical grounding, conceptual frameworks and empirical evidence which are relevant for the present study. The review is divided into 8 thematic sections. Following this introduction, the chapter reviews the important theories that facilitate the conceptual framework of the study which are Social Exchange Theory, Participative Decision-Making Theory, High-Involvement Management Theory and Self-Determination Theory. Section three discusses employee involvement as a multidimensional concept. Sections four to seven take each involvement dimension in turn (voice, information sharing, performance-based rewards and delegation of authority) and review the global, regional and South Asian evidence on each. In the eighth section, a literature survey is done with regard to the multidimensional nature of employee performance, while the ninth section discusses the obstacles to employee involvement in public sector institutions. The chapter closes by identifying gaps in the literature and explaining how the present study responds to them.

## Theoretical Foundations

### *Social Exchange Theory*

Social Exchange Theory (SET), set out by the sociologist Peter Blau in 1964, is one of the main explanations offered for the link between employee involvement and organisational performance. In essence, SET implies that the norm of reciprocity, or "tit for tat", is a key component of social relationships, including those that a member of staff could have with an employer: If employees invest in their employer they feel that there is an implicit obligation to reciprocate. From an organizational perspective, this translates to increased employee loyalty, commitment, discretionary effort and performance when employers have a positive regard for their employees by engaging in inclusive practices, transparency of communication, and meaningful recognition (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Newman et al., 2020).

### *Participative Decision-Making Theory*

Participative Decision-Making (PDM) theory, which builds on the early work of Locke and Schweiger (1979) and was later developed by other organisational researchers, proposes that involving employees in decisions about their work improves the quality of those decisions and strengthens employees' commitment to them. The theory is based on two underlying mechanisms: a motivational mechanism, in which the mere act of participation boosts employees' commitment to the decision and ownership over it and thus to the success of its implementation; and a cognitive mechanism where participation allows the employees to make a contribution to the decision by providing context knowledge and expertise.

### *High-Involvement Management Theory*

High-Involvement Management (HIM) Theory, developed largely by Edward Lawler and colleagues at the Center for Effective Organizations at USC, takes the reasoning of participative decision-making further by arguing that power, information, knowledge and rewards should be passed down to employees at every level of the organisation (Lawler, 1986; Lawler et al., 2018). It is not just the use of involvement practices that is most effective, but it is the use of a combination of these practices that is consistent within the organization and providing employees with empowerment making them feel relevant, giving them the necessary skills and training, and offering performance-based incentives.

### *Definitional Landscape*

Employee involvement has been understood in several ways across theoretical traditions, disciplines and empirical studies, which makes it a layered and multidimensional concept. In general terms, it is a way that employees are provided with a meaningful say in the decisions and results of the organisation, and can be expressed in many ways, such as when employees are members of a decision making body, or have a voice in the organisation, or when the organisation shares information with them in a structured way, or when the organisation allows them to have discretion over activities in the organisation (Cotton, 1993; Marchington, 2015; Wilkinson et al., 2020).

### The Typologies of Employee Involvement

Various typologies have been proposed, regarding the different ways in which employees can be involved in the organizational practice. In an early and influential review, Cotton et al. (1988) distinguished six forms of participation: participative decision-making, consultative participation, short-term participation, informal participation, employee ownership and representative participation. The typology is still widely cited, though later writers point out that these categories overlap and that the lines between them are often unclear in practice (Marchington, 2015; Bah et al., 2024).

**Theory, evidence and context around employee voice**

***Understand the theoretical basis of employee voice***

Employee voice is often described as the basis of all other forms of involvement, because employees who cannot express their views, concerns, ideas and aspirations cannot really be said to take part in the life of the organisation (Wilkinson et al., 2020; Dundon et al., 2022). The notion has its intellectual origins in the influential analysis by Hirschman (1970) of the three possible reactions to dissolution of a relationship with an organization: exit, voice and loyalty. Voice, in Hirschman's argument, means trying to effect a change in the situation by communicating directly a process that has been spelt out and nuanced in the subsequent organizational behaviour and industrial relations literature.

***Findings from the Field: Employee Voice and Performance***

The evidence linking employee voice to employee performance is extensive, and, overall, strong, and largely consistent in terms of contexts and organization and geographical. A systematic review by Donaghey et al. (2023) found strong associations between voice mechanisms and several aspects of performance, including task performance, organisational citizenship behaviour and innovative work behaviour. These associations were stronger where trust between managers and employees was high, which suggests that how well voice works depends partly on the wider organisational culture.

***Theoretical aspects of Information sharing***

Information sharing in organizational setting involves deliberately, systematically disseminating institutional decision makers and managers relevant accurate and timely information to the staff of various organizational levels. It also is a precondition for employee involvement because the employees' meaningful participation into the organizational life would be impossible without their access to information to understand the organizational goals, to evaluate the performance and to contribute to the decision making process (Duthler & Dhanesh, 2018; Mishra, 1996). The sharing of information in an organization is also transparent, which in turn becomes a signal for employees that they are not just a part of the organizational plan, but that they are partners in the life of the institution, and this has an impact on the motivation, commitment and employee performance (Newman et al., 2020 ; Akmal et al ., 2026).

***Experience of Information Sharing in Higher Education***

Findings on information sharing and employee performance in higher education have been fairly consistent across countries and institutions. In Sri Lankan universities, Ekanayake and Padmasiri (2019) found that the regularity and quality of institutional communication, including access to information on policies, performance targets and administrative changes, significantly predicted academic staff performance, especially research productivity and teaching quality. The study found that those institutions that had a well-developed communication system (regular faculty meetings, easy access communication system, proactive communication from administration etc.) were found to have much higher faculty engagement and performance than those institutions that had informal, ad hoc communication.

**Performance-based Incentives: Motivation, Recognition and Reward**

***Theories on incentives and performance***

Incentives and their effect on performance have been studied from classical reinforcement theory (behaviourism) through to current approaches such as self-determination theory and cognitive evaluation theory (Deci et al., 2017; Ryan & Deci, 2020; Stajkovic, 2009 ; Khan et al ., 2024). At its most basic, incentive theory holds that behaviour is shaped by its consequences: behaviour that is positively reinforced tends to be repeated, behaviour that receives neutral reinforcement is less likely to recur, and behaviour that is negatively reinforced is least likely of all. In the organizational context, this principle manifests itself as a series of financial, monetary, non-monetary and career developmenT and other systems to reinforce performance aligned behaviours and outcomes.

***Higher education in the public sector - incentives***

Public sector HEIs face particular challenges and constraints in designing and running performance incentives, and many of these do not arise in private or commercial organisations. Flexibility in the salaries of public universities to offer performance-based salaries to the institutional leaders is lacking in most developing countries such as Pakistan. (Mambula et al., 2021; Ezeanolue & Ezeanyim, 2020). Also, limited funds available for financial recognition and rewards and the time-lag between good performance and funds becoming available for the recognition/rewards can impact the ‘immediacy' of the effect on motivation.

**Equity, fairness and effectiveness of incentives**

There are numerous studies performed on the effect of incentive systems and it has been proven that it is extensively connected with employee's perception of fairness and equity. This study therefore draws on Equity Theory (Adams, 1965) and its later extension, organisational justice theory, which hold that employees judge their rewards not in absolute terms but against those received by colleagues with similar qualifications, responsibilities and performance (Colquitt et al., 2001, Greenberg, 2021). An incentive system that is not considered "fair" by the employee and/or that does not pay off for the employee's performance may have a profound impact on the motivational value of the incentive and even the degree to which it actually leads to behaviour that is ultimately harmful to the company.

