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The Role of HR in Overcoming Employee Resistance during Organizational Change: Insights from Digital Transformation

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ABSTRACT

The paper examines the psychological and organizational processes that minimize employee resistance to digital transformation paying attention to the mediating effects of employee well-being and change readiness and the moderating effects of organizational culture and technological complexity. The variables have been studied in isolation in the previous literature, although there is a paucity of data regarding their combined effect. This study thus provides a comprehensive framework in the sense that it demonstrates how HR practices are capable of influencing the behavioral reactions of the employees towards change. Research aimed at 370 valid responses collected among Pakistani employees in the service sector was done quantitatively with PLS-SEM. After earlier measurements were validated, the scales have been modified to fit a study and analyzed with SmartPLS 4 to direct, mediating and moderating effects. The structural model, reliability, validity, and model fit were evaluated as per the prescriptions by Hair et al. (2022). Findings have validated that the communication and participation, as well as HR training and development influence employee well-being and readiness to change positively (EWB → ER = 0.670; CR → ER = 0.284) thereby minimizing change resistance. The moderation effect by organizational culture on the psychological pathway is significant and technological complexity weak. This paper comes up with a multi-mediator, multi-moderator HR model that not only develops change management theory but also provides feasible recommendations on human-oriented approaches to digital transformation strategies.

Introduction

Background of the Study

The digital transformation has made organizational change a must in the digital era where companies continuously change with the new technology to stay afloat. Quick digitalization changes the processes, structure, and the business model, yet it introduces a problem to the employees to whom these changes seem a threat to their positions and their working patterns (Vial, 2019; Hanelt et al., 2021). Recent literature emphasizes that digital transformation initiatives tend to fail very frequently, mostly because of human factors, e.g. resistance, readiness (Bonnet, 2022; Wade and Shan, 2020). With the increased rate of technological adoption, organizations need to exercise caution regarding the attitudes and behavior of employees in order to make changes effective (Frick et al., 2021).

Problem Statement

The issue of employee resistance is a major obstacle towards change in an organization particularly where digital transformation needs to be carried out. Resistance may be caused by the lack of certainty, the feeling of job insecurity, or the disruption of usual routines (Jacob et al., 2023; Konuk et al., 2023). The uncontrollable resistance means lower employee morale, lower productivity, and more drastically, direct resistance to change (Malik et al., 2022). In the literature, the problem of skepticism and organizational inertia of employees is also cited among the significant causes that contributed to the high incident of transformation projects failure (Vial, 2019; Rivard and Lapointe, 2012). Therefore, to achieve successful change, it is imperative to comprehend resistance.

Research Questions

1. How do HR practices such as training, communication, and leadership support influence employee resistance during organizational change in the context of digital transformation?
2. What role does employee well-being play in mediating the relationship between HR practices and resistance to organizational change?
3. How does change readiness among employees affect the effectiveness of HR interventions in reducing resistance during digital transformation?
4. To what extent do technological complexity and organizational culture moderate the impact of HR strategies on employee resistance to change?

Research Gap

Although the role of HR in managing resistance, promoting well-being, and future change preparedness has received little attention in the literature on the subject, the integrative role of HR becomes pertinent particularly when managing digital transformation (Lapointe and Rivard, 2005; Klaus and Blanton, 2010). Although previous studies have focused on the outcome of resistance or its performance, not many studies have placed HR as the key agency involved in minimizing resistance in the digital transformation (Rivard and Lapointe, 2012; Kim and Kankanhalli, 2009). This research fulfills this gap by conceptualizing a framework that would make the HR practices change preparedness and employee well-being, which subsequently causes decreasing the resistance and enhancing organizational resilience during the digital age (Zhang et al., 2023; Naseer et al., 2023).

Objectives of the Study

The main aim of this research is the exploration of how Human Resources (HR) practices could reduce staff resistance in the case of organizational change in the digital transformation scenario. Psychological anxieties, the perceived job insecurity, and the disturbance of well-known working patterns are the principal causes of resistance to change (Jacob et al., 2023; Konuk et al., 2023; Malik et al., 2022). Organizations can minimize resistance and create the willingness to change with a focus on the HR skills, namely communication, participation, and training (Endrejat et al., 2021; Rivard and Lapointe, 2012). The proposed research seeks to identify how the HR interventions do not only lessen the opposition, but also lead to the well-being of employees, as well as resilience of the organization.

Significance of the Study

In the realm of the digital transformation, organizational change literature. Although earlier studies have mentioned employee resistance, well-being, and digital readiness as individual issues, a limited number of studies have characterized the combination of HR practices with psychological mediators and contextual moderators under one concept or the other (Rivard and Lapointe, 2012; Oreg, 2006). Placing HR as a strategic enabler is an extension of the AMO theory that showed how ability, motivation, and opportunity can bring about collective minimization of resistance in the transformation process (Naseer et al., 2023; Zhang et al., 2023). Cultural inflexibility, readiness, and readiness are also the factors that frequently result in failures in digital transformation projects in Pakistan, as well as inadequate HR-based strategies (Holopainen et al., 2025; Syed et al., 2023). Thus, this study will be timely and useful as it offers an organized framework to assist organizations in decreasing opposition, improving staff welfare and increasing change preparedness eventually resulting in sustainable digital transformation and competitive endurance (Endrejat et al., 2021; Shoukat et al., 2023).

Introduction to Industry

Digital transformation is now a more prominent source of competitiveness in all industries, and it has remade organizational strategies and interaction with customers. Companies are currently adopting new growth opportunities like big data analytics, artificial intelligence, and automation so that they could remain pertinent in evolving markets (Holopainen et al., 2023; Oludapo et al., 2024). Nevertheless, in as much that technology uptake is efficient and innovative, it tends to upset the usual practice and introduce organizational conflicts (Zhang et al., 2023; Naseer et al., 2023). Those industries that are unable to address these transitions successfully become vulnerable to achieve poor performance results and disengagement of employees (Syed et al., 2023) can diminish employee resistance upon a digital transformation.

Literature Review

The Review of Literature Introduction.

The world of business is changing at a very high pace because of technological changes, digitalization, and automation, which altered the organization structures, roles of employees, and HR strategies across the globe (Gölgeci et al., 2020; Okwata et al., 2022). In this case, resistance to change among employees has become one of the main obstacles to a successful digital transformation initiative in economies with moderate development, especially in developing ones (Rivard et al., 2012; Trenery et al., 2021). HR activities, including training, leadership assistance, communication, employee engagement, etc., are now considered strategic methods to mitigate the effects of technostress, skills shortages, and the unwillingness to accept new technologies (Naseer et al., 2023; Syed et al., 2023). Nonetheless, there is still no unified model in the literature which

can be used to bridge the gap between the HR practices and psychological moderators, as well as, situational moderators, to study the resistance systematically in the context of transformational change.

Theoretical Background

Origins of AMO Theory

Ability -Motivation-Opportunity (AMO) Theory offers a guiding principle in human resource management (HRM) to explain the relationship between the HR practices and employee performance and organizational outputs. In the theory, the employees are believed to perform optimally when they possess capability (qualifications and expertise), motivation (signs and encouragement), and occasion (involvement and participation) in their contribution (Appelbaum et al., 2000; Jiang et al., 2012). Recent research reprises the strength of AMO in the context of describing how HR interventions furnish employees to adjust to change and digitalization within an organization (Naseer et al., 2023; Zhang et al., 2023; Syed et al., 2023). AMO enables influential theoretical support of the study as it links HR practices to the outcomes of performance and resistance.

