



Linking Family-Friendly HR Practices to Employee Well-Being in India: A Longitudinal Mediation Analysis of Work Engagement

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Abstract

Drawing on the Job Demands–Resources (JD–R) framework, this study examines the longitudinal relationship between family-friendly human resource (HR) practices and employee well-being in the Indian organizational context, with work engagement as a mediating mechanism. Indian workplaces increasingly face challenges such as extended working hours, work–family conflict, and dual-income households, making it critical to understand how supportive HR practices influence employee outcomes over time. Prior research has largely relied on cross-sectional designs in Western or East Asian settings, leaving empirical evidence from emerging economies like India limited.

To address this gap, the study proposes a three-wave time-lagged conceptual framework. Family-friendly HR practices—including flexible working arrangements, parental leave, remote work options, and organizational support for family responsibilities—serve as key job resources. Work engagement, conceptualized through vigor, dedication, and absorption, is hypothesized to mediate the relationship between HR practices and employee well-being, which encompasses psychological well-being, job satisfaction, and reduced burnout.

The conceptual model suggests that family-friendly HR practices positively influence employee well-being directly and indirectly through enhanced work engagement over time. By extending the JD–R framework to the Indian context, this study offers theoretical and practical insights for organizations seeking to promote sustained employee engagement and well-being. The findings highlight the strategic importance of implementing supportive HR practices to foster healthier and more sustainable workplaces, particularly in emerging economy contexts.

Keywords :Family-friendly HR practices; Employee well-being; Work engagement; Longitudinal study; India; Job Demands–Resources framework

1. INTRODUCTION

The contemporary world of work is undergoing profound transformations, driven by globalization, technological advancement, and changing workforce demographics. In India, these changes have been particularly pronounced, with rapid economic growth, increased competition, and the expansion of knowledge-intensive industries reshaping organizational practices. While these developments have enhanced productivity and employment opportunities, they have also intensified work demands, extended working hours, and blurred the boundaries between work and family life. As a result, employee well-being has emerged as a critical concern for organizations and policymakers alike.

The Indian workforce is increasingly characterized by dual-income households, greater participation of women in paid employment, and rising responsibilities related to childcare and eldercare. Cultural expectations surrounding family obligations remain deeply embedded in Indian society, placing additional pressure on employees to balance professional and personal roles. In such a context, family-friendly human resource (HR) practices—such as flexible working arrangements, parental leave, remote work options, and organizational support for family responsibilities have gained prominence as important mechanisms for enabling work–life balance. These practices signal organizational concern for employees’ non-work roles and provide resources that can alleviate work–family conflict and stress.

Existing research has consistently demonstrated that family-friendly HR practices are associated with favorable employee outcomes, including higher job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and reduced burnout. However, much of this evidence is derived from cross-sectional studies conducted in Western economies, where institutional support systems and cultural norms differ substantially from those in emerging economies like India. Consequently, the generalizability of these findings to the Indian context remains uncertain. Moreover, cross-sectional designs limit the ability to infer causal relationships and to understand how the effects of family-friendly practices unfold over time.

From a theoretical perspective, the Job Demands–Resources (JD–R) framework provides a useful lens for examining the role of family-friendly HR practices in shaping employee well-being. According to the JD–R model, job resources help employees cope with job demands, stimulate motivation, and enhance engagement, ultimately leading to positive well-being outcomes. Family-friendly HR practices can be conceptualized as critical job resources that reduce role strain and enable employees to manage competing work and family demands more effectively. By offering flexibility and support, organizations may foster a sense of reciprocity among employees, motivating them to invest greater energy and dedication in their work.

Work engagement, defined as a positive, fulfilling work-related state of mind characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption, has been identified as a key motivational mechanism linking job resources to employee well-being. Engaged employees tend to experience higher levels of enthusiasm, resilience, and meaningfulness at work, which contribute to improved psychological well-being and reduced stress. Although prior studies have acknowledged the importance of work engagement as an intervening variable, empirical investigations examining its mediating role in the relationship between family-friendly HR practices and employee well-being—particularly using longitudinal designs—remain limited in the Indian context.