**Delegation of Authority: Empowerment, Autonomy and Organizational Performance**

***A Concept of Delegation***

One of the easiest empowerment processes is delegation of authority where authority and responsibility to make decisions are formally delegated from a superior to a subordinate in a specific area within an organization. Delegation is conceptualized as a combination of aspects of organizational design (structure) such as arrangement of authority to make decisions through the organizational hierarchy (Tamunomiebi & Chika-Anya, 2020) and aspects of interpersonal management behaviour (the tendency of supervisors to trust, confide in and approach subordinates developmentally; Bah et al., 2024).

***The Delegation as the Part of Public Universities***

Research on delegation in Pakistani higher education is limited, but what exists points to over-centralised power as a major obstacle to institutional performance. Studies of Pakistani public institutions show that vice chancellors, registrars and senior administrators usually hold most of the authority, while heads of department, programme coordinators and individual faculty members have little say in decisions (Khan et al., 2020; Saeed et al., 2019). This concentration of decision-making power has a negative effect on the performance of staff in Pakistani public universities. Those faculty members who have no authority or decision making over curriculum development, designing the research program and utilization of resources are the less motivated faculty members, less creative, less professional ownership of their work (Iqbal et al., 2021; Bajwa et al., 2024). When one doesn't have discretionary decision-making power on operational issues, staff feels less competent at work and frustrated by institutional bureaucracy. Results show that one of the keys to meaningful reform of the delegation practices in public universities in Pakistan is to empower the department heads, program coordinators and faculty members to make the decisions.

**Employee Performance: Dimensions, Determinants and Measurement**

***Conceptualizing Employee Performance***

Performance is a complex phenomenon and various disciplinary traditions, organizational contexts and research purposes have resulted in a variety of definitions and operationalizations of employee performance. In general terms, performance is the extent to which people meet the requirements, expectations and goals of their work in an organisation, and it can refer both to how employees do their jobs and to what their jobs produce (Armstrong, 2016; Campbell & Wiernik, 2015). A very popular conceptual model that distinguishes between three fundamental aspects of performance of an employee. Task performance is how well an employee carries out the duties set out in the job description and meets the institution's expectations. Organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB), also called contextual performance, covers behaviour that supports the wider organisational setting, such as good working relationships, organisational commitment and extra-role effort. Adaptive performance refers to how well employees adjust to changes in their work, in technology and in the problems the organisation faces (Campbell & Wiernik, 2015; Trépanier et al., 2020).

***Factors that influence the performance of employees***

The factors that influence employee performance can be grouped at three levels: the individual employee, the job and the organisation (Campbell & Wiernik, 2015; Armstrong, 2016). Most involvement practices sit at the organisational level and act on motivation, engagement, access to information and employees' sense of belonging. Research has found a number of individual level moderators to the involvement-performance relationship. More positive effects are likely to occur at higher levels of intrinsic motivation as their motivational orientations are aligned with the voice and delegation practices (autonomy and mastery) (Deci et al., 2017). Individuals with high scores on proactive personality and conscientiousness tend to be more active in information sharing, voice and gain more from involvement practices (Saks, 2022). The power distance values (PDVs, the range of value of inequalities of power between superiors and subordinates as legitimate and acceptable) may interact with their responses to participative

practices (Huang et al., 2019, although the moderation effect may be not as strong as this cultural determinism would have suggested).

**Employee Involvement in Public Sector Higher Education: Global Evidence**

***Evidence from Sub-Saharan Africa (Africa south of the Sahara)***

Research on employee involvement in public universities in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) has grown over the last ten years and provides useful comparative evidence for this study. Studies from Kenya, Uganda, Nigeria and Ghana consistently report positive effects of involvement practices, while also showing how the structures and culture of the post-colonial public sector limit that involvement. The extensive study of ten Public Universities in Kenya conducted by Mwangi and Waiganjo (2019) has revealed that EE is positively related with various employee performance variables such as employee teaching effectiveness, output of research and institutional commitment. In Kenyan academic context, where academic staff have a strong sense of professional identity and intrinsic motivation, participative decision-making was the most important factor predicting overall performance, and these practices are likely to have a big influence on engagement and performance.

***The evidence from South and South East Asia***

The evidence base for employee involvement and performance in higher education institutions in South and Southeast Asia has been built up quite extensively in the last few years and this places the current study, focusing on public universities in Pakistan, in a comparative perspective from a regional point of view. Research from India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Malaysia has shown positive effects of involvement on employee performance in public universities, and has identified mediators and moderators of this relationship in Asian public higher education. Ekanayake and Padmasiri (2019) examined several EE dimensions, including information sharing, participation and empowerment, in Sri Lankan public universities and found that each was significantly and positively correlated with employee performance outcomes. In that setting, information sharing and delegation of authority were closely related. The authors linked this to the relatively high power distance (PD) of Sri Lankan organisations, where being given information and formal decision-making authority are read as signs of trust and respect.

**Barriers to Effective Employee Involvement in Public Universities**

***Structural, Cultural, and Behavioural Barriers to Employee Involvement***

In various contexts of higher education, the scientific research has identified a set of structures and institutions that can be enablers to the success of implementing employee involvement practices. The barrier mentioned most often is organisational centralisation, where decisions are concentrated at the top of the hierarchy, which limits delegation and leaves little room for the voice of employees at lower levels (Kotter, 2001; Ezeanolue & Ezeanyim, 2020; Mwangi & Waiganjo, 2019). This centralisation is exacerbated in public universities in Pakistan by the governmental structure of the civil service that gives high formal authority to the vice chancellors and senior administrators over the university, while giving little formal authority to the department heads and individual faculty for the operation of the university.

**Staff engagement in the post pandemic Higher Education landscape**

COVID-19, which has essentially been a higher education institution disrupter since early 2020, has had a big impact on the state of employee participation in higher education institutions. Pandemic working conditions, the spread of remote and hybrid work, new communication technologies, heavier workloads for academic and non-academic staff, and uncertainty about institutional futures have together changed the setting in which involvement takes place, and the kinds of involvement that staff find most meaningful and supportive (Saks, 2022; Park & Kim, 2023). Since the pandemic, research has emerged that shows that employee voice and information sharing were particularly critical types of employee support during times of institutional disruption and uncertainty. The universities studied in Asia, Africa and Europe found that those staff who believed that their institutions had a high level of transparency regarding the challenges and threats the institution faced, consulted with staff on how to deal with the challenges and kept them well informed of institutional decisions were much more resilient, engaged and able to perform during the pandemic period than those in institutions with less robust engagement practices (Newman et al., 2020; Saks, 2022 ; Akmal et al., 2025).

**Conceptual Framework of the Study**

The conceptual framework of this study brings the theoretical and empirical points from the review together into one model that explains how employee involvement practices relate to employee performance in the public universities of Sindh. In this model the

four involvement dimensions are treated as independent predictors, each with a direct effect on employee performance, which itself has four components (motivation, productivity, job satisfaction and organisational commitment). In Section 2.2 the theories were used to identify theoretical mechanisms for each dimension of involvement and how it is related to performance. The four dimensions of involvement, based on Social Exchange Theory, and their relationship to performance are as follows: All four dimensions of involvement are positively related to performance: When the institution invests in its employees (voice, information, recognition, and delegated authority), they are more committed and perform better. Participative Decision-Making theory suggests that there are two ways in which voice and delegation can influence a decision; by enhancing the quality of the decision and by increasing motivational ownership. High-Involvement Management Theory adds a systemic view in which the four dimensions' form one whole, so that their joint effect on performance is expected to be larger than the sum of their separate effects. How involvement practices impact SDT is through the three basic psychological needs, being able to have a voice, to be delegated, to be included and competence (information sharing and feedback).