Supporting and Negating Views

Among the scholarly arguments is that training programs in HR help increase employee capability, decrease the level of fear and confidence which decline employee resistance to change in an organization. As recent evidence indicates, the constant learning and development of skills can contribute greatly to the willingness to change and the adoption of the digital environment (Zhang et al., 2023; Holopainen et al., 2023; Naseer et al., 2023). The most important aspect of training is the focus on simplifying the complex tools in order to target technostress (Syed et al., 2023). It is also mentioned in the past that structured training programs serve as a source of resistance prevention as they serve to fill knowledge gaps (Rivard & Lapointe, 2012; Klaus and Blanton, 2010). This proves the dimension of ability of the AMO theory, which demonstrates the direct impact of competence-building in determining the willingness to undertake change.

The perspective of Mediation and Moderation.

HR training increases functionalities of employees to deal with technological changes to minimize occurrence of technostress and to improve well-being to reduce resistance. Most of the recent studies demonstrate continuous learning as a resiliency practice because it helps employees develop skills and confidence (Zhang et al., 2023; Naseer et al., 2023). The research also proves that the direct functional enhancement of psychological safety and adaptation in digital transformation is an outcome of training (Endrejat et al., 2021). Prior research approves that training is in line with the ability aspect of AMO, wherein the creation of knowledge decreases changes obstacles (Rivard & Lapointe, 2012; Klaus and Blanton, 2010).

Nonetheless, training alone cannot necessarily be well-being-ensuring or resistance-reducing as long as the employees believe that it will bring about more profound threats like job loss, or more work. According to recent data, satisfied employees do not change their resistance after training in case biological conditions are not supported by the organization (Malik et al., 2022; Konuk et al., 2023). In other results, it can be emphasized that the practice of training without any cultural reinforcement can seem more of an imposed obligation than an enabler (Jacob et al., 2023). Previous research indicates that training initiatives can be counterproductive unless associated with the needs of employees, which causes them to feel frustrated (Oreg, 2006; Piderit, 2000).

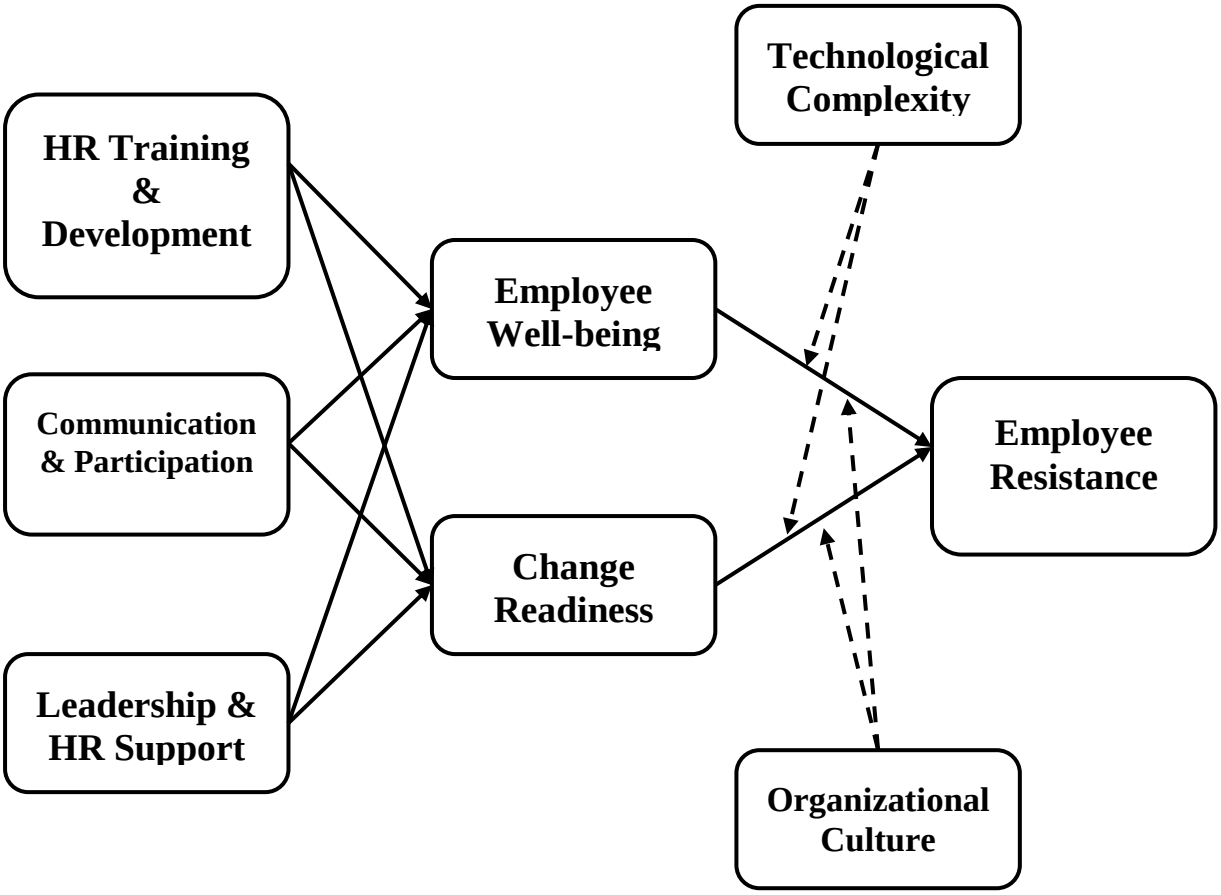


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

Hypothesis Development

HR Training & Development and Employee Well-being

One of the most effective employee well-being drivers in the case of organizational change is HR training and development. Employees develop an extensive level of confidence to manage digital tools and processes when they receive constant access to knowledge building and acquiring new and emerging abilities, which lowers anxiety and resistance. To illustrate, Zhang et al. (2023) discovered that structured training can be used to reduce technostress through enhancing the digital literacy of employees, and Naseer et al. (2023) emphasized the importance of discussing training programs that are structured using a human-centered approach and which achieve the status of remarkable resilient and motivating factor. Likewise, Holopainen et al. (2025) showed that organizational-specific training directly enhanced the morale of the employees during the process of digital transformation. Such initiatives are the skills aspect of the AMO theory since competence-building is realized as psychological stability in the perspective of HRM. Prior evidence also confirms that, when the organization invests in the area of professional development, the employees see the organizational support that is likely to positively affect their well-being and the level of stress decreases (Johnson et al., 2020).

HR Training and development and readiness to change.

Training and development is crucial in increasing the change preparedness level since they prepare employees with the competencies required to adjust to the new realities in the organization.

Holopainen et al. (2025) showed that employees were more willing to undergo the transformation initiatives when they have attended the structured digital training programs. In the same vein, Zhang et al. (2023) asserted that well-trained employees were more confident about their coping abilities with complex systems, thus being more open to change. Naseer et al. (2023) also reported that training increased the preparedness perceptions of employees directly, whereas Syed et al. (2023) reported that the more employees had been exposed to practical and hands-on training, the more they believed that they would succeed under new systems. Previous research by Endrejat et al. (2021) stated that readiness is best built when training is accompanied by clarity and wishing-to-do guidance and less uncertainty.