Furthermore, India’s organizational environment presents unique challenges and opportunities that warrant focused empirical attention. The coexistence of traditional management practices with modern HR systems, variations in organizational size and sector, and disparities in access to family-supportive policies create a complex landscape in which the effectiveness of HR practices may vary over time. Understanding how family-friendly HR practices influence employee engagement and well-being in this context is

essential for developing evidence-based HR strategies that align with both organizational goals and employee needs.

In response to these gaps, the present study aims to examine the longitudinal relationship between family-friendly HR practices and employee well-being in India, with work engagement as a mediating mechanism. By employing a three-wave time-lagged research design, this study seeks to move beyond cross-sectional associations and provide stronger evidence of temporal relationships among key constructs. In doing so, the study contributes to the growing body of literature on work–family dynamics and employee well-being in emerging economies. Additionally, the findings offer practical insights for HR managers and policymakers regarding the design and implementation of family-friendly practices that promote sustained employee engagement and well-being in Indian organizations.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To examine the longitudinal relationship between family-friendly HR practices and employee well-being in the Indian organizational context.
2. To assess the effect of family-friendly HR practices on employees' work engagement over time.
3. To analyze the mediating role of work engagement in the relationship between family-friendly HR practices and employee well-being.

3. NEED OF THE STUDY

The need for the present study arises from significant changes in the nature of work and workforce dynamics in India, which have intensified challenges related to work–family balance and employee well-being. Rapid economic development, increased competition, technological advancement, and the growing prevalence of dual-income households have led to extended working hours and heightened job demands. In this context, employee well-being has emerged as a critical organizational concern, directly influencing productivity, retention, and long-term organizational sustainability.

Although family-friendly HR practices have been widely acknowledged as effective tools for supporting employees in managing work and family responsibilities, empirical research examining their impact on employee well-being remains largely concentrated in Western economies. The Indian context differs considerably in terms of cultural norms, family structures, institutional support systems, and labor market conditions. Consequently, findings from developed economies may not be directly applicable to Indian organizations, highlighting the need for context-specific empirical evidence.

Furthermore, existing studies in India predominantly rely on cross-sectional research designs, which limit the ability to establish causal inferences and understand how the effects of family-friendly HR practices evolve over time. Employee well-being and work engagement are dynamic constructs that may change with sustained exposure to organizational practices. Therefore, a longitudinal approach is essential to capture the temporal nature of these relationships and provide more robust insights.

Another important gap addressed by this study is the lack of empirical research examining the underlying mechanisms through which family-friendly HR practices influence employee well-being. While work engagement has been recognized as a key motivational state linking job resources to positive outcomes, its mediating role has not been adequately explored in the Indian context, particularly using time-lagged designs. Understanding this mechanism is crucial for designing HR interventions that not only support employees' family needs but also enhance their engagement and well-being.

Additionally, Indian organizations exhibit wide variation in the availability and implementation of family-friendly HR practices across sectors and organizational sizes. Identifying the long-term benefits of such practices can encourage organizations to move beyond symbolic adoption and towards meaningful implementation. By providing longitudinal evidence, this study aims to inform HR managers and policymakers about the strategic value of family-friendly HR practices in promoting sustained employee engagement and well-being.

In sum, the present study is needed to address theoretical, methodological, and contextual gaps in the literature by offering longitudinal evidence from an emerging economy. It contributes to a deeper understanding of how family-friendly HR practices shape employee well-being over time and provides practical insights for fostering healthier and more supportive workplaces in India.

4. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Indian organizations are operating in an increasingly demanding and competitive work environment characterized by rapid technological change, extended working hours, and heightened performance expectations. Alongside these pressures, employees are required to manage substantial family and social responsibilities rooted in cultural norms and evolving household structures, such as dual-income families and caregiving for children and elderly dependents. This growing imbalance between work demands and family responsibilities has led to increased stress, burnout, and declining levels of employee well-being.