## Gap in the Existing literature

The review points to several important gaps that the present study addresses. For one, the evidence related to employee involvement and performance in higher education is rather lacking in Western countries, and the evidence in East Asian and Sub-Saharan African countries is similarly lacking, with a dearth of evidence in the South Asian context, and in particular for the Pakistani public university system. A few studies have taken employee participation in organisations as a variable in Pakistan, and were either done in private sector organisations, or in larger sample of organisations where detailed analysis of the mechanisms at work in public universities was not possible. This geographical variation, however, is important due to presence of specific institutional features of the Pakistani public universities such as governance through civil service, cultural context and lack of resources which make it more difficult to transfer results from other settings.

## Research Methodology

This chapter explains the methodology used to examine the relationship between employee involvement practices and employee performance in public sector universities of Sindh, Pakistan. It describes the research design, how the study variables were operationalised, the target population, the sampling technique, the development of the survey instrument, the data collection process and the statistical analysis. The chapter also reports the procedures used to establish validity and reliability, and the ethical considerations observed during the study. Each methodological choice described here was made to produce valid and reliable evidence that fits the local context and allows the research questions and hypotheses set out in Chapter One to be answered and tested.

## Conceptual Framework of the Study

Figure 1 presents the study's conceptual framework, which combines the theoretical and empirical material reviewed in Chapter Two into one testable model. The four involvement dimensions (employee voice, information sharing, performance-based rewards and delegation of authority) are the independent variables, and employee performance, made up of job satisfaction, work motivation, task productivity and organisational commitment, is the multidimensional dependent variable. Each of the four arrows corresponds to one directional hypothesis (H1 to H4), and each hypothesis predicts a positive, statistically significant relationship between the involvement practice concerned and employee performance.

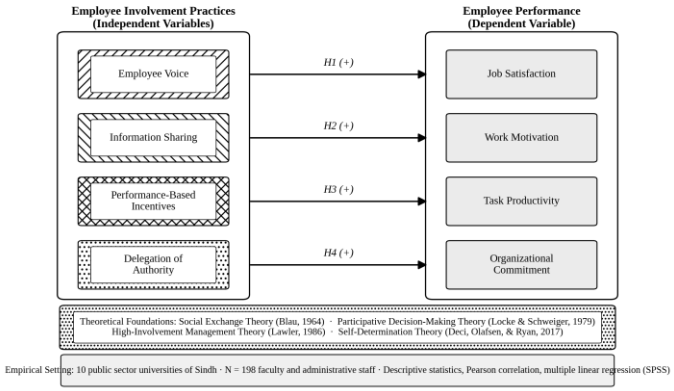


**Figure 1 Conceptual Framework**

There are four overlapping theoretical underpinnings of the framework. The relational logic comes from Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964): the more an institution invests in its staff through voice, information, recognition and delegated authority, the more effort and loyalty staff give in return. The motivational and cognitive processes of how voice and participation lead to improved work outcomes are explained by Participative Decision-Making Theory (Locke & Schweiger, 1979). The four dimensions are not simply additive, e.g. delegation is more effective if employees have the information they need to exercise the delegated authority, and High-Involvement Management Theory (Lawler, 1986) provides a systemic perspective. The fourth element is psychological. Following Self-Determination Theory (Deci et al., 2017), each involvement practice is linked to the individual's needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness.

## Research Design

A quantitative, descriptive-correlational design was used, based on a cross-sectional survey. A quantitative approach fits the aims of the study, which were to measure the level of EIPs, estimate the strength and direction of their relationship with employee performance, and test a set of directional hypotheses derived from existing theory (Creswell, 2014). The survey method helps in getting structured data from a large number of respondents who are geographically spread in ten universities and results of which can be generalized to the general population of academic and administrative staff of Public Universities of Sindh.

### Population and Sample

#### *Target Population*

The target population consisted of all academic (faculty) and administrative staff working in public sector universities in Sindh province, Pakistan. This group was selected because these employees experience institutional involvement practices directly, and their combined performance largely determines how well their institutions teach, research and administer. The study was carried out on 10 public universities, which were selected to represent the differences in size, location in the province, and disciplinary orientation.

#### *Sample Size*

Sample size was determined using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table, which recommends 196 respondents at a 95% confidence level for a population of about 5,000. To allow for non-response and unusable returns, 21 questionnaires were sent to each of the 10 participating universities, 210 in total. Of these, 198 complete and valid questionnaires were returned and analysed, an effective response rate of 94.3%, which satisfies the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) requirement. A sample of 198 is also well above the minimum usually required for multiple regression with four predictors (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019), so the planned inferential tests had adequate statistical power.

### Sampling Technique

Stratified random sampling was used within the participating universities so that the two main staff groups, academic/faculty and administrative, were represented in proportion. The stratification was done on the basis of employee's role, institutional affiliation and geographical location in Sindh. Within each stratum, respondents were selected at random from staff lists supplied by the human resource departments of the participating universities. Stratified random sampling was selected over simple random sampling as the former allows for a more precise estimate and ensures both occupational groups (which may have different experiences with involvement practices) are well represented in the sample (Armstrong, 2016).

### Research Instrument

#### *Structure of the Questionnaire*

Data were gathered with a structured, self-administered questionnaire made up of three sections. Demographic data were collected in section A which comprised of: gender, age group, employment category, designation, years of service and highest qualification. Section B was used to assess the four dimensions of employee involvement practice including eight items for each dimension (e.g., "I am involved in decision making processes within my department"). In section C, employees' performance was judged against eight items including satisfaction, motivations, productivity and commitment (e.g., I feel motivated and productive in my job now). Items in sections B and C were rated on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). For each construct, item responses were averaged to give a composite score on the same.

***Operationalization of Variables***

**Table 1: Summarises how the study variables were operationalised, listing each construct in the conceptual framework, its role in the analysis and the working definition used.**

| Variable Type | Variable Name | Operational Definition |
|---|---|---|
| Independent Variable | Employee Voice (EV) | The extent to which employees participate in decision-making and express their opinions, ideas, and concerns through formal and informal channels. |
| Independent Variable | Information Sharing (IS) | The degree to which employees have timely and accurate access to relevant organizational information, goals, policies, and updates. |
| Independent Variable | Performance-Based Incentives (PBI) | The financial and non-financial rewards, recognition, and benefits provided to employees to encourage and acknowledge performance. |
| Independent Variable | Delegation of Authority (DA) | The practice of assigning responsibilities, decision-making authority, and accountability to employees for their tasks. |
| Dependent Variable | Employee Performance (EP) | A multidimensional outcome measured through employee satisfaction, motivation, task productivity, and organizational commitment. |

Table 1 Operationalization of Dependent and Independent Variables

**Data Collection Procedure**

which were distributed to the participating Universities and through official channels at the Universities respectively. The human resource departments of the participating universities were approached beforehand to ease access to staff lists and to help with distribution and follow-up. A covering letter and consent form came with each questionnaire. These explained the aim of the research and made clear that taking part was voluntary, that responses were anonymous and that they would be used for academic purposes only. Reminders were sent out over the collection window to try and increase the response. Completed responses were then first verified for completeness, coded, anonymized and stored in a secure electronic data base for analysis.