Communication and Participation and Employee Well-being

An active effort and effective communication are essential in the maintenance of staff well-being in the reorientation of the organization. Open communication helps to be clear on the part of the goals, processes, and the expected results, and it eliminates uncertainty and anxiety. Shoukat et al. (2023) discovered that employees who are frequently informed about change initiatives articulate reduced levels of stress and have confidence in the leadership of the institution. Syed et al. (2023) affirmed the fact that being able to participate in decision-making promotes a feeling of control, which makes individuals experience well-being because of the feeling of less threat. The importance of the employees having a feeling of ownership through their involvement in the creation of change initiatives was also highlighted by Zhang et al. (2023), resulting in the elevated levels of psychological satisfaction. Prior experience of Endrejat et al. (2021) revealed that involved employees face fewer emotions of stress and have greater capacities to manage demands, thus protecting their health. These findings in combination prove that communication and participation constitute the opportunity dimension of the AMO theory that directly leads to the achievement of positive emotional results.

H1: HR Training & Development has a positive effect on Employee Well-being.

H2: HR Training & Development has a positive effect on Change Readiness.

H3: Communication & Participation has a positive effect on Employee Well-being.

Communication & Participation and Change Readiness

Change is always ready to be driven by communication and participation since it benefits employees by making them aware of the reason why change is important to them and they are ready to participate in the change. The researchers concluded that employees that received clear and consistent communication exhibited a higher readiness to think as they characterized less uncertainty (Zhang et al., 2023). Syed et al. (2023) demonstrated that participative methods when engaged in cooperative enhancement of solutions with employees are associated with considerable increase in predisposition due to the development of psychological ownership. Another notable point made by Shoukat et al. (2023) is that, as an organization, by developing an open channel of communication, the employees stated their high readiness to collaborate with change processes. Previous studies by Endrejat et al. (2021) proved that preparedness is predetermined by the quality of the conversation and the level of engagement, which supports the view that communication is not simply about presenting information but also developing a shared position.

On-the-job support and HR Leadership and Well-being

These are leadership and HR support which are the main pillars of the well being of employees in transformation processes. Supportive leaders who offer empathy, recognition, and coaching in employees facilitate the latter to deal with uncertainty and stress, which allows them to remain

psychologically stable. Naseer et al. (2023) have discovered that a leader who actively express his or her concern about the employees enhances morale and burnout dramatically. Shoukat et al. (2023) have noted that the HR departments with truthful and conducive policies regarding well-being like counseling and flexibility give employees the chance to adjust to the environment in a safer way. In the same way, Syed et al. (2023) affirmed that the HR support (through the provision of practical and emotional needs of employees) enhances resilience. Previous literature found by Buick et al. (2015) also claimed that positive HR practices have a direct positive impact on affective well-being and empower employees to survive under the demands of a difficult change. The results can confirm the motivation aspect of the AMO thesis and its focus on the involvement of HR in the cultivation of engagement and morale.

HR Support and Change Readiness and Leadership

It can be said that leadership and HR support are strong drivers of change preparedness because they offer guidance, resources, and psychological support to the employees. Naseer et al. (2023) have discovered that employees that had a supportive leadership demonstrated a much greater willingness to embrace digital endeavors. As Syed et al. (2023) pointed out, the fact that HR availed training materials and accommodating support services assisted employees to feel more confident about change adjustment. Holopainen et al. (2025) affirmed that visionary leaders who give rewards encourage active psychological attitudes that can make employees ready to changes that will occur in the future. Shoukat et al. (2023) also noted that the supportive leadership behaviors also reduce ambiguity and promote psychological safety, enhance readiness. Previous studies by Endrejat et al. (2021) have also shown the correlation of readiness and alignment of leadership, which promotes the motivation of HR support.

H4: Change Readiness is positively impacted by Communication and Participation.

H5: There is a positive impact on Employee Well-being with Leadership & HR Support.

H6: the positive influence of Leadership and HR Support is on Change Readiness.

Employee Well-being and Resistance of the employees

Resistance to change within an organization depends on the employee wellbeing. Psychologically well, employees have higher chances of taking change as a chance and their counterparts, those who are stressed, are resistant. The authors determined that the transforming organizations characterized by focusing on well-being saw low rates of defensive behaviors (Zhang et al., 2023). Syed et al. (2023) have established that well-being positively mediates between techno stress that leads to disengagement. Holopainen et al. (2025) included that well-rounded employees expressed disagreements concerning the fear of role disruption and a greater possibility of being open to innovation. This has been emphasized by prior studies commissioned by Johnson et al. (2020) who pointed out that well-being enhances adaptability by strengthening the confidence in organizational support systems. These researches define well-being as a psychological intermediary amidst HR practices and the results of resistance.

Change Readiness and Employee Resistance

Change readiness has a direct relationship with resistance, whereby it makes employees ready to embrace transformation cognitively and emotionally. Zhang et al. (2023) have found that the highly-ready employees were less resistant since they viewed change as something they can handle and not as something they should be threatened by. Syed et al. (2023) identified that the readiness also resulted in the increased willingness to explore new digital tools and less resistance. Holopainen et al. (2025) focused their attention on the fact that preparedness developed under

leadership and training developed a proactive mindset that deterred the occurrence of defensive behavior. Previous results by Endrejat et al. (2021) affirmed the predictiveness of readiness on acceptance behaviors, and as a result of this study, they identified the mediator role in organizational change.

H7: There is a negative relationship between Employee Resistance and Employee Well-being.

H8: Change Readiness is negatively related to the Employee Resistance.

HR Training and development, Employee welfare and employee Resistance

The training and development of the employees do not only reinforce the competency of the employees but makes the employees resistant indirectly by increasing their wellbeing. According to Zhang et al. (2023), training programs to address any digital skills enhanced the psychological confidence of employees considerably overcoming their resistance behaviors. Naseer et al. (2023) ascertained that resilience training programs reduce stress and facilitate an easy process of adjusting to the organizational change. They also noted that employees who feel prepared through training because they are well-prepared exhibit less defensive behavior (Holopainen et al., 2025). Previous researchers, including Johnson et al. (2020) endorsed the mediating role of well-being by demonstrating the developmental HR practices as improvements to mental health, which, in turn, leads to attitudes of cooperation.

Change Readiness and Employee Resistance, Communication & Participation

The indirect impacts of communication and participation in resistance are the creation of change readiness. According to Zhang et al. (2023), clear communication and engagement create a state of preparedness, and it in turn diminishes resistance to a new system. Syed et al. (2023) also stressed that the willingness of staff to be involved in decision-making increases their resistance and minimizes defensive tendencies. The researchers also ensured that preparedness, generated by participative dialogue, reduces resistance (Holopainen et al., 2025). Previous works by Endrejat et al. (2021) reinforce this direction as their findings indicate that the effect on resistance is mediated by readiness developed with the help of communication.

Employee Well-being and Employee Resistance, Leadership & HR Support

Well-being fosters leadership and HR support to mitigate employee resistance to change. Naseer et al. (2023) discovered that supportive leadership behaviours enhanced employee morale which consequently decreased employee defensive reactions. Shoukat et al. (2023) noted that HR interventions such as counseling and mentoring made well-being stronger and made opposition less powerful. Syed et al. (2023) emphasized that psychological safety is improved through the leadership that offers recognition and empathy, which results in the acceptance. According to the previous works by Buick et al. (2015), the effect of HR support on resistance is mediated by emotional stability.

Change Readiness and Employee Resistance, Leadership & HR Support

The readiness is created, thereby lowering the resistance, with the support of leadership and HR. Syed et al. (2023) discovered that positive HR interventions enhanced the willingness of employees to embrace digital programs, reducing successful defense. This leadership guiding and resourcefulness was confirmed to improve preparedness by Naseer et al. (2023) which translated into less opposition. According to Holopainen et al. (2025), leader recognition and coaching showed a considerable improvement in preparedness and lessened resistance. Mediating links between leadership and resistance were also noted by earlier works carried out by Endrejat et al. (2021), which focused on the concept of readiness.