Although family-friendly HR practices such as flexible work arrangements, parental leave, and organizational support for family needs are recognized as potential solutions to work–family challenges, their adoption and effectiveness in the Indian context remain uneven and insufficiently understood. Many organizations either implement such practices in a limited or symbolic manner or fail to assess their long-term impact on employee outcomes. Moreover, existing empirical studies examining family-friendly HR practices and employee well-being in India are predominantly cross-sectional, restricting the ability to determine causal relationships and the sustainability of their effects over time.

Another critical concern is the lack of clarity regarding the mechanisms through which family-friendly HR practices influence employee well-being. While work engagement has been theoretically identified as a key motivational pathway linking organizational resources to positive employee outcomes, its mediating role has not been adequately examined using longitudinal designs in Indian organizations. Without a clear understanding of this mechanism, organizations may struggle to design effective HR interventions that simultaneously enhance engagement and well-being.

Therefore, the central problem addressed in this study is the absence of longitudinal, context-specific evidence on how family-friendly HR practices affect employee well-being in India and the extent to which work engagement mediates this relationship over time. Addressing this problem is essential for advancing theory, guiding evidence-based HR practices, and supporting the development of healthier and more sustainable workplaces in the Indian organizational context.

5. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Recent years have witnessed growing scholarly interest in family-friendly HR practices, work engagement, and employee well-being, particularly in response to changing workforce demographics and intensified work demands. Family-friendly HR practices are commonly defined as organizational policies and practices that support employees in balancing work and family responsibilities, including flexible working hours, parental leave, remote work options, and childcare support (Allen et al., 2020). These practices are increasingly viewed as strategic HR resources that enhance employee well-being and organizational effectiveness.

Several international studies have established a positive relationship between family-friendly HR practices and employee well-being. For instance, **Beauregard and Henry (2021)** found that access to flexible work arrangements significantly reduced work–family conflict and emotional exhaustion among employees in service organizations. Similarly, **Chung and Van der Horst (2022)** reported that family-supportive policies improved psychological well-being and job satisfaction, particularly when employees perceived genuine organizational support rather than symbolic implementation. These findings suggest that family-friendly HR practices function as important job resources that protect employees from stress and burnout.

Work engagement has emerged as a critical construct linking HR practices to employee outcomes. Defined as a positive and fulfilling work-related state characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption, work engagement has been consistently associated with improved well-being and performance (**Schaufeli et al., 2020**). According to the Job Demands–Resources (JD–R) model, job resources such as supportive HR practices enhance work engagement, which in turn leads to positive psychological outcomes. Supporting this view, **Bakker and Albrecht (2018)** demonstrated that employees who perceived higher organizational support reported stronger engagement and better mental health outcomes.

Recent empirical studies have specifically examined the link between family-friendly HR practices and work engagement. For example, **Karatepe and Uludag (2021)**, in their study of hospitality employees, found that work–family supportive practices significantly enhanced work engagement and reduced emotional exhaustion. Likewise, **Wang, Liu, and Parker (2022)** showed that flexible work arrangements promoted engagement by enabling employees to better manage work and non-work roles. These findings reinforce the argument that family-friendly HR practices stimulate motivational processes within employees.

The relationship between work engagement and employee well-being has also been widely documented. Engaged employees tend to experience higher levels of psychological well-being, life satisfaction, and resilience, along with lower levels of stress and burnout (**Hakanen, Peeters, & Schaufeli, 2018**). More recently, **Sonnentag, Venz, and Casper (2023)** highlighted that sustained work engagement over time contributes to long-term well-being by fostering positive emotions and personal resource accumulation. These studies underscore the importance of work engagement as a pathway to employee well-being.

Despite these advancements, relatively few studies have adopted longitudinal designs to examine the mediating role of work engagement between family-friendly HR practices and employee well-being. **Ho, Chan, and Chan (2025)**, using a three-wave time-lagged design in Hong Kong, demonstrated that work engagement partially mediated the relationship between family-friendly employment practices and employee well-being over time. Their findings provide strong evidence for the temporal ordering of these relationships and highlight the value of longitudinal approaches.