**Data Analysis Techniques**

After screening, the data were analysed in IBM SPSS Statistics Version 26. The analysis was carried out in the following order and all inferential tests were performed at .05 level of significance unless otherwise indicated.

First, descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviations, minimum and maximum scores, skewness and kurtosis) were used to describe the respondents and the distribution of each construct. Second, the internal consistency of every multi-item scale was checked with Cronbach's alpha, using .70 as the acceptable threshold (Nunnally, 1978; George & Mallery, 2003). Third, normality of the composite scores was examined with the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test, normal Q–Q plots and skewness and kurtosis values (Field, 2018) to confirm that parametric tests were appropriate.

**Validity and Reliability**

***Validity***

Content validity of the instrument was established through expert review. Academic specialists in human resource management and higher education leadership reviewed the draft questionnaire and judged each item for its relevance to the conceptual definitions of the constructs, for coverage and for clarity. Some modifications were made in items as per the suggestions of the above mentioned, to make it relevant to the research objectives with the institutional scenario of public universities in Sindh. Items

also were drawn from scales that had been previously validated in the literature on employee involvement internationally (Wilkinson et al., 2020; Park & Kim, 2023) to facilitate the development of coverage.

***Reliability***

Two phases of reliability testing were carried out. In the pilot, Cronbach's alpha for the adapted scales lay between 0.78 and 0.89, showing good internal consistency. For the full sample (N = 198), alpha values for employee voice, information sharing, performance-based incentives and delegation of authority were .93, .94, .94 and .94 respectively, indicating excellent internal consistency, as reported in Chapter Four. Every coefficient is comfortably above .70 (Nunnally, 1978), so the instrument can be regarded as highly reliable for use in Sindh's public universities.

**Ethical Considerations**

The study followed established ethical standards for research involving human participants. Informed consent was obtained from every respondent before participation. Respondents were told what the study was about and that they were under no obligation to take part (Appendix B). The confidentiality of the participants was respected by coding the data and the secure storage of data; the anonymity by ensuring that no personal and/or institutional data would be published or traceable in the results reported. They were also told they could withdraw at any point without penalty, and no rewards or incentives were offered that might have compromised the voluntary nature of participation

**Results and Discussion**

This chapter reports the quantitative findings on how employee involvement practices affect employee performance in public sector universities in Sindh, Pakistan. Responses from 198 participants were analysed using IBM SPSS Statistics Version 26. It begins with the demographic profile of the respondents and then moves through descriptive statistics and reliability, normality testing, Pearson correlation, multiple linear regression, independent samples t-tests and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). Unless specified, the significance level for all statistical tests was .05. The tables and figures comply with the APA (2020) Publication Manual.

**Demographic Profile of Respondents**

**Table 2: shows the demographic characteristics of the 198 respondents. Six demographic variables (gender, age group, employment, designation, year of service and highest qualification) were analyzed by descriptive frequency.**

| Variable | Category | n | % |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Gender** | Male | 116 | 58.6 |
| | Female | 76 | 38.4 |
| | Prefer Not to Say | 6 | 3.0 |
| **Age Group** | Below 30 | 16 | 8.1 |
| | 30–40 | 71 | 35.9 |
| | 41–50 | 60 | 30.3 |
| | 51–60 | 37 | 18.7 |
| | Above 60 | 14 | 7.1 |
| **Employment Category** | Academic/Faculty Staff | 123 | 62.1 |
| | Administrative Staff | 75 | 37.9 |
| **Designation** | Lecturer/Assistant Professor | 57 | 28.8 |
| | Associate Professor/Professor | 47 | 23.7 |
| | Department Head/Dean | 19 | 9.6 |
| | Administrative Officer/Staff | 75 | 37.9 |
| **Years of Service** | Less than 2 Years | 22 | 11.1 |
| | 2–5 Years | 46 | 23.2 |
| | 6–10 Years | 57 | 28.8 |

| Variable | Category | n | % |
|---|---|---|---|
| | 11–15 Years | 37 | 18.7 |
| | More than 15 Years | 36 | 18.2 |
| **Qualification** | Bachelor's Degree | 15 | 7.6 |
| | Master's/M.Phil | 119 | 60.1 |
| | PhD/Doctorate | 64 | 32.3 |

**Table 2 Demographic Profile of Respondents (N = 198)**

**Descriptive Statistics and Reliability Analysis**

Table 3 gives the descriptive statistics and Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the five constructs measured. For each composite score the table reports the mean (M), standard deviation (SD), minimum, maximum, skewness and kurtosis. Reliability was assessed with Cronbach's alpha, with values of .70 or higher taken as acceptable (Nunnally, 1978; George & Mallery, 2003).

| Variable | N | M | SD | Min | Max | Skewness | Kurtosis | Cronbach's α |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Employee Voice (EV) | 198 | 3.52 | 0.63 | 1.75 | 5.00 | -0.06 | -0.34 | 0.93 |
| Information Sharing (IS) | 198 | 3.51 | 0.65 | 1.75 | 5.00 | -0.12 | -0.26 | 0.94 |
| Perf.-Based Incentives (PBI) | 198 | 3.39 | 0.67 | 1.38 | 5.00 | -0.13 | 0.04 | 0.94 |
| Delegation of Authority (DA) | 198 | 3.55 | 0.67 | 1.88 | 5.00 | -0.05 | -0.45 | 0.94 |
| Employee Performance (EP) | 198 | 3.67 | 0.63 | 1.88 | 5.00 | -0.06 | -0.44 | – |

**Table 3 Descriptive Statistics and Reliability Coefficients for Study Constructs (N = 198)**

*Note.* All composite scores represent mean values of eight Likert-scale items (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree). α = Cronbach's alpha; — = not applicable for the dependent variable reliability coefficient. Skewness and kurtosis values within ±1.96 indicate acceptable normality for parametric analysis (Field, 2018).

The highest mean was for Employee Performance (EP; M = 3.67, SD = 0.63). Delegation of Authority came next (DA; M = 3.55, SD = 0.67), then Employee Voice (EV; M = 3.52, SD = 0.63), Information Sharing (IS; M = 3.51, SD = 0.65) and Performance-Based Incentives (PBI; M = 3.39, SD = 0.67). All means were above the scale midpoint of 3.00, so respondents rated both involvement practices and performance at a moderate to high level. The lowest mean was for PBI, meaning that the respondents believe that PBI is generally less developed than the other types of recognition and reward in their institutions.

**Normality Assessment**

Before the inferential analysis, normality was assessed using the Kolmogorov–Smirnov (K-S) test, Q-Q plots, and skewness and kurtosis values. The K-S test was significant for some constructs, which is usual with a sample of this size (n > 50; Pallant, 2020). Skewness and kurtosis for all five constructs, however, fell within the acceptable range of ±1.96. In particular, the respective values of skewness were between −0.13 and −0.05 and the values of kurtosis were between −0.45 and +0.04. Normal Q-Q plots also showed that on visual inspection data points were close to the normal distribution line and confirmed that data followed a normal distribution. Given the large sample, parametric tests (Pearson correlation and multiple linear regression) were judged suitable for the analyses that followed (Field, 2018; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019).

