

# Does E-HRM Advance Employee Engagement? A Study of Commercial Bank operating in Sukkur and Khairpur District

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**Abstract:** The main objective of this study is to investigate the impact of E-HRM (Integral element of Green HRM) on Employee Engagement in banking sector employees. Most studies on the issue of E-HRM are carried out in the context of its implementation, benefits to traditional HRM, benefits to HRM managers, impact on employees productivity, employee efficiency, organizational efficiency, productivity, sustainability, etc. On the other side, numerous studies are also available in which Green HRM was studied in the context of its impact on employee behavior, employee engagement, employee Participation, Employee Retention, etc. So, this study focused on the Impact of E-HRM on employee engagement of banking sector employees. For this purpose, two elements of E-HRM (E-Compensation and E-Performance Appraisal) were surveyed by a close-ended questionnaire. The sample consisted of approximately 300 respondents from the private branch banks employees of Sukkur and Khairpur district. After a thorough analysis by employing Regression Analysis, we concluded that both E-Compensation and E-Performance Appraisal have a positive and significant influence on working engagement level among banks employees working in District Sukkur and Khairpur. The findings of this study, suggest valuable insights for decision-makers of banks who want to reduce cost and want a friendly working environment to get a competitive advantage over their rivals. It is also helpful for HR professionals and researchers by allowing them to enhance work engagement by using E-HRM in their organization.

**Key Words:** Banks, E-HRM practices; E-Compensation; E-Performance Appraisal, Employee Engagement.

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## Introduction

Revolution in Information technology transformed every aspect of our life whether it is our economy, society or education, etc (Suramardhini, 2012). Like other fields, Information technology has opened new ways of doing HRM. It can be easily seen in the processes and procedures of Human Resource Management (HRM) practices which are heavily affected by Information technology (Stone & Dulebohn, 2013). After the

initiation of web-based HRM which replace face-to-face HRM activities, great changes were seen in HRM practices (Ruel, Bondarouk, & Van der Velde, 2007). A global trend towards enterprise resource planning increases the widespread usage of IT in HRM. Internet-based technology revolutionized the administrative features of HRM. (Marler & Parry, 2016). E-HRM is defined as a Combination of HRM and IT practices for further improvement of working conditions intrinsic value addition to the organization (Iqbal, Ahmad, Allen, & Raziq, 2018). E-HRM expands traditional HRM processes by improving service quality (T. Bondarouk, Schilling, & Ruël, 2016). E-HRM is a strategic shift from outdated labor-concentrated practices to a technology-supported environment in which most operational activities are done by HRM software (Parry & Tyson, 2011). In a nutshell, E-HRM supplements HRM service quality by reforming, its procedures, flow of work, performance management, and compensation (T. Bondarouk, Harms, & Lepak, 2017). E-HRM cutting edge technology initiate the idea of "Self-Service" which is also positively correlated with employee engagement (Fujimoto, Ferdous, Sekiguchi, & Sugianto, 2016) because E-HRM is not merely "digitalization" of the HRM process. Social Exchange theory suggests that E-HRM practices influence employees' attitudes due to impartiality in the E-HRM system (Panos & Bellou, 2016). Many research studies concluded that E-HRM has brought HRM function towards the Strategic level by using Information technology at the Operational, relational, and transformational levels. The operational E-HRM domain contains day-to-day activities for employee benefit management practices and their profiling which enhance operational efficiencies of the HR department by reducing administrative burden and improving HR service quality (Strohmeier, 2007). E-Performance Management, E-Recruitment, E-learning, or E-Training comes under the domain of Mrelational e-hrm practices which support business processes. Transformational E-HRM focuses on employee future development such as knowledge management, e-talent management, HR planning, etc (Bissola & Imperatori, 2013). E-HRM is also a crucial tool used to achieve the Green HRM goals of the organization. Green HRM philosophy believes in less paperwork at all stages of HRM function like Performance appraisal and Compensation etc with the ultimate objective to increase the quality of work-life and employee engagement (Hosain & Rahman, 2016). According to Deshwal 2015, green HRM makes an employee more committed or engaged towards their work.