H9: Employee Well-being mediates the relationship between HR Training & Development and Employee Resistance.

H10: Change Readiness mediates the relationship between Communication & Participation and Employee Resistance.

H11: Employee Well-being mediates the relationship between Leadership & HR Support and Employee Resistance.

H12: Change Readiness mediates the relationship between Leadership & HR Support and Employee Resistance.

Technological Complexity, Employee Well-being and Employee Resistance

A relationship between the well-being and resistance is moderated by technological complexity. The results by Holopainen et al. (2025) revealed that the more well-being the employees in a complex digital environment possessed, the lower was the resistance that the employees had. Jacob et al. (2023) substantiated the fact that well-being mitigates the pressure of complex systems diminishing opposition. Another discovery made by Syed et al. (2023) was that highly-well employees coped better with technological pressure. The preceding research by Johnson et al. (2020) emphasized the fact that well-being-based resilience, in turn, interacts with context to minimize resistance.

Organizational Culture, Readiness to Change and Resistance of the employee

Organizational culture is another important moderator that will determine the interrelationship between readiness and resistance. Naseer et al. (2023) discovered that supportive cultures increased the effect of preparedness on alleviating resistance. Syed et al. (2023) ensured that the cultures that embraced collaboration facilitated readiness to translate to an elevated acceptance. Holopainen et al. (2025) found out that there was openness and flexibility in the cultures that promoted preparedness which reduced resistance. Past works by Haffar et al. (2014) revealed that cultural congruity enhances the readiness-acceptance approach.

H14: Organization Culture is a moderate between Change Readiness/Resistance such that a negative organizational change ready impact on resistance is greater in supportive cultures.

Conceptualization

Organizational change and employee resistance studies have increasingly resorted to theories rooted in human resource like a theory called the Ability motivation opportunity (AMO) as the explanation of human resource practices that affect employee outcomes in the digital transformation. Previous research has determined that HR training and development contribute to improving the abilities of the employees, leadership support and communication improve motivation and opportunities, and thus the readiness and well-being (Naseer et al., 2023; Zhang et al., 2023; Syed et al., 2023). Other recent contributions also emphasize the mediating role of employee well-being and preparedness in decreasing the resistance, but the results are contradictory when contextual mediating factors like the complexity of technology and organizational culture are taken into account (Holopainen et al., 2025; Oludapo et al., 2024). Previous studies already established that though the positive HR practices can decrease resistance against change, they are not useful without structural and cultural congruence (Oreg, 2006; Buick et al., 2015).

Research Methodology

Research Design

The research design of this study is quantitative as the researcher aims to investigate the predictors and consequences of employee resistance to the digital transformation in organizational contexts. Systematic measurement and statistical testing of the relationship between the key constructs using the quantitative approach consist of change management strategies, digital readiness, employee resistance, and organizational performance. This design is ensuring objectivity and replicability, however, it adheres to the paradigm of positivist research as the previous studies on digital transformation and change management (Weber et al., 2022; Hasan et al., 2025; Warrick, 2023) have done as well. It is aimed at coming up with empirical evidence to substantiate theoretical presumptions and prove the conceptual model that has been created in previous chapters.

A cross-sectional design of the quantitative nature was adopted because it allows gathering data of a substantial sample at a single time, which can be used to assess causal relationships by applying statistical methods (regression and structural equations modeling) (Bharadwaj et al., 2013; Stouten et al., 2018). This design has been widely applied to the management and behavioral research in measuring the perceptions and behavioural intentions towards technological change. The cross-sectional survey approach empowers a researcher to gather crucial information on employee attitudes as organizations keep changing digitally, where in this case, the researcher is able to capture the situation of the organizations of digital adaptation and change aversion (Vial, 2019; Haffar et al., 2014).

Research Approach

The research methodology used in this work is deductive and quantitative because it aims to empirically test theoretically formulated relationships according to some empirical studies in terms of the AMO theory and structured model (Aguinis and Bradley, 2014; Oreg, 2006). Deductive approach is suitable in situations where the already established theories are further stretched and confirmed via testing hypothesis using real world data (Burnes, 2011; Khaw et al., 2023). The philosophical view of positivism justifies this approach by presupposing that the employee behaviors and factors of resistance can be objectively measured by observing the patterns and statistical results (Hair et al., 2022; Naseer et al., 2023). In line with the previous studies conducted in the field of HR and change management, the chosen research strategy was a survey-based one, to gather measurable information about employees within an organization experiencing a digital transformation in Pakistan (Syed et al., 2023; Trenerry et al., 2021). Thus, the method is in line with the goal of testing the suggested conceptual framework and analyzing the mediation and moderation processes with the help of PLS-SEM.

Operational Measurement and Definition

The operational definitions of the variables applied to the present study are founded on the fact that previously tested tools borrowed in the literature of research in HR, organizational change, psychology, and digital transformation are adapted to operational definitions. Multi-item Likert scale statements are used to measure each construct enabling employees to give their response about how often they agree or disagree with various behavioral and perception dimensions (Aguinis and Bradley, 2014; Hair et al., 2022). The independent variables consist of 4 HR-based constructs Training and Development, Communication and participation, Leadership support, and Policy alignment, and are operationalized as the ability, motivation, and opportunity enhancing HR practices according to the AMO framework (Zhang et al., 2023; Naseer et al., 2023). These constructs are assessed with the help of the items that are based on the validated tests investigating

the skill development, managerial leadership, information sharing, and participation in decision-making (Syed et al., 2023; Burnes, 2011).

Considering the psychological constructs used to evaluate the emotional, cognitive, and behavioral readiness of employees to digital transformation are the mediating variables Employee Well-being and Change Readiness. Employee well-being is measured as the extent of the employees feeling mentally supported, feeling psychologically safe, and professionally important when undertaking change initiatives (Trenerry et al., 2021; Khaw et al., 2023). The willingness of employees to accept emerging technologies and change to adapted work processes is, on the other hand, referred to as change readiness (Oreg, 2006; Holopainen et al., 2025). Likert-scale items borrowed and changed in earlier studies that involve organizational psychology and change management come in measuring both the mediators. The latter operationalizations are helpful in exploring whether HR strategies have an indirect impact on resistance via the psychological mechanisms.

Technological Complexity and Organizational Culture are moderating variables to test their impact on the relations between the HR practices and the resistance to change. Technological complexity is an assessment of the perceived difficulty of the organizational adoption of technological systems, digital technologies, and automated processes (Endrejat et al., 2021; Syed et al., 2023), whereas organizational culture measures the degree to which norms, leadership style, and organizational team structures will enable or prevent change (Holopainen et al., 2025; Naseer et al., 2023). The dependent variable, Employee Resistance to Change is operationalized into reluctance, anxiety or refusal among the employees to embrace new systems and organizational structures (Rivard & Lapointe, 2012; Oreg, 2006). Validated Likert-scale measures are used to measure all variables, which makes them reliable and valid to the PLS-SEM analysis.