**Pearson Correlation Analysis**

Pearson correlations were used to test the bivariate linear relationships between the four involvement dimensions (EV, IS, PBI, DA) and the dependent variable, Employee Performance (EP). Table 4 presents the correlation matrix together with the descriptive statistics and Cronbach's alpha values.

| Variable | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | α |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Employee Voice (EV) | — | | | | | 0.93 |
| 2. Information Sharing (IS) | .528** | — | | | | 0.94 |
| 3. Perf.-Based Incentives (PBI) | .508** | .421** | — | | | 0.94 |

| Variable | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | α |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4. Delegation of Authority (DA) | .553** | .482** | .444** | — | | 0.94 |
| 5. Employee Performance (EP) | .600** | .590** | .507** | .618** | — | — |
| **M** | 3.52 | 3.51 | 3.39 | 3.55 | 3.67 | |
| **SD** | 0.63 | 0.65 | 0.67 | 0.67 | 0.63 | |

**Table 4 Pearson Correlation Matrix for Study Variables (N = 198)**

*Note.* EV = Employee Voice; IS = Information Sharing; PBI = Performance-Based Incentives; DA = Delegation of Authority; EP = Employee Performance. Values on the diagonal (—) represent construct self-correlations. α values appear in the final column. ** p < .01 (two-tailed). M and SD rows report means and standard deviations.

As indicated in Table 4, all four of the dimensions of employee involvement were statistically significant positive relationships with Employee Performance at a .01 level. Delegation of Authority had the strongest bivariate correlation with Employee Performance (r = .618, p < .001), followed by Employee Voice (r = .600, p < .001), Information Sharing (r = .590, p < .001) and Performance-Based Incentives (r = .507, p < .001). All of the correlations were in the moderate to strong range (between .40 and .70) according to Cohen (1988) and initially supported all four research hypotheses.

Predictor variables were inter-correlated from .421 (PBI and IS) to .553 (EV and DA) and all inter-correlations were moderate and in line with the theoretical overlaps among the dimensions of employee involvement. None of the inter-correlations reached r = .90, so multicollinearity was unlikely to distort the regression analysis (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019).

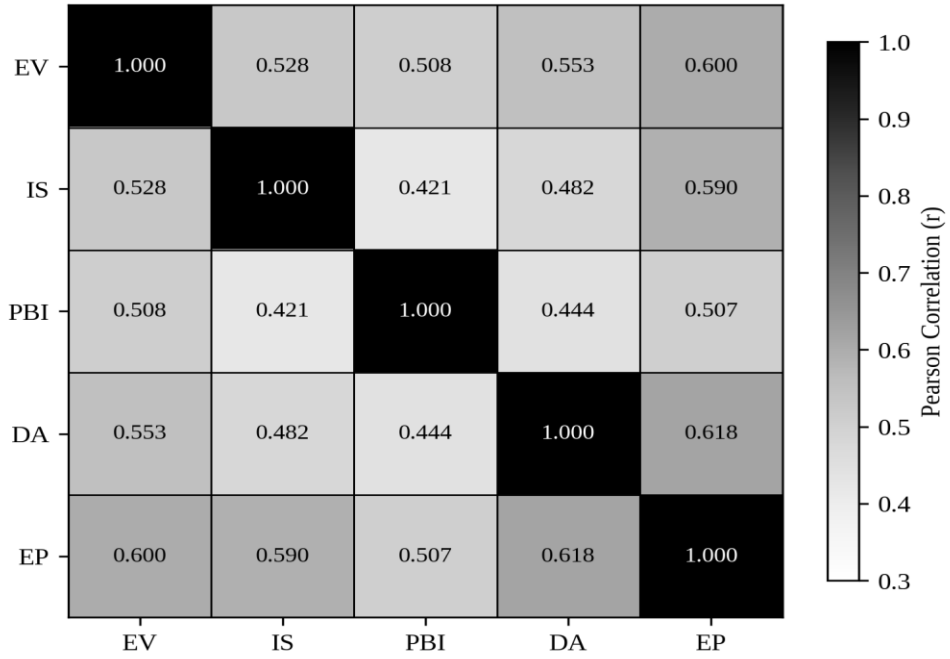


**Figure 2 Pearson Correlation Heatmap of All Study Variables (N = 198)**

*Note.* Darker cells indicate stronger positive correlations. All off-diagonal correlations are significant at p < .01. EV = Employee Voice; IS = Information Sharing; PBI = Performance-Based Incentives; DA = Delegation of Authority; EP = Employee Performance.

**Multiple Linear Regression Analysis**

Multiple linear regression was used to estimate the joint and relative contribution of the four involvement dimensions to Employee Performance. All predictors were entered in a single step (the Enter method). The regression coefficients, standard errors, standardised beta values, t-statistics, p-values and collinearity diagnostics are given in Table 5.

The model as a whole was significant, $F(4, 193) = 59.101$, $p < .001$, so the four predictors together explained a significant share of the variance in Employee Performance. With $R = .742$, $R^2 = .551$ and adjusted $R^2 = .541$, the model accounted for 54.1% of the

variance in Employee Performance after adjusting for the number of predictors and the sample size. According to Cohen's (1988) criteria ($f^2$ = 1.20) this is a large effect.

| Predictor | B | SE B | β | t | p | Tolerance | VIF |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| (Constant) | 0.532 | 0.207 | — | 2.566 | .011 | — | — |
| Employee Voice (EV) | 0.212 | 0.064 | 0.214 | 3.308 | .001 | 0.556 | 1.797 |
| Information Sharing (IS) | 0.256 | 0.057 | 0.267 | 4.473 | .000 | 0.653 | 1.532 |
| Perf.-Based Incentives (PBI) | 0.141 | 0.055 | 0.151 | 2.583 | .011 | 0.686 | 1.458 |
| Delegation of Authority (DA) | 0.285 | 0.057 | 0.304 | 4.978 | .000 | 0.623 | 1.606 |

**Table 5 Multiple Linear Regression Coefficients for Employee Performance (N = 198)**

*Note.* DV = Employee Performance (EP_Score). B = unstandardised regression coefficient; SE B = standard error of B; β = standardised regression coefficient; p = two-tailed significance; VIF = Variance Inflation Factor. Tolerance values > .10 and VIF values < 10 confirm the absence of harmful multicollinearity (Field, 2018). R = .742, $R^2$ = .551, Adjusted $R^2$ = .541, F(4, 193) = 59.101, p < .001.

Among the individual predictors, Delegation of Authority made the largest contribution to Employee Performance (β = .304, t = 4.978, p < .001). Holding the other predictors constant, a one-unit rise in perceived delegation was associated with a .285-unit rise in performance scores. Information Sharing ranked second (β = .267, t = 4.473, p < .001) and Employee Voice third (β = .214, t = 3.308, p = .001). While the smallest predictor, Performance Based Incentives was still statistically significant (β = .151, t = 2.583, p = .011), it was demonstrated to make an independent positive contribution to employee performance, in addition to the other 3 dimensions of involvement.

There was no problem of multicollinearity in the model as shown by the multicollinearity diagnostics. Tolerance values ran from .556 (EV) to .686 (PBI), all far above the critical value of .10, and VIF values ran from 1.458 (PBI) to 1.797 (EV), well under the conservative ceiling of 5.0 (Field, 2018; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019). The normal probability plot of standardised residuals and the scatterplot of standardised residuals against predicted values indicated normally distributed residuals and homoscedasticity.