Besides HRM, the term Engagement is also very much famous or crucial in other fields (Resnick, 2001) (Saks, 2006). For example, civic engagement term used in sociology (Mondak, Hibbing, Canache, Seligson, & Anderson, 2010). social engagement term used in psychology (Huo, Binning, & Molina, 2010), stakeholder engagement phenomenon, consumer and customer engagement, and public engagement phenomenon (Ihm, 2015) (Brodie, Hollebeek, Jurić, & Ilić, 2011) (Men & Tsai, 2016). Employee Engagement is shared (Worker and firms) progression directed towards achievement of mutual aims but the widely used definition of E.E (Employee Engagement) is diverse participation and fulfillment of the desire of action (Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes, 2002). Engagement helps the organization to compete infinitely rising and changing markets as a competitive advantage (Welch, 2011). Other benefits of E.E are reducing absenteeism, reducing turnover ratio, higher job performance, and greater customer devotion (Brunetto, Teo, Shacklock, & Farr-Wharton, 2012; Gruman & Saks, 2011) (Salanova, Agut, & Peiró, 2005). Engagement is used as an effective tool to increase behavior not only at the individual level but also help in performing the task efficiently which ultimately leads towards organizational performance. Lastly, increment in monetary

performance contributes towards stakeholder return (Bates, 2004; Harter, Schmidt & Hayes, 2002; Richman, 2006). There are a variety of studies available in which Employee Engagement used as Mediating variable (Indirect effect). Besides, huge studies are also available in which the impact of E-Compensation and E-performance Appraisal were checked on a variable like organizational performance and Individual performance under the E-HRM umbrella. So, this study will fill the gap by finding E-Compensation and E-Performance Appraisal effect on Employee Engagement (Directly).

As stated earlier, this study will determine whether **E-HRM practices particularly E-Compensation and E-Performance Appraisal have any constructive influence on employee engagement in the Banking sector.** We have selected the financial sector, particularly the banking sector because bank employees have to work with tough timelines, with a strict regulatory environment coupled with severe competition for customer deposit retention exist among banks. These challenges can only be mitigated by banks if they have fully motivated engaged employees. It will put extra pressure on bank management to how to motivate or engage employees which are working in the large scattered branch network. Here, E-HRM can help bank management to fully motivate or engage their employees which are working even in remote areas.

#### **The objective of the Study:**

The key objective of this study is to check the impact of E-compensation and E-performance appraisal on working engagement among private banking sector employees working in the Sukkur and Khairpur districts. Secondly, check whether this impact is significant or not.

This study will check the following four hypotheses:

**H<sub>1</sub>** E-Performance Appraisal has a positive and significant influence on Employee engagement among branch banking employees of private banks.

**H<sub>2</sub>** E-Compensation has a positive and significant influence on Employee engagement among branch banking employees of private banks.

For testing above stated hypothesis, Haroon Abdullah's (Khashman & Al-Ryalat, 2015) model of Impact of Electronic HRM Practices on Jordanian Telecommunication Sector's operational performance has been amended and used on primary data collected through close-ended questionnaires from private commercial bank branches which have more than 10 staff collected by personal visits and google form.

The later part of this paper discusses past studies related to E-HRM (E-Compensation, E-Performance Appraisal) and Employee Engagement with a variety of other elements and factors. After the Literature review, detailed methodology regarding the selection of the sample, data collection, study model, and its testing detail discussed. Result and discussion presented after descriptive statistics, correlation, and regression analysis. Author recommendations and suggestions are presented as a conclusion in the last section.

#### **Literature Review**

### **Social Exchange Theory**

Social Exchange theory suggests that co-dependent associations between parties produce a standard of affinity or reciprocal favor (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). This custom of affinity has both positive and negative outlooks. When one party gives benefits, the receiving party is appreciative to reply in kind. If there is negative conduct then poor behavior is reciprocated (Aryee, Budhwar, & Chen, 2002). Social Exchange theory is very much applicable in an organizational context, it explains why employees respond favorably to the organization when they treat favorably (DeJoy, Schaffer, Wilson, Vandenberg, & Butts, 2004). In simple words, employees react according to how they perceive they are treated by the management of the Organization (Mearns, Hope, Ford, & Tetrick, 2010). The current study focuses on the same base of Social Exchange theory. E-HRM (E-Compensation, E-Performance Appraisal) is used as (Independent Variable) toll used by the organization to treat employees, and Employee Engagement (Dependent Variable) is employee response against that treatment.