In the Indian context, research on family-friendly HR practices remains limited and fragmented. Studies by **Sharma and Nayak (2020)** and **Rathi and Barath (2021)** have shown that work–life balance initiatives positively influence job satisfaction and organizational commitment among Indian employees. However, these studies are largely cross-sectional and do not examine the underlying mechanisms or long-term effects. Moreover, empirical research integrating family-friendly HR practices, work engagement, and employee well-being within a single longitudinal framework is scarce.

While prior literature provides strong evidence that family-friendly HR practices enhance employee well-being and that work engagement plays a critical motivational role, significant gaps remain. There is a lack of longitudinal, context-specific research in emerging economies such as India, particularly studies that examine work engagement as a mediating mechanism over time. Addressing these gaps, the present study builds on recent theoretical and empirical developments to provide longitudinal evidence on

how family-friendly HR practices influence employee well-being through work engagement in the Indian organizational context.

5.1 RESEARCH GAP

Despite the growing body of literature on family-friendly HR practices, work engagement, and employee well-being, several critical research gaps remain, particularly in the context of emerging economies such as India. First, much of the existing research has been conducted in Western or East Asian contexts, where institutional support systems, labor regulations, and cultural norms differ substantially from those in India. Consequently, there is limited context-specific understanding of how family-friendly HR practices operate and influence employee outcomes within Indian organizations.

Second, the majority of prior studies have relied on cross-sectional research designs, which restrict the ability to establish causal relationships and overlook the dynamic nature of employee experiences. Employee well-being and work engagement are not static constructs; rather, they evolve over time in response to sustained organizational practices. The lack of longitudinal studies limits insights into how the effects of family-friendly HR practices unfold and persist over time.

Third, although work engagement has been widely recognized as a key motivational construct, its role as a mediating mechanism between family-friendly HR practices and employee well-being remains underexplored, particularly using longitudinal designs. Most existing studies examine direct relationships without adequately explaining the underlying psychological processes through which HR practices influence well-being.

Fourth, empirical research integrating family-friendly HR practices, work engagement, and employee well-being within a single comprehensive framework is scarce in the Indian context. Existing Indian studies often focus on isolated outcomes such as job satisfaction or work-life balance, rather than adopting an integrated, theory-driven approach grounded in established frameworks such as the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model.

Finally, there is limited evidence addressing the long-term strategic value of family-friendly HR practices for organizations. Without longitudinal and mechanism-based insights, organizations may perceive such practices as short-term welfare initiatives rather than as sustainable HR strategies that enhance engagement and well-being.

Addressing these gaps, the present conceptual study proposes a longitudinal framework grounded in the JD-R model to explain how family-friendly HR practices influence employee well-being over time through work engagement in the Indian organizational context.

6. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND PROPOSITIONS

Based on the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) framework and prior empirical evidence, this study proposes a conceptual framework illustrating the longitudinal relationships among family-friendly HR practices, work engagement, and employee well-being in the Indian organizational context. Family-friendly HR practices are conceptualized as key job resources that influence employee well-being both directly and indirectly through work engagement over time. **Figure 1** presents the proposed conceptual framework.