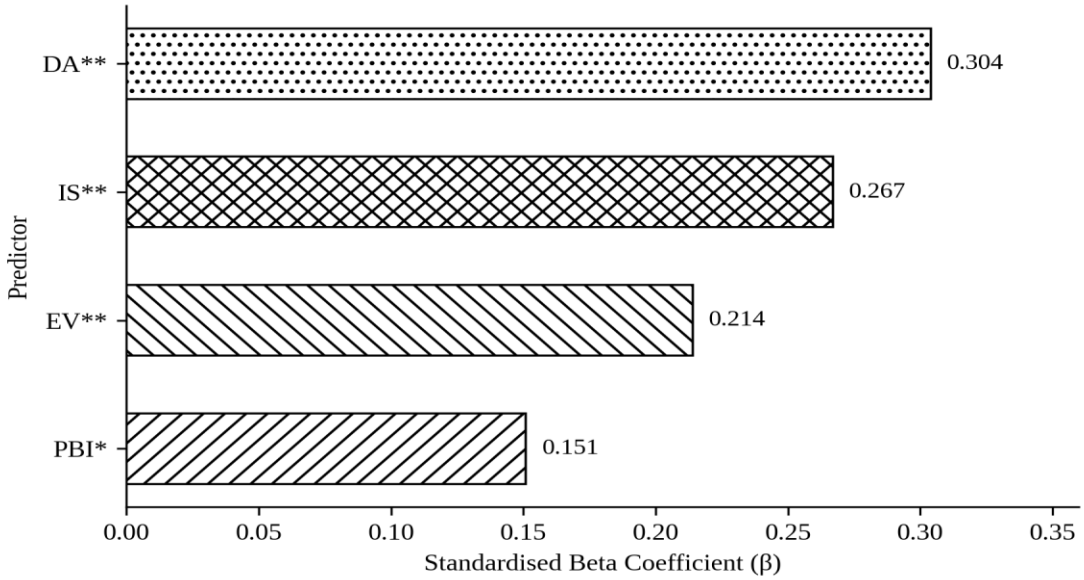


**Figure 9 Standardised Beta Coefficients for Employee Involvement Predictors of Employee Performance**

*Note.* Horizontal bars represent standardised beta (β) coefficients. DA = Delegation of Authority; IS = Information Sharing; EV = Employee Voice; PBI = Performance-Based Incentives. ** p < .01; * p < .05.

**Hypothesis Testing**

**Table 6 summarizes the hypothesis tests, drawing on both the Pearson correlation and the multiple regression results.**

| H | Hypothesis | Key Statistics | Direction | Sig. Level | Decision |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| H1 | Employee Voice → Employee Performance | r = .600, p < .001; β = .214, p = .001 | Positive | Significant | **Supported** |
| H2 | Information Sharing → Employee Performance | r = .590, p < .001; β = .267, p < .001 | Positive | Significant | **Supported** |
| H3 | Perf.-Based Incentives → Employee Performance | r = .507, p < .001; β = .151, p = .011 | Positive | Significant | **Supported** |
| H4 | Delegation of Authority → Employee Performance | r = .618, p < .001; β = .304, p < .001 | Positive | Significant | **Supported** |

Table 6 Summary of Research Hypothesis Testing Results

*Note.* H = Hypothesis number. Key statistics draw on both Pearson bivariate correlations (r) and standardised regression coefficients (β) from the multiple regression model. All hypotheses were supported at $p < .05$. Sig. = significance.

The four research hypotheses (H1-H4) received support in the research. H1 was supported: Employee Voice was positively and significantly related to Employee Performance in both the correlation ($r = .600$, $p < .001$) and the regression ($\beta = .214$, $p = .001$). H2, which predicted a positive relationship between Information Sharing and Employee Performance, was also supported ($r = .590$, $p < .001$; $\beta = .267$, $p < .001$). H3, relating to Performance-Based Incentives, received support ($r = .507$, $p < .001$; $\beta = .151$, $p = .011$), and H4, concerning Delegation of Authority, yielded the strongest individual predictor in the model ($r = .618$, $p < .001$; $\beta = .304$, $p < .001$).

**Independent Samples t-Test**

***Comparison by Employment Category***

Independent samples t-tests were then used to compare the five construct means of academic/faculty staff (n = 123) and administrative staff (n = 75). Levene's test was non-significant for all five variables (all $p > .05$), so equal variances were assumed and the pooled-variance t-test was applied. Table 7 shows the results.

| Variable | M (Acad.) | SD | M (Admin.) | SD | t | p | df |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Employee Voice (EV) | 3.497 | 0.659 | 3.560 | 0.584 | -0.679 | .498 | 196.0 |
| Information Sharing (IS) | 3.493 | 0.639 | 3.534 | 0.681 | -0.425 | .672 | 196.0 |
| Perf.-Based Incentives (PBI) | 3.349 | 0.669 | 3.454 | 0.665 | -1.074 | .284 | 196.0 |
| Delegation of Authority (DA) | 3.552 | 0.688 | 3.550 | 0.634 | 0.017 | .986 | 196.0 |
| Employee Performance (EP) | 3.690 | 0.623 | 3.627 | 0.631 | 0.690 | .491 | 196.0 |

Table 7 Independent Samples t-Test Results by Employment Category

*Note.* Acad. = Academic/Faculty Staff (n = 123); Admin. = Administrative Staff (n = 75). Equal variances assumed for all variables (Levene's test $p > .05$). df = 196 for all comparisons. * $p < .05$; ns = not significant.

The academic and the administrative staff reported no significant difference on any of the 5 constructs (all $p > .05$, see Table 7). Employee Performance did not differ significantly between academic staff ($M = 3.69$, $SD = 0.62$) and administrative staff ($M = 3.63$, $SD = 0.63$), $t(196) = 0.690$, $p = .491$. Similarly, the academic mean ($M = 3.35$) and administrative mean ($M = 3.45$) of the Performance Based Incentives was not statistically different, $t(196) = -1.074$, $p = .284$. The findings show that the attitude towards employee involvement practices and performance of both the staff categories of the public universities of Sindh is fairly homogeneous.

***Comparison by Gender***

A second set of independent samples t-tests compared male and female respondents on each construct, with the six respondents who chose "Prefer not to say" excluded. There were no statistically significant gender differences on any construct: Employee Voice, $t = -0.186$, $p = .852$; Information Sharing, $t = -0.434$, $p = .665$; Performance-Based Incentives, $t = -0.435$, $p = .664$; Delegation of Authority, $t = 0.721$, $p = .472$; and Employee Performance, $t = 0.828$, $p = .409$. These findings reflect that the staffs (both male and female) have a comparable perception towards employee involvement and performance, which is a good result for a fair Human Resource Management in the universities examined.