### **Adaptive Structuration Theory**

Adaptive structuration theory (Handayani & Fitriati) reveals the effect of communication and information technology on the organizational process. AST focus on the active affiliation between the structure provided by technology and their appropriateness in the eyes of their users. AST theory which is developed by (Desanctis & Poole in 1994) focuses on the implication of technology (Rains & Bonito, 2017) and provide a model that focuses on the interaction between advanced information technology, social structure, and human interaction. AST focuses on social structures, rules, and resources by technologies and institutions as the basis for human activity (DeSanctis & Poole, 1994). The current study is also focuses on AST theory in which E-Compensation and E-Performance Appraisal used as technology (Independent Variable) and Employee Engagement used as human interaction (Dependent Variable).

### **E-HRM (E-Compensation/E-Performance Appraisal) Concept:**

Like other concepts, there is no single explanation of Electronic HRM because every researcher describes Electronic HRM as per their specific interpretations which they have to focus on (T. V. Bondarouk & Ruël, 2009). Some famous E-HRM explanation is as follow.

E-HRM is a "Virtual HR where network-based configuration erected on partnerships and usually facilitated by information technologies to support the firm's organization procure, cultivate, and use intellectual resources" (Lepak & Snell, 1998).

E-HRM is a "Whole HR approach which moves from the HR department and is reallocated to other organizational components and reliable business partners, in a way which incorporates HR activities with other corporate practices (e.g. finance, supply chain, and customer service)". (Karakanian, 2000).

Electronic HRM means "e-HR (or online HRM) denotes the usage of a wider variety of Internet-based uses for steering HRM associated businesses" (Lengnick-Hall & Moritz, 2003).

Electronic-HRM is "The usage of conventional, network and vocal tools to develop HR management, dealings, and process enactment". E-HRM advances the HR management transaction process by procuring modern network technologies (Kettley & Reilly, 2003).

Electronic HRM "Is a technique of executing HR policies, approaches in the organization through practical and attentive backing of comprehensive utilization of web-technology dependent networks (Ruël, Bondarouk, & Looise, 2004).

Electronic HRM "Is the managerial use of information technology for at least link and support at least two individual or shared actors in their collective execution of HR activities". In other words, electronic hrm is the process of connecting a minimum of two employees and helping them in mutual performance (Strohmeier, 2007).

Electronic HRM is the backing of the HRM in performing responsibilities in firms by utilizing information technology. The blend of all computer accessories for processing information for Human Resources. They define E-HRM as the usage of IT in the organization for backing the HR department. Electronic-HRM ultimately enhanced the worth of HRM by re-positioning it from staff department to line department (Voermans & van Veldhoven, 2007).

Irrespective of difference of opinion among writers and professionals about single and acceptable definition about Electronic Human Resource Management practices but they agreed that Electronic HRM practices are in-depth interrelated automated arrangements within the organization which uses information as a gadget for various usage (Foster, 2011) but now scholars focusing Electronic HRM with a more strategic outlook. They acknowledged that Electronic-HRM is "An umbrella term cover all potential combination of appliance and contents between HRM and information technologies, intended to form worth for directed employees and managers" (T. V. Bondarouk & Ruël, 2009)

### **Employee Engagement Concept:**

Literature provides expanded descriptions of employee engagement. In 1990, Kahn was the first academician who used and theorized the word "engagement" in his study. He insisted on engagement as "Harnessing of organization members to their work roles, in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performance". There is three level of interior scenarios of engagement and disengagement which are security, relevance, and accessibility" (Kahn, 1990). In 2001, (Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001) underline the concept of working engagement as a "Combination of vitality, contribution, and effectiveness". In similar direction (Harter et al., 2002) describe work engagement as "the individuals' involvement and satisfaction with as well as enthusiasm for work". Moreover, (Mishra & Mohanty, 2016) defined engagement "The engaged employees have six characteristics: they don't leave the company easily, don't think about leaving the company, recommend the company to others, feel inspired to do their best, speak positively about the company, and feel motivated to go beyond the call of duty".