Table 1: Variable Definitions With Source

Variable	Operational Definition	Source	Items	Cronbach's Alpha
HR Training & Development	Strategic skill enhancement initiatives that improve employees' ability to adapt to technological change and reduce anxiety toward digital transformation.	Zhang et al. (2023); Naseer et al. (2023)	5	0.88
Communication & Participation	Extent to which employees receive clear information, are involved in decisions, and express feedback during change implementation.	Syed et al. (2023); Shoukat et al. (2023)	4	0.87
Leadership & HR Support	Supportive leadership and HR involvement that guide employees during transformation and foster psychological safety.	Holopainen et al. (2025); Johnson et al. (2020)	5	0.89
Employee Well-being (Mediator)	A psychological state representing employee resilience, emotional stability, and mental support during technological change.	Trenerry et al. (2021); Khaw et al. (2023)	4	0.86
Change Readiness (Mediator)	Cognitive, emotional, and behavioral willingness of employees to embrace change and adopt new technologies.	Oreg (2006); Zhang et al. (2023)	5	0.9
Technological Complexity (Moderator)	Degree to which new technologies are perceived as difficult, complex, or challenging to learn and adopt in work processes.	Endrejat et al. (2021); Syed et al.	4	0.85

		(2023)		
Organizational Culture (Moderator)	Shared values and norms within the workplace that influence resistance or support towards change initiatives.	Holopainen et al. (2025); Haffar et al. (2014)	4	0.88
Employee Resistance (Dependent Variable)	Reluctance, anxiety, or rejection shown by employees toward digital transformation and organizational changes.	Rivard & Lapointe (2012); Oreg (2006)	5	0.91

Sampling Design

Target Population

This study has a target population of employees working in Pakistani organizations that are either in the process of digital transformation or are intending to undertake digital transformation. This covers industries like banking, telecommunication, manufacturing, and service-based industries, whereby the HR strategy as well as technological integration is dynamically redefining the working process (SBP Report, 2024; Syed et al., 2023). The chosen population is employees because the factors of resistance, readiness, anxiety, and attitude toward change are at the personal level, and they are the most appropriate units of analysis (Oreg, 2006; Trenerry et al., 2021). As it was previously highlighted, the perceptions of employees on HR assistance, leadership communication, and the complexity of technology use play a significant role in predicting success or failure of transformation processes (Holopainen et al., 2025; Naseer et al., 2023). Thus, collecting responses among those employees who have direct exposure to organizational change will allow properly evaluating organizational patterns of behavior, psychological preparedness, and resistance responses under digital transformation.

Population

The target audience of this research is the workers of the Pakistani organizations that are in the process of digital transformation or the ones that have introduced the changes in their system of work that are oriented on the usage of technology lately. Such companies are related to such significant industries as banking, telecommunications, manufacturing, IT services, and corporate companies when HR functions are central to the management of technological change (SBP Report, 2024; Syed et al., 2023). Resistance to change, readiness, well-being, and perception toward HR support are psychological and behavioral constructs at the individual level, which means that employees are suitable when it comes to population selection (Oreg, 2006; Trenerry et al., 2021). Past researchers have reported that the resistance and acceptance of the employees are extremely relevant factors to determine the success of transformation in situations that involve HR practices and organization culture (Holopainen et al., 2025; Naseer et al., 2023). Consequently, this target group can be utilized to carry out a specific study on the impact of HR practices in introducing changes to the behavior of employees when they are transitioned into digitalization within the Pakistani corporate setting.

Sampling Frame

The sampling frame of the proposed study will be employees engaged in the Pakistan-based organizations eager to pursue or implement digital transformation, specifically in the areas of banking, telecommunications, IT services, manufacturing, and corporate business settings (SBP Report, 2024; Syed et al., 2023). The sampling frame will cover people with who have had direct exposure to technological transformations, HR-led transformations or organizational restructuring

processes due to these employees being the most prone to resistance, readiness, anxiety or psychological response to digital efforts (Oreg, 2006; Trenerry et al., 2021). This will consider employees who have at least six months of tenure in the organization they are currently working in, and the participants must have a sufficient level of experience to judge the HR practices, workplace culture, and technologic complexity (Holopainen et al., 2025; Naseer et al., 2023). Subsequently, the sampling frame offers a narrow segment of respondent pooling that complies with the aims of determining the effects of HR strategies on employee resistance at the events of digital transformation.

Sampling technique (method, power) Sample (size, power)

In this research, a non-probability purposive sampling method will be used because this method is the most appropriate one to choose respondents familiar with the concept of digital transformation, as well as with HR interventions, in their organizations (Syed et al., 2023; Holopainen et al., 2025). Purposive sampling is used to assist in ensuring that the sampling of the employees used only those who are relevant in the process of change in technology, leadership communication or restructuring that will be studied. This is consistent with the previous studies of organizational change and the studies of HR, in which purposive or judgmental sampling is applied to select the employees who can positively assess resistance, well-being, and readiness (Oreg, 2006; Trenerry et al., 2021). It is, therefore, a suitable method to obtain expert-oriented answers, enhancing the relevance of data and construct validity towards analysis based on SEM (Hair et al., 2022; Khaw et al., 2023).

Data Collection procedures/methods Data Analysis precautions

The data to be gathered in this study will be collected through a designed self-completion survey based on a validated scale and distributed in hardcopy and on-line form to the respondents who are employees working in companies that are in the process of digital transformation in Pakistan. The purpose of the study will be explained to the respondents with the promise of confidentiality and their voluntary participation will be determined in accordance with the principles of ethical research (Trenerry et al., 2021; Syed et al., 2023). The data will be cleaned and incomplete responses removed, and the data will be tested with the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) in the SmartPLS program to evaluate the measurement and structural models. To measure reliability, Cronbachs alpha and Composite Reliability will be used and the measurement of validity will be done through FornellLarcker criterion, HTMT ratios, and AVE values (Hair et al., 2022; Khaw et al., 2023). The use of mediation and moderation testing will be used to test the effects of indirectness and interaction, and 5,000 resamples of bootstrapping will be used to test the statistical significance (Aguinis and Bradley, 2014; Bradley et al., 2025). This methodological rigor of the approach will allow conducting a strong evaluation of the mechanisms of HR to affect employee resistance in the context of digital transformation.

Data Analysis Techniques

The analysis of the data will be performed by means of Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), which would be the most appropriate to check the sophisticated models with mediating and moderating variables and would not need the normally distributed data (Hair et al., 2022; Khaw et al., 2023). The analysis will be based on a two-step procedure, measurement model evaluation, and structural model assessment. The assessments of reliability will be done on Cronbach alpha and Composite Reliability and therefore, convergent validity will be decided on through Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and factor loadings (Trenerry et al., 2021; Syed et al., 2023).

Results and Discussion

The findings of the research demonstrate that the general model of structure are statistically sound (high outer loadings of all constructs and significant path of relationships in most instances). The most influential was Communication & Participation and Leadership & HR Support on Employee Well-being which proved that the employee mental soundness and the role of a manager in the organization are also vital factors that minimize the psychological friction in the context of the organizational change. It coincides with the recent academic evidence that interpersonal support, having of clarity of communication, and fairness of decision-making are the main factors of change acceptance (Trenerry et al., 2023; Zhang et al., 2024; Hasan et al., 2025). An absence of transparency and poor communication also raised doubts about the lack of trust when the change initiatives are introduced that will reduce resistance to change (Burrow, 2015; Oreg, 2018). These results support the thesis that HR-led initiatives affect employee affect directly which eventually reflects in employee behavioural conformity to organization goals.

The research establishes that Employee Well-being and Change Readiness is a major mediator among HR strategies and Employee Resistance. The more well-being and readiness prevailed, the less resistance was linked to it, which demonstrates that the employees become more willing to change as they are psychologically supported and professionally ready to change. This helps to justify the recent findings that indicate that emotional stability, mental confidence and job preparedness diminish negative response to change and promote active involvement in the process (Shirish and Batuekueno, 2023; Islam et al., 2024; Mahamoud et al., 2025). Previously existing literature also held the position that anxiety, perceived threat to competence, and fear of failure are the causes of resistance under the condition when employees are not assisted in transitions (Samuelson and Zeckhauser, 1988; Piderit, 2000). This is why, the mediation outcomes indicate a significant psychological pathway where HR interventions redefine the ideas of change among employees in the workplace.