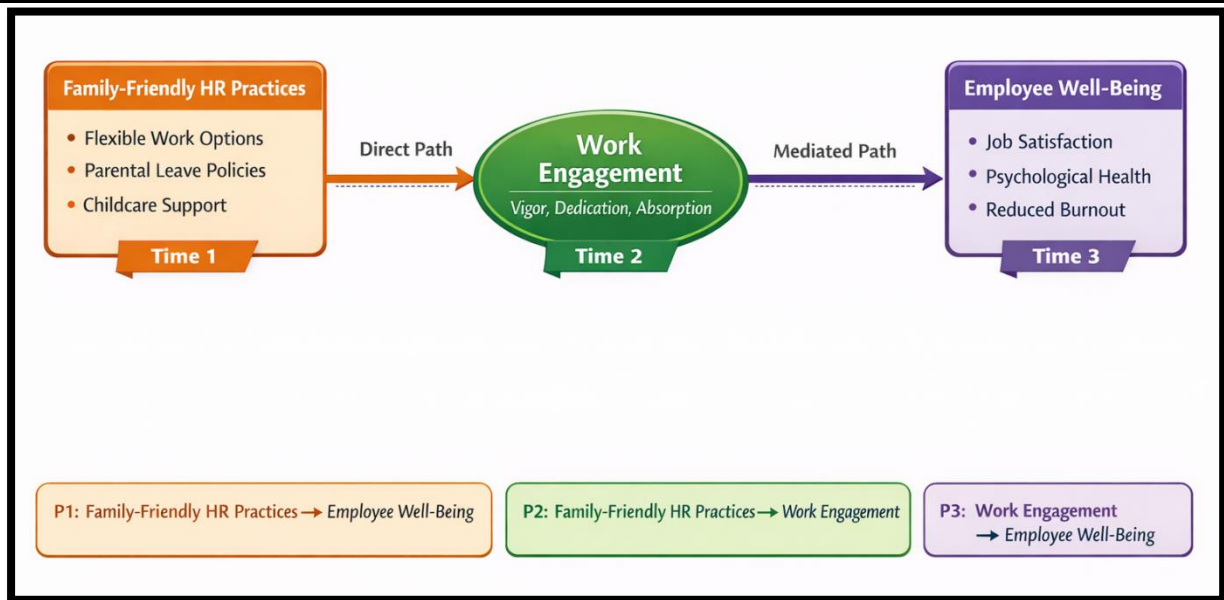


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework Linking Family-Friendly HR Practices to Employee Well-Being in India

6.1 Family-Friendly HR Practices and Employee Well-Being: An Indian Perspective

Employee well-being has become a central concern for organizations as employees increasingly face competing work and family demands. Family-friendly HR practices are widely recognized as organizational resources that can alleviate stress and enhance employees' psychological and job-related well-being. Examining the relationship between these practices and employee well-being over time is essential for understanding their sustained relevance in the Indian organizational context.

➤ Family-Friendly HR Practices in Indian Organizations

Family-friendly HR practices refer to organizational policies and initiatives designed to support employees in managing their work and family responsibilities. In the Indian organizational context, these practices commonly include flexible working hours, work-from-home arrangements, parental leave policies, childcare support, and family-care assistance. Given India's strong family-oriented culture and the increasing prevalence of dual-income households, such practices play a crucial role in helping employees balance professional and personal roles. When organizations actively support employees' family needs, they create a work environment that acknowledges employees as whole individuals rather than merely as economic contributors.

➤ Employee Well-Being as a Strategic Organizational Outcome

Employee well-being is a multidimensional construct encompassing psychological well-being, job satisfaction, emotional stability, and reduced levels of stress and burnout. In Indian workplaces, high job demands, long working hours, and role overload have increasingly threatened employee well-being. Poor well-being not only affects employees' mental and physical health but also leads to negative organizational outcomes such as absenteeism, turnover intentions, and reduced productivity. Therefore, enhancing employee well-being has become a strategic priority for organizations seeking long-term sustainability.

➤ Theoretical Linkage between Family-Friendly HR Practices and Well-Being

Drawing on the Job Demands–Resources (JD–R) framework, family-friendly HR practices can be conceptualized as critical job resources that help employees cope with work and family-related demands.

These practices reduce role conflict, provide greater control over work schedules, and offer emotional and instrumental support. As a result, employees experience lower stress levels and improved psychological well-being. In the Indian context, where institutional support for work–family balance may be limited, organizational support through HR practices becomes even more significant in shaping employee well-being.

➤ Importance of a Longitudinal Perspective

Most existing studies examining family-friendly HR practices and employee well-being have relied on cross-sectional research designs, which capture relationships at a single point in time. However, the effects of HR practices on employee well-being are not instantaneous and may evolve with continued exposure to supportive policies. A longitudinal approach allows for the examination of how family-friendly HR practices influence employee well-being over time, providing stronger evidence of causality and temporal sequencing. This is particularly important in the Indian context, where changes in organizational practices and employee perceptions may occur gradually.