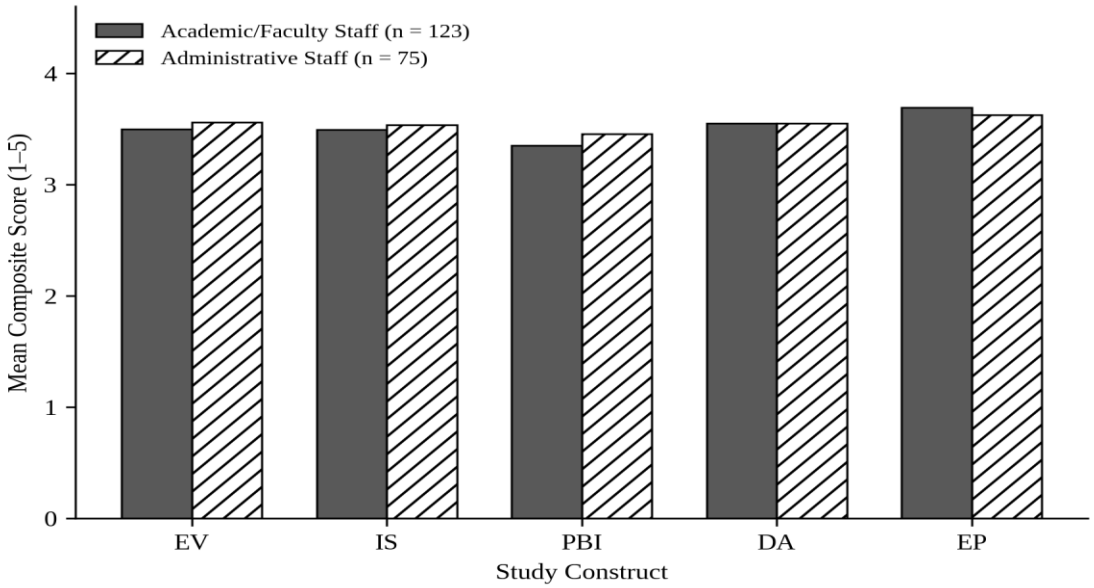


Figure 10 Comparison of Mean Construct Scores by Employment Category

*Note.* Dark bars = Academic/Faculty Staff (n = 123); Light bars = Administrative Staff (n = 75). No statistically significant differences were observed (all $p > .05$). EV = Employee Voice; IS = Information Sharing; PBI = Performance-Based Incentives; DA = Delegation of Authority; EP = Employee Performance.

**One-Way Analysis of Variance**

Four one-way ANOVAs tested whether Employee Performance scores differed across four demographic variables: age group (5 levels), qualification (3 levels), years of service (5 levels) and designation (4 levels). Levene's test for homogeneity of variance was non-significant at the .05 level in every analysis, so the equal-variance assumption held. Table 8 shows the results of the ANOVA, group descriptives and the effect size ($\eta^2$).

| Group / Category | N | M | SD | SS | F | p | $\eta^2$ | df |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ***Age Group (EP)*** | | | | | 1.788 | .133 | .036 | 4, 193 |
| Below 30 | 16 | 3.462 | 0.765 | | | | | |
| 30–40 | 71 | 3.627 | 0.602 | | | | | |
| 41–50 | 60 | 3.827 | 0.588 | | | | | |
| 51–60 | 37 | 3.632 | 0.659 | | | | | |
| Above 60 | 14 | 3.501 | 0.560 | | | | | |

| Group / Category | N | M | SD | SS | F | p | $\eta^2$ | df |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ***Qualification (EP)*** | | | | | 2.519 | .083 | .025 | 2, 195 |
| Bachelor's | 15 | 3.967 | 0.736 | | | | | |
| Master's/M.Phil | 119 | 3.604 | 0.626 | | | | | |
| PhD/Doctorate | 64 | 3.711 | 0.581 | | | | | |
| ***Service Years (EP)*** | | | | | 0.643 | .633 | .013 | 4, 193 |
| < 2 Years | 22 | 3.795 | 0.504 | | | | | |
| 2–5 Years | 46 | 3.580 | 0.715 | | | | | |
| 6–10 Years | 57 | 3.660 | 0.589 | | | | | |
| 11–15 Years | 37 | 3.747 | 0.626 | | | | | |
| > 15 Years | 36 | 3.626 | 0.635 | | | | | |
| ***Designation (EP)*** | | | | | 0.378 | .769 | .006 | 3, 194 |
| Lecturer/Asst Prof | 57 | 3.663 | 0.616 | | | | | |
| Assoc. Prof/Prof | 47 | 3.747 | 0.634 | | | | | |
| Dept Head/Dean | 19 | 3.632 | 0.638 | | | | | |
| Admin Officer/Staff | 75 | 3.627 | 0.631 | | | | | |

**Table 8 One-Way ANOVA Results for Employee Performance Across Demographic Groups**

*Note.* EP = Employee Performance composite mean score. F = F-statistic; p = significance level; $\eta^2$ = eta-squared (effect size; >.01 = small, >.06 = medium, >.14 = large; Cohen, 1988); df = degrees of freedom (between groups, within groups). Tukey HSD post hoc tests were conducted where significant; no significant post hoc pairs were identified given all omnibus F values were non-significant.

The results of all 4 ANOVA tests were not significant. Employee Performance did not differ significantly across the five age groups, $F(4, 193) = 1.788$, $p = .133$, $\eta^2 = .036$, although the 41–50 group had the highest mean ($M = 3.827$, $SD = 0.588$). The qualification effect was also non-significant, $F(2, 195) = 2.519$, $p = .083$, $\eta^2 = .025$. Bachelor's degree holders showed a somewhat higher mean ($M = 3.967$, $SD = 0.736$), but this group was small ($n = 15$) and the trend should be read with caution. The Service Years ANOVA was non-significant, $F(4, 193) = 0.643$, $p = .633$, $\eta^2 = .013$, as was the Designation analysis, $F(3, 194) = 0.378$, $p = .769$, $\eta^2 = .006$. Overall, demographic background did not produce significant differences in perceived Employee Performance in this sample. The involvement practices, which reflect organisational and contextual conditions, appear to matter more for performance than personal background.

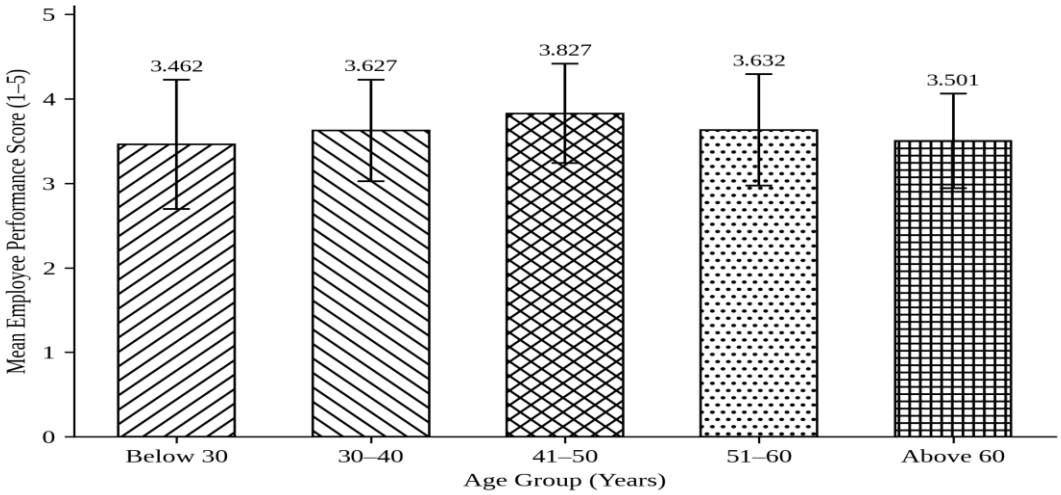


**Figure 11 Mean Employee Performance Scores by Age Group with Standard Deviation Error Bars**

*Note.* Error bars represent ±1 standard deviation. $F(4, 193) = 1.788$, $p = .133$, $\eta^2 = .036$ (non-significant). Values above error bars indicate group means.