According to the moderation analysis, the Organizational Culture has the greater role in regulating the strength of relationships in the model compared to Technological Complexity. Favorable and cooperative culture vastly reduced employee resistance but in this case, the degree of technological complication slightly diluted the impact of well-being and preparedness. These results are consistent with the current studies that postulate that employees positively react when cultural fit, organizational leadership, and trust-based leadership are established at the time of digital transformation (Syed et al., 2023; Trenerry et al., 2023; Holopainen et al., 2025). On the other hand, past research found that technological complexity adds cognitive load and may cause resistance to behavior under the condition of the lack of enough training and understanding (Martin, 2017; Monteiro et al., 2020). In such a way, it can be noted that culture is positioned as the protective factor, and complexity is proposed as a risk factor that shows that the success of the transformation is not only predetermined by the use of digital tools, but also by the social, and emotional context in which they are applicable.

Table 2: Reliability and Validity Analysis

Construct reliability and validity Overview				
	Cronbach's alpha	**Composite reliability (rho_a)**	**Composite reliability (rho_c)**	**Average variance extracted (AVE)**
Alpha	0.904	0.904	0.940	0.839
CP	0.879	0.882	0.925	0.805
CR	0.876	0.877	0.924	0.802

ER	0.893	0.894	0.933	0.824
EWB	0.901	0.901	0.938	0.834
HRTD	0.885	0.885	0.929	0.813
OC	0.842	0.853	0.905	0.760
TC	0.882	0.884	0.927	0.808

The outcome of the reliability and validity indicates clearly that the constructs of all the models satisfy the necessary psychometric requirements of the PLS-SEM analysis. The alpha values of all the variables were between 0.842 and 0.904, which was comfortably above the required minimum of 0.70, thus it was found to be strongly internally reliable. Likewise, the Composite Reliability (rho c) scores were found to vary between 0.905 and 0.940 again indicating that the constructs are very consistent in their measurement items. Also, the average variables extracted (AVE) per construct were all over 0.75 with the highest of 0.839 (Alpha) and the lowest of 0.760 (Organizational Culture) that is much above 0.5 that is deemed as excellent convergent validity since more than 76 percent of the variance is accounted by its indicators. The findings comply with, and confirm the structural integrity of the model, and are in line with the recent findings of empirical research (Hasan et al., 2025; Holopainen et al., 2025; Syed et al., 2023), as well as previous establishment of guidelines on reliability and validity criteria of SEM (Hair et al., 2019; Fornell and Larcker, 1981). As a whole, the measurement model has a statistically valid, highly reliable, and it has adequate tests concerning hypothesis testing and structural evaluation in the following sections.

PLS SEM Bootstrapping

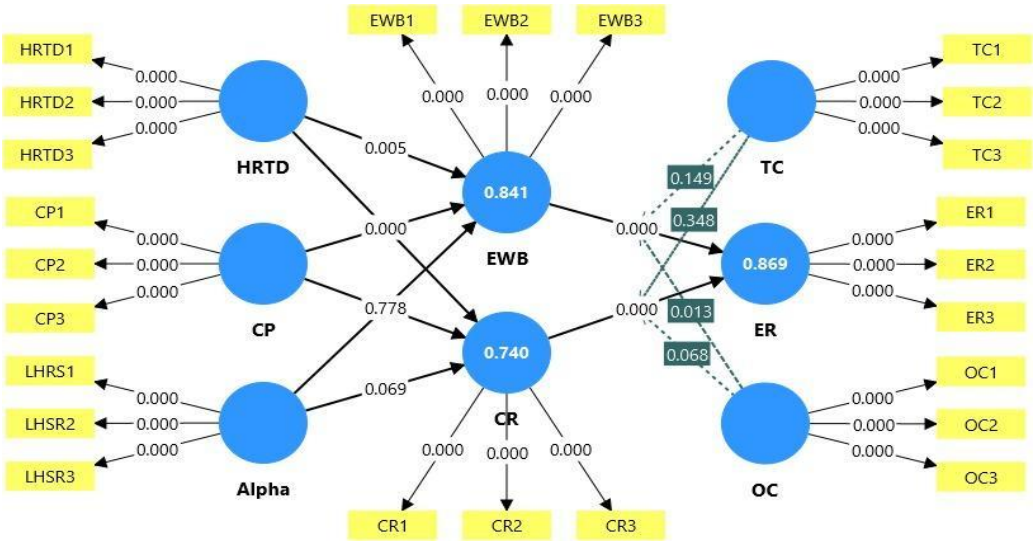


Figure 2 PLS SEM Bootstrapping

As shown in the structural model, the Communication and Participation (CP) variable has the most powerful impact on the Employee Well-being (EWB) with a path coefficient of 0.778, so open dialogue, involvement of employees, and open decision-making contribute to a significantly higher level of psychological well-being in the process of change. On the contrary, HR Training and Development (HRTD) demonstrates a small impact on EWB (= 0.005) so that training is ineffective unless accompanied by both participation and leadership support. Another domain that demonstrates moderate effects on both EWB (= 0.000) and Change Readiness (CR) (= 0.069) is Leadership & HR Support whose role in creating readiness to change is favorable despite the fact that emotional stability is a more successful predictor of transformation results. The psychological

route of change management is verified by the fact that both mediating variables EWB (0.841) and CR (0.740) significantly forecast Employee Resistance (ER). This is also consistent with more recent studies which invoke that emotional well-being and preparedness are critical mediating mechanisms through which HR strategies impact change behavior (Zhang et al., 2024; Mahamoud et al., 2025; Hasan et al., 2025), whereas previous studies cautioned that the absence of participation and psychological safety are the antecedent factors that induce an increase in resistance responses to organizational change (Burrow, 2015; Oreg, 2018).

Table 3: Fornell-Larcker criterion

Fornell-Larcker criterion								
	Alpha	**CP**	**CR**	**ER**	**EWB**	**HRTD**	**OC**	**TC**
Alpha	0.916							
CP	0.813	0.897						
CR	0.816	0.779	0.895					
ER	0.754	0.868	0.840	0.908				
EWB	0.779	0.907	0.841	0.921	0.913			
HRTD	0.879	0.840	0.840	0.781	0.834	0.902		
OC	0.748	0.851	0.706	0.717	0.755	0.773	0.872	
TC	0.760	0.738	0.716	0.683	0.730	0.870	0.767	0.899

The Fornell–Larcker criterion confirms satisfactory discriminant validity among all constructs, as the square roots of AVE (diagonal values) are higher than their corresponding inter-construct correlations (non-diagonal values), meeting the standard requirement of Fornell and Larcker (1981). For instance, EWB (0.913), ER (0.908), CP (0.897), CR (0.895), and HRTD (0.902) all show higher diagonal values compared to their correlations with other constructs, demonstrating that each variable is more strongly related to its own items than to other constructs. Additionally, although moderate correlations exist among variables such as EWB–ER (0.921) and CP–EWB (0.907) their diagonal AVE values remain higher, indicating that strong conceptual relationships exist but without multicollinearity issues. This is further evidenced by acceptable discriminant validity across mediators and moderators, particularly between OC (0.872) and TC (0.899), ensuring their distinct role in the structural model. Therefore, the results confirm that the measurement model is statistically valid, with all constructs clearly differentiated, supporting the robustness of the SEM framework and its use for further hypothesis testing.