➤ Relevance to the Indian Organizational Context

Indian organizations vary widely in terms of sector, size, and HR maturity, leading to uneven implementation of family-friendly HR practices. By examining the longitudinal relationship between these practices and employee well-being, this study provides context-specific insights into their sustained effectiveness. Understanding this relationship over time helps organizations move beyond symbolic adoption of policies and encourages the development of genuinely supportive work environments that promote employee well-being.

6.2 Effect of Family-Friendly HR Practices on Employees' Work Engagement over Time

Work engagement represents a key motivational outcome that reflects employees' energy, dedication, and involvement in their work. Family-friendly HR practices may influence engagement by reducing work–family conflict and signaling organizational support. Assessing the effect of these practices on employees' work engagement over time helps explain how supportive HR policies contribute to sustained motivation and involvement at work.

➤ Understanding Family-Friendly HR Practices as Job Resources

Family-friendly HR practices encompass organizational policies and initiatives that support employees in balancing work and family responsibilities, such as flexible work schedules, remote work arrangements, parental leave, and family-care support. Within the Job Demands–Resources (JD–R) framework, these practices are viewed as important job resources that help employees manage role demands and reduce work–family conflict. In the Indian organizational context, where family responsibilities often extend beyond the nuclear family, the availability of such supportive HR practices can significantly influence employees' work-related attitudes and behaviors.

➤ Work Engagement as a Motivational Construct

Work engagement is defined as a positive, fulfilling work-related state characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption. Engaged employees demonstrate high levels of energy, enthusiasm, and immersion in their work, which contributes to improved performance and psychological health. In demanding work environments, sustained work engagement depends largely on the availability of adequate job resources. When employees perceive organizational support for their family needs, they are more likely to experience a sense of appreciation and psychological safety, which fosters engagement at work.

➤ Theoretical Relationship between Family-Friendly HR Practices and Work Engagement

According to the JD–R model, job resources play a central role in activating motivational processes that lead to higher work engagement. Family-friendly HR practices reduce stress associated with competing work and family roles and provide employees with greater control and flexibility. In response to this support, employees are likely to reciprocate by investing greater effort and commitment in their work, consistent with social exchange theory. Over time, continued access to family-friendly practices strengthens employees' emotional attachment to their organization, thereby enhancing their levels of work engagement.

➤ Importance of a Longitudinal Approach

Most existing research examining the relationship between family-friendly HR practices and work engagement has relied on cross-sectional designs, which do not capture changes in engagement levels over time. However, work engagement is not static and may increase or decline depending on sustained organizational support. A longitudinal approach allows for the assessment of how family-friendly HR practices influence employees' engagement across different time periods, providing stronger evidence of temporal effects and reducing concerns related to common method bias.

➤ Relevance to the Indian Organizational Context

In India, the implementation of family-friendly HR practices varies widely across sectors and organizations. Some organizations offer comprehensive support, while others provide limited or informal arrangements. Examining the effect of these practices on work engagement over time helps identify whether consistent organizational support leads to sustained employee motivation. Such insights are valuable for Indian organizations seeking to enhance engagement in a competitive labor market.

6.3 Mediating Role of Work Engagement in the Relationship between Family-Friendly HR Practices and Employee Well-Being

While family-friendly HR practices may directly enhance employee well-being, their effects may also operate through underlying psychological mechanisms. Work engagement is considered a crucial pathway through which organizational resources translate into positive employee outcomes. Analyzing the mediating role of work engagement provides deeper insight into how and why family-friendly HR practices influence employee well-being in the Indian context.

➤ Family-Friendly HR Practices as Antecedents of Positive Employee Outcomes

Family-friendly HR practices provide employees with organizational support to effectively manage work and family responsibilities. Such practices reduce role conflict, enhance perceived organizational support, and create a supportive work environment. In the Indian context, where employees often juggle extensive family obligations alongside demanding work roles, these practices serve as crucial organizational resources that contribute to positive work and non-work outcomes. However, the impact of family-friendly HR practices on employee well-being may not be purely direct and may operate through key motivational mechanisms.