## Discussion

This section interprets the quantitative results reported above and relates them to the theoretical and empirical literature. The discussion focuses on the four research hypotheses which are the core of this study and then generalizes to the overall predictive model, the demographic results and the theoretical and institutional implications. The study set out to examine how employee involvement practices, namely Employee Voice, Delegation of Authority, Performance-Based Incentives and Information Sharing, affect employee performance in public sector universities in Sindh, Pakistan. The results not only provide robust empirical findings in support of all four hypotheses (in the light of growing literature on employee involvement in higher education worldwide) but also provide insights into context-specific processes in the Sindhi public university context.

The results gave strong support to the first hypothesis (H1), which predicted a positive and significant relationship between Employee Voice and Employee Performance. The Pearson correlation between the two was moderate to strong ($r = .600$, $p < .001$), and Employee Voice remained a significant predictor in the multiple regression model ($\beta = .214$, $p = .001$). This agrees with the large body of international evidence showing that voice mechanisms help improve organisational performance.

The second hypothesis (H2), that Information Sharing would be positively and significantly related to Employee Performance, was fully supported. The bivariate correlation was $r = .590$ ($p < .001$), and Information Sharing was the second strongest predictor in the regression model ($\beta = .267$, $p < .001$). This is consistent with Social Exchange Theory and Self-Determination Theory (Deci et al., 2017; Ryan & Deci, 2020): clear information helps satisfy employees' basic needs for competence and relatedness, which then raises their motivation and performance.

H3, which predicted a positive and significant relationship between Performance-Based Incentives and Employee Performance, was supported ($r = .507$, $p < .001$; $\beta = .151$, $p = .011$). Performance-Based Incentives was the weakest of the four predictors in the regression, but it still added to the explanation of performance beyond the other three dimensions, which shows that incentives do play a part in employee performance in public universities.

Hypothesis 4, which predicted a positive and significant relationship between Delegation of Authority and Employee Performance, received the strongest empirical support of the four. Delegation of Authority was the best bivariate correlation with Employee Performance ($r = .618$, $p < .001$), and with the largest beta in the multiple regression analysis ($\beta = .304$, $p < .001$). Conceptually, this research is very sound and practically relevant to the literature on empowerment, autonomy and performance in the higher education institutions.

With all four involvement dimensions entered as predictors, the regression model gave an adjusted $R^2$ of .541 ($F(4, 193) = 59.101$, $p < .001$), explaining 54.1% of the variance in Employee Performance. This is a large effect using Cohen's (1988) standards and a meaningful proportion of variances of performance which can be explained by the measures of organizational level involvement practices.

The t-tests and ANOVAs found no significant differences on any of the five constructs (EV, IS, PBI, DA and EP) by gender, employment category, age group, years of service, qualification or designation. Having almost reached significance, the ANOVA for Qualification was not quite significant at the .05 level ($F(2, 195) = 2.519$, $p = .083$). The fact that these are null findings is, in itself, informative substantively, and coherent on the theoretical level. In general, no significant gender gaps were observed in the perception of involvement practices and performance, which slightly contradicts the differential gendered access to participative governance mechanism in institutions of Pakistan (Mambula et al., 2021). Similarly, the apparent difference between the professions and organizational roles of academic and administrative staff, the lack of significant difference between these two groups suggests that the systemic deficits and strengths in involvement practices identified in this study are across-staff in nature, rather than specific to particular groups.

The study adds to theory and empirical research on employee involvement and performance in several ways. First, it supplies systematic and methodologically careful evidence from public universities in Sindh, Pakistan, a setting that is almost absent from the international literature on HRM and higher education management. It does so in South Asian public higher education, whose institutional features (bureaucratic governance, limited resources and a hierarchical culture) differ from those of the Western and East Asian countries that supply most of the existing evidence.

## Conclusion

The main findings are summarised below. First, descriptive analysis showed moderate to high perceptions of both involvement and performance, with every composite score above the scale midpoint of 3.00. The highest mean ($M = 3.67$) was on employee performance while the lowest mean ($M = 3.39$) was on performance-based incentives where there is a perceived weakness on reward and recognition. Second, the reliability analysis showed that all the five constructs were internally consistent with the Cronbach's alpha coefficient ranged between .93 and .94 which is well above the minimum of .70. Third, all four involvement dimensions were significantly and positively correlated with Employee Performance ($r = .507$ to $.618$) and each made a positive contribution in the multiple regression model ($\beta = .151$ to $.304$). Fourth, the regression model explained 54.1% of the variance in Employee Performance (adjusted $R^2 = .541$), with Delegation of Authority ($\beta = .304$) and Information Sharing ($\beta = .267$) as the strongest individual predictors. Fifth, no significant difference among the five groups on Employee Performance or perceptions of involvement were found by gender, employment category, age, qualification or service years or designation, implying that the dynamics between involvement and performance are widespread and similar for everyone.

## Recommendations

Based on the findings that Delegation of Authority was the most significant predictor of Employee Performance, leaders and administrators of universities are called on to ensure that as a critical institutional strategy, the authority of decision making is delegated. This may involve delegating administration and academics to faculty and middle managers, but also a management model that is built upon trust and provides a feeling of ownership to staff. Some of these practical changes include having committees in the faculty to make decisions and fewer sign off points for day to day academic and administrative decisions, as well as structured induction for staff to build up skills and confidence to use delegated authority effectively.

The achievements of Information Sharing in the domain of Employee Performance is significant and positive and it is in dire need of systematic improvement in the domain of institutional communication infrastructure. Regular and structured communication channels (digital platforms, departmental newsletters, faculty briefings, transparent policy document etc.) are encouraged to be set up by public universities for the purpose of disseminating timely and accurate information to all categories of staff on the objectives of public universities, policy adjustments, strategic decisions and required performance. What is also significant here is that in many of these institutions the administrative staff, which comprises a significant part of the communication audience of an institution, has not been catered to as much as the academic community and therefore it is essential that they have access to information as well.

The four were ranked in terms of their predictive power, with Performance Based Incentives being the least predictive; however this is with a substantial contribution, and agrees with the motivational effects of recognition/reward systems. In the public sector environment of limited resources, it is recommended that institutions diversify their incentive package beyond monetary incentives to also provide non-monetary incentives like departmental awards, reduced teaching load for high-performing researchers, conference travel subsidies and the public recognition of excellence. They are in line with the importance of informative and autonomy-supportive feedback for the most sustainable way of sustaining intrinsic motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2020).

## Future Research Direction

Several of these limitations point to directions for future research. Longitudinal research designs will enable causal sequence and temporal dynamics of change in employee involvement and change in performance to be analyzed. A mixed-methods design combining survey data with in-depth interviews or focus groups would give a more context-sensitive picture of how involvement practices relate to performance within the particular cultural and institutional setting of Sindh's public universities. Comparisons across Pakistan's provinces, or between public and private universities, would show how far the findings are specific to Sindh and how far they apply in other settings. Last, the study of potential mediating and moderating factors – including organizational trust, psychological safety, institutional culture, transformational leadership and job satisfaction – would help to build a more complete theoretical framework of the involvement-performance association in this context.

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