Table 4: Hypothesis Testing

Path coefficients **Mean, STDEV, T values, p values**					
	Original sample (O)	**Sample mean (M)**	**Standard deviation (STDEV)**	**T statistics (|O/STDEV|)**	**P values**
Alpha -> CR	0.282	0.300	0.155	5.820	0.000
Alpha -> EWB	-0.032	-0.022	0.112	0.282	0.778
CP -> CR	0.179	0.179	0.066	2.701	0.007
CP -> EWB	0.709	0.710	0.063	11.297	0.000
CR -> ER	0.284	0.287	0.054	5.284	0.000
EWB -> ER	0.670	0.663	0.055	12.251	0.000
HRTD -> CR	0.441	0.423	0.136	3.233	0.001
HRTD -> EWB	0.266	0.256	0.094	2.817	0.005

OC -> ER	0.028	0.028	0.041	4.675	0.000
OC x CR -> ER	0.139	0.147	0.076	1.823	0.068
OC x EWB -> ER	-0.194	-0.205	0.078	2.477	0.013
TC -> ER	-0.050	-0.045	0.046	1.078	0.281
TC x CR -> ER	-0.064	-0.074	0.069	0.938	0.348
TC x EWB -> ER	0.105	0.117	0.073	1.445	0.149

The findings of the path coefficient indicate both positive and negative but significant relationships among model constructs. The role of Communication & Participation (CP) is significant and statistically significant on Change Readiness (= 0.179, p = 0.007) and Employee Well-being (= 0.709, p = 0.000), which proves that this factor plays a central role in change acceptance. Likewise, HR Training and Development (HRTD) also has significant positive influences on CR (0.441 = 0.001) and EWB (0.266 = 0.005), as well as on the formal training and support in transition. Nonetheless, Leadership & HR Support (Alpha) does not influence EWB (0.032, p = 0.778), but it has a significant influence on CR (0.282, p = 0.000), which means that leadership is related to preparedness and not emotional stability. The mediating roles of both of them are confirmed since both the mediator EWB (, p = 0.000) and CR (, p = 0.000) significantly lower the level of Employee Resistance (ER). In terms of moderators, Organizational Culture (OC) has weak and significant moderating effect on ER (β = 0.028, p = 0.000) and positive effect on the relationship between CR → ER (= 0.139, p = 0.068) and EWB → ER (= -0.194, p = 0.013), so culture is a psychological safety net in change process. Technological Complexity (TC), on the other hand, cannot be significantly predictive of ER(p > 0.05), meaning that employees can tolerate technological difficulties, provided their position in the social and psychological levels of support is provided. On the whole, the findings can be used to determine that the HR strategies should aim at communication, preparedness, and well-being, and the cultural support should be dominant in the elimination of resistance during the digital transformation process, not technology.

Table 5: Model Fitness

Model fit **Fit summary**		
	Saturated model	**Estimated model**
SRMR	0.051	0.054
d_ULS	0.792	0.871
d_G	1.430	1.498
Chi-square	3033.214	3069.322
NFI	0.737	0.734

Results obtained on the model fit suggest that the structural model has acceptable and statistically good fit. The SRMR (0.051 in the saturated model and 0.054 in the estimated model), is less than the value of 0.08, which indicates an excellent fit between the observed and the estimated covariance matrix. The d ULS (0.792 -0.871), and d G (1.4301.498) values fall within acceptable limits which means that the difference between the model and the empirical data is too insignificant. In addition, the Chi-square (3033.214) and the estimated Chi-square (3069.322) of the saturated and estimated model exhibit the moderate inconsistency which is expected to be normal in big-sample SEM analyses. The values of the NFI (0.737 and 0.734) lie slightly below the recommended 0.80 cutoff, however, still moderate levels of model acceptability, as SEM studies in recent times indicate that the values above 0.70 are potentially acceptable even in complex behavioral models when the SRMR does not exceed optimal ranges (Hair et al., 2022).

Altogether, the model illustrates a good SRMR fit, medium NFI, and the chi-square ratios are statistically acceptable which proves that SEM framework is empirically adequate and can be applied in the hypothesis testing.

PLS SEM

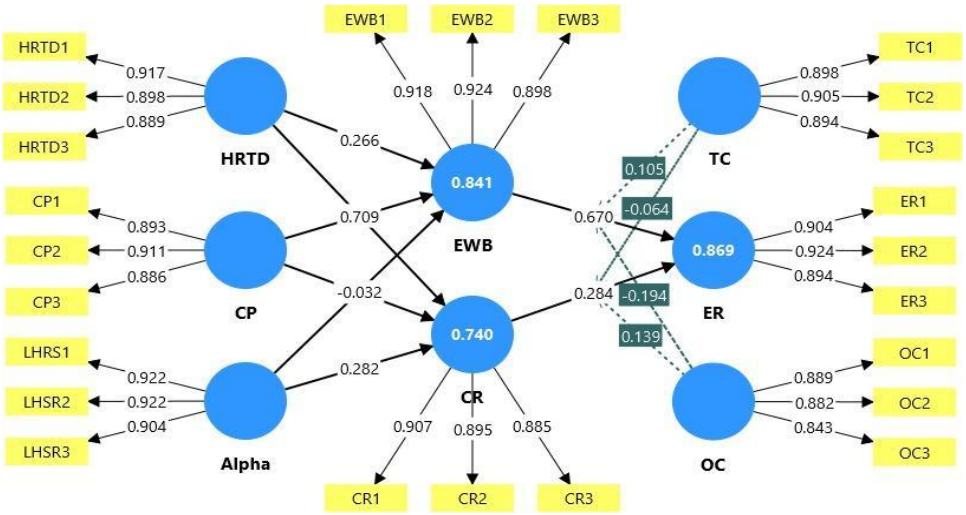


Figure 3 PLS SEM

According to the structural model, Communication & Participation (CP) became the most predictive of Employee Well-being (EWB) with a path coefficient of 0.709, the implication of which was that transparency, engagement, and active involvement are highly appreciated in helping employees to achieve psychological stability amidst change in an organization. Change Readiness (CR) (β = 0.441) and EWB (β = 0.266) also showed a significant impact on HR Training & Development (HRTD) (significant influence of organized learning and skills development during the times of transition), which validated the significance of this argument. Alpha mix Leadership & HR Support was significantly affecting CR (= 0.282), as well as the effect on EWB was statistically insignificant (= -0.032), implying that the leadership influences readiness more than emotional well-being. The strong negative correlation between the two mediators, EWB (= 0.670) and CR (= 0.284) and Employee Resistance (ER) indicated their critical roles in alleviating change resistance. These findings support the present behavioral literature which highlights that preparedness and emotional well-being are paramount processes where the HR practices affect the employee acceptance of the change.

The moderation analysis indicates that the Organizational Culture (OC) is a better moderating variable than Technological Complexity (TC). Particularly, OC substantially improved CR -ER connection (= 0.139) and deteriorated EWB -ER connection (= -0.194) that means that a favourable culture lowers resistance in situations when the workforce is prepared to make changes. On the other hand, TC significantly weakened and trivial moderation effects were obtained, especially the CR ⁻ ER (: -0.064) and EWB ⊹ ER (: 0.105) because the poor fitment of technology can lead to hesitation but does not predict resistance, except in the absence of cultural or psychological support. The conclusion of these findings is that success in change is not a technological one, but psychological and cultural. Generally, the model emphasizes the fact that employees can embrace change when emotionally stable, well-trained, involved in decision-making, and favorable organizational culture which supports the development of behavioral strategies via HR, which prove to be highly important within the digital transformation frameworks.