➤ Work Engagement as a Key Psychological Mechanism

Work engagement represents a positive and fulfilling psychological state characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption. Engaged employees are energetic, enthusiastic, and deeply involved in their work. Prior research suggests that work engagement plays a central role in translating organizational resources into positive employee outcomes. When employees experience supportive HR practices, they

are more likely to feel valued and motivated, which enhances their engagement levels. This heightened engagement, in turn, contributes to improved psychological well-being and reduced stress.

➤ Theoretical Explanation of the Mediating Relationship

The Job Demands–Resources (JD–R) framework provides a strong theoretical basis for understanding the mediating role of work engagement. According to the JD–R model, job resources such as family-friendly HR practices stimulate motivational processes that lead to higher work engagement. Engaged employees then experience positive emotional states and personal resource gains, which enhance overall well-being. Additionally, social exchange theory suggests that employees reciprocate organizational support by investing greater energy and commitment in their work, reinforcing the indirect pathway from HR practices to well-being through engagement.

➤ Importance of Examining Mediation Using a Longitudinal Design

Most previous studies examining mediation effects have relied on cross-sectional data, which limits the ability to establish temporal ordering among variables. Employee engagement and well-being are dynamic constructs that evolve over time, particularly in response to sustained organizational support. A longitudinal mediation approach enables the examination of whether family-friendly HR practices influence work engagement at an earlier time point, which subsequently affects employee well-being at a later stage. This approach provides stronger evidence for the mediating role of work engagement and reduces concerns related to common method bias.

➤ Relevance to the Indian Organizational Context

In Indian organizations, family-friendly HR practices are often inconsistently implemented, and their long-term psychological benefits remain underexplored. By analyzing the mediating role of work engagement, this study offers valuable insights into how supportive HR policies translate into improved employee well-being over time. Understanding this mechanism can help organizations design HR interventions that not only support employees' family needs but also foster sustained engagement and well-being.

7. Challenges in Implementing Family-Friendly HR Practices in India

Despite growing recognition of the importance of family-friendly HR practices, Indian organizations face several challenges in their effective design, implementation, and sustainability. These challenges can limit the potential impact of such practices on work engagement and employee well-being.

➤ Cultural and Managerial Mindsets

Traditional managerial attitudes in many Indian organizations emphasize physical presence, long working hours, and output-based evaluation rather than flexibility and well-being. Family-friendly practices may be perceived as privileges rather than legitimate organizational resources, leading to reluctance among managers to fully support or encourage their use.

➤ 2. Uneven Implementation Across Sectors

The availability and quality of family-friendly HR practices vary significantly across industries and organizational sizes. Large multinational firms and IT organizations often offer structured policies, while small and medium-sized enterprises may lack formal HR systems or resources to implement such practices effectively.

➤ Symbolic Adoption of Policies

In some organizations, family-friendly HR practices exist only at a policy level without meaningful execution. Employees may hesitate to utilize available benefits due to fear of negative career

consequences, workload redistribution, or managerial disapproval, thereby reducing the actual effectiveness of these practices.

➤ **Gendered Perceptions and Utilization**

Family-friendly HR practices are often implicitly associated with women, particularly working mothers, which can reinforce gender stereotypes. Male employees may underutilize such practices due to societal expectations, while women may face career penalties for doing so, limiting the inclusive impact of these policies.

➤ **Monitoring and Evaluation Difficulties**

Organizations frequently lack mechanisms to assess the long-term outcomes of family-friendly HR practices on employee engagement and well-being. Without longitudinal evaluation, it becomes difficult to justify continued investment or to refine policies based on evidence.

➤ **Resistance to Flexible Work Arrangements**

Despite technological readiness, resistance to flexible and remote work persists in some Indian organizations due to concerns over productivity, coordination, and control. Such resistance undermines the potential benefits of flexibility as a job resource that enhances engagement and well-being.

8. Suggestions for Enhancing Family-Friendly HR Practices in India

To maximize the effectiveness of family-friendly HR practices and their positive impact on work engagement and employee well-being, Indian organizations must adopt a strategic, inclusive, and evidence-based approach. The following suggestions offer actionable directions for organizations and policymakers.

➤ **Foster a Supportive Organizational Culture**

Organizations should move beyond policy formulation and cultivate a culture that genuinely supports work–family balance. Senior leadership and line managers play a crucial role in shaping employee perceptions by openly endorsing and modeling the use of family-friendly practices.

➤ **Train Managers to Support Flexible Work**

Managerial resistance is often a key barrier to the effective implementation of family-friendly HR practices. Providing training programs that emphasize outcome-based performance evaluation, trust-building, and empathy can improve managerial support and encourage consistent application of flexible work arrangements.

➤ **Ensure Equitable and Inclusive Access**

Family-friendly HR practices should be designed to benefit all employees, regardless of gender, marital status, or caregiving responsibilities. Encouraging male employees to utilize parental leave and flexible work options can help reduce gender stereotypes and promote inclusivity.

➤ **Move from Symbolic to Substantive Implementation**

Organizations should actively monitor the utilization and effectiveness of family-friendly HR practices. Regular employee feedback, transparent communication, and supportive supervisory behaviors can help ensure that policies are not merely symbolic but meaningfully contribute to employee well-being.

➤ **Integrate Family-Friendly Practices into HR Strategy**

Rather than treating family-friendly HR practices as standalone initiatives, organizations should embed them within broader HR strategies related to talent management, engagement, and well-being. This integration reinforces their strategic value and sustainability.

➤ **Adopt a Long-Term Evaluation Perspective**

Organizations should implement mechanisms to assess the long-term impact of family-friendly HR practices on work engagement and employee well-being. Longitudinal employee surveys and periodic well-being assessments can provide valuable insights for continuous improvement.

➤ **Encourage Sector-Specific Customization**

Given the diversity of Indian organizations, family-friendly HR practices should be tailored to sector-specific needs and operational realities. Customization enhances relevance and increases the likelihood of sustained employee engagement and well-being.

By adopting these strategies, Indian organizations can strengthen the effectiveness of family-friendly HR practices and create supportive work environments that promote sustained employee engagement and well-being.

Conclusion

This conceptual study advances understanding of the long-term relationship between family-friendly HR practices and employee well-being in the Indian organizational context by integrating work engagement as a key mediating mechanism. Drawing on the Job Demands–Resources (JD–R) framework, the study highlights family-friendly HR practices as critical organizational resources that influence employee well-being both directly and indirectly through sustained work engagement over time.

By adopting a longitudinal perspective, the study moves beyond the limitations of cross-sectional research and emphasizes the dynamic nature of employee experiences. The proposed conceptual framework underscores that family-friendly HR practices are not merely short-term benefits but strategic interventions that shape motivational processes and well-being outcomes across time. The inclusion of work engagement as a mediator provides deeper insight into how supportive HR policies translate into positive psychological and job-related outcomes.

From a theoretical standpoint, this study contributes to the work–family and human resource management literature by extending the applicability of the JD–R framework to the Indian context. It highlights the relevance of cultural and institutional factors in shaping the effectiveness of HR practices in emerging economies. The conceptual propositions offer a foundation for future empirical research, particularly longitudinal and multi-sectoral studies, to test and refine the proposed relationships.

Practically, the study emphasizes the importance of moving beyond symbolic adoption of family-friendly HR practices toward meaningful and inclusive implementation. Indian organizations are encouraged to embed such practices within their broader HR strategies to foster sustained work engagement and employee well-being. Policymakers may also draw on these insights to promote supportive workplace norms that align organizational performance with employee welfare.

In conclusion, this conceptual paper provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the longitudinal pathways through which family-friendly HR practices influence employee well-being in India. By highlighting the mediating role of work engagement, the study offers valuable directions for

research and practice aimed at creating healthier, more sustainable workplaces in an evolving organizational landscape.

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