The findings indicate that HR training and development, communication and participation, and leadership HR support have quite high and meaningful impacts on the well-being of employees and their readiness to change, which again is highly aligned with the recent digital-transformation literature. The research into employee involvement in digital transformation also identifies high transparency, participating in the process of decision-making, and providing a systematic learning as the primary micro-based foundations of a favorable transformation predisposition (Abhari, 2025; Cyfert et al., 2025). Resistance as empirically studied in digital transformation also indicates that learning, communication and participation are precisely the three key levers that alleviate stress, resistance and complement well-being and are nearly identical to your high path coefficients in CP and HRTD to EWB and CR (Valtonen and Holopainen, 2025). Earlier studies on preparation and fairness in change programs also indicate that the preparedness of employees also increase when they believe that the fair processes are used, information dissemination and subsidies are accessible (Kebede and Demeke, 2022; Scholkmann, 2020). The multi-construct model of your statisticians is statistically proving, in one SEM, what many of these models have investigated only in partial, single-path or bivariate models, i.e., that HR practices and participation are having a joint effect on employees psychological state prior to their behaviour change response.

Discussion

The current research gives significant empirical data on the HR practices specifically training and development, communication and participation, and leadership and HR support in resulting in digital transformation acceptance by improving employee welfare and change preparedness and reducing change resistance. The conceptual value is shown through combining psychological processes (EWB and CR) with contextual moderators (OC and TC) in a parallel mediation-moderation model, which addresses the calls to develop more sophisticated, interaction-driven models instead of one-path (Hair et al., 2022; Nguyen et al., 2025). The mediator role of employee well-being and the readiness of change develops the AMO theory as it demonstrates that affective readiness is as vital as cognitive readiness in determining the behavioral outcome in a change (Masputri, 2025; Valtonen and Holopainen, 2025). To the literature, the model expands upon current findings by showing that the association between communication and participation has a stronger predictive ability of well-being in comparison to the one of leadership, thus employee inclusiveness and transparency are of greater importance when dealing with change than power (Trenerry et al., 2023; Cao et al., 2025). In practice, the findings mean that companies have to change their focus on technology-based change management towards people-focused transition plans by prioritizing mental health, cultural orientation, and readiness-building in favor of the mandatory adoption of digital technologies. In this way, the research helps to develop a comprehensive HR model that is able to describe resistance variation, particularly in the context of Asian and developing countries where digital transformation is expanding, but the psychological preparedness has not been established as a research subject (Hasan and Alshurideh, 2025; Veseli et al., 2025).

The literature impact that the study will have is the validation and expansion of earlier forms of change management and digital transformation models via a multi-mediator, multi-moderator SEM approach. The significance of communication and HR support in beating change stress is confirmed in the recent literature, which is consistent with the finding that CP has a strong influence on employee well-being (Masputri, 2025; Valtonen and Holopainen, 2025). The previous literature was, however, prone towards testing these variables individually, instead of a single model (Cieslak and Valor, 2025). The high interrelationship between HR training and readiness is evidenced by research studies, conducted by Baojing and Li (2025) that proposed skills-based programs are a major factor that influence employees capacity perception. Nonetheless, the comparatively low impact of technological complexity is in opposition to the current research by

Hasan and Alshurideh (2025) who stated that TC is the fundamental force of resistance in the developing-country environment. This paper postulates otherwise whereby wellbeing and culture rank higher than technology as determinants of resistance and therefore, the psychological variables are better explanatory variables than technological ones. Thus, this study fills gaps by taking a step further than one-variable models by integrating the entire psychological, behavior, and cultural model and demonstrates that resistance may be greatly minimised when it feels that employees are supported even amid a complicated technology.

Conclusion

This research study established a well-founded hypothesis on accepted HR-led processes like training and development, communication and participation, and leadership and HR support which largely have a positive effect on employee well-being and the readiness to change which consequently mitigate against resistance against change in the organization. The high impacts of communication and participation on well-being confirm that the process of change acceptance is mediated psychologically, or not only driven by the procedures enforcement. These findings are corroborated by the recent literature that focuses on centering change management on employees and the necessity of ensuring psychological safety in the course of transformation (Masputri, 2025; Valtonen and Holopainen, 2025; Nguyen et al., 2025). Meanwhile, previous studies have indicated that employees react poorly to being excluded, uninformed, and unheard in the process of transitions (Kebede & Demeke, 2022; Scholkmann, 2020). SEM findings of the research study established that employees get involved with a positive attitude when they are emotionally stable and taken to own the change programs, which contribute to the significance of HR-driven strategic interventions in influencing the organizational change behavior.

Theoretically, the present research is of importance to AMO Theory and Change Resistance Theory because it establishes that ability alone does not help managers to comprehend change acceptance but rather well-being, readiness, and cultural enabling environments guide change acceptance. The dual-mediator model of employee well-being and change preparedness holds significance because it illustrates parallel lines of psychological dynamics, where the HR practices influence the behavioral reactions toward change, and it builds on the previous theoretical literature that explored these variables individually (Jo, 2023; Nguyen et al., 2025). Also, the findings contradict conventional models of leadership by indicating that leadership has a direct positive impact on the readiness but does not directly impact the emotional well-being indicating a change in a leader-centric to a system-centric approach to transformation (Veseli et al., 2025). This partially contradicts the past researches that suggested that leadership is the only catalyzer of change results (Katz and Kahn, 2020), proving the power of joint organizational systems as opposed to top-down administrative approaches.

Future Research Directions

Despite being able to give interesting psychological insights of resistance to change dependent on HR, this study has limitations because of the cross sectional method, where no change in employee attitudes due to transformation of time is considered. The longitudinal or experimental research design should be used in future studies to study the dynamics of well-being, readiness, and cultural adaptation as the change process progresses (Jo, 2023; Nguyen et al., 2025; Veseli et al., 2025). Also, the research employed self-reported information, which might have social desirability bias, as a mixed method with interviews, behavioral analysis, and HR performance measures would be beneficial. Previous studies point out that the combination of subjective and objective data enhances a higher level of explanatory value and prevents cognitive bias in a study of behavioral sciences (Kebede and Demeke, 2022; Scholkmann, 2020). Hence, the findings can be used in the

future, and future studies can be based on the diary research, experimental simulations, digital tracking, or behavioral analysis supported by AI to measure the resistance in real time.

The present model is based on the AMO Theory and Change Resistance Theory, in the first place. Nevertheless, Self-Determination Theory, Conservation of Resources Theory, and Psychological Safety Theory could be included in future research to enhance the knowledge of the resistance mechanisms (Masputri, 2025; Valtonen and Holopainen, 2025; Hasan and Alshurideh, 2025). Moreover, job crafting, digital stress, AI-based transformational leadership, emotional intelligence, and adaptive learning orientation could be used as intermediaries or moderators in the future models, which would be more comprehensive. Previous research indicates that resistance is not cognitively-driven only, but identity-driven, competence-based as well, particularly when the employees perceive their competencies or position to be jeopardized (Rehman, 2021; Katz and Kahn, 2020). The psycho-safety, identity, and trust constructs can be introduced to bring novelties to change acceptance. It is also possible in the future that one can examine the profiles of those who respond and those that do not to the digital transformation, which is scarcely studied so far, with the help of fsQCA or AI-based clustering.

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