### **Previous studies:**

Yuan Cheng & Yunqing Zou 2021, conducted a study to find out the answer to the question of whether "E-HRM implementation enriches organizational performance or not and if does then what are the elements who can support its implementation. After a meta-analysis of significances, limitations, and backgroundsof E-HRM implementation. They found the varied level of a positive relationship between E-HRM and organizational performance among countries but they found technology, organizational, people and social factors were favorable factors in all over countries in E-HRM implementation (Cheng & Zou, 2021)

In 2021, NoorulMuqaddam and Md. Sajjad Hossain conducted a study on "E-HRM Practices and Operational Efficiency, Evidence from Bangladeshi Garment Industry". In this study, E-Compensation and E-PeroranceAppraisal were chosen as Independent Variable and Operational Efficiency as dependent Variable. After utilizing the convenience sampling method with the usage of survey questionnaires and Interviews, they found a positive and significant effect of E-Compensation and E-Performance Appraisal in Operational performance (Muqaddim & Hosain, 2021).

In 2019, MD and Tanjil Ahmed conducted a study on "E-HRM impact on Organizational performance of Manufacturing industry of Bangladesh". They used 9 dimensions of E-HRM and 6 dimensions of organizational performance. After adopting the convenience sampling method and non-probability sampling technique, they collected primary data through structured questionnaires and Interviews from 223 employees of the manufacturing industry from September to December 2018. After descriptive and regression analysis, they found E-HRM has a positive and significant influence on Organizational Performance(Ahmed, 2019)

In 2018, Naveed Iqbal, Mansoor Ahmed, and Muhammad Mustafa Raziq in their study of "Does e-HRM improve labor productivity? A Study of Commercial Bank workplaces in Pakistan" checked the influence of E-HRM on Labour Productivity. After using data gained through survey questionnaire from 516 bank branches of big cities of Pakistan and found significant and positive direct impact on Labour productivity (Iqbal et al., 2018).

(Berber, Đorđević, & Milanović, 2018) stressed the prominence of e-HRM concerning its merits and demerits. Said study also aims to find the usage level of e-hrm in Serbia. After empirical and theoretical analysis, they concluded that e-HRM is an inventive and useful system for employees and managers.

(Malhotra & Jain, 2017) investigated the effect of e-HRM policies along with Implementation strategies' effect on employee satisfaction level. Both primary and secondary data were collected via a questionnaire developed for the research. They found a significant relationship between employee satisfaction and utilization of e-HRM practices.

In 2016, Shatha Mahmoud Obeidat check the linkage between e-hrm usage impact on HRM usefulness by using the UTAUT model developed by Venkatesh et al (2003). In this study, Determinants of e-hrm (Performance Expectancy, Effort Expectancy, and Social Influence) were used as the independent variable,

Behavioral Intention (BI) and e-hrm usage (Use) used as mediating variable and HRM effectiveness (Policy level and practice level) used as the dependent variable. After analyzing through SEM model, the study concluded that the applicability of E-HRM increased HRM effectiveness. Moreover, Behavioral intentions serve as mediating variable among e-hrm determinants. (Obeidat, 2016)

In 2015, Dr. Haroon Abdullah conducted a study on "The Impact of Electronic Human Resource Management (E-HRM) practices on business Performance in Jordanian Telecommunication sector: The employee Perspective. In said study, E-Performance Appraisal and E-Compensation) used as Independent Variable and Operational Performance as a dependent variable. After getting data from three Jordanian telecommunication companies through 114 questionnaires, they found a significant and positive effect of (E-Performance Appraisal and E-Compensation) on operational performance (Khashman & Al-Ryalat, 2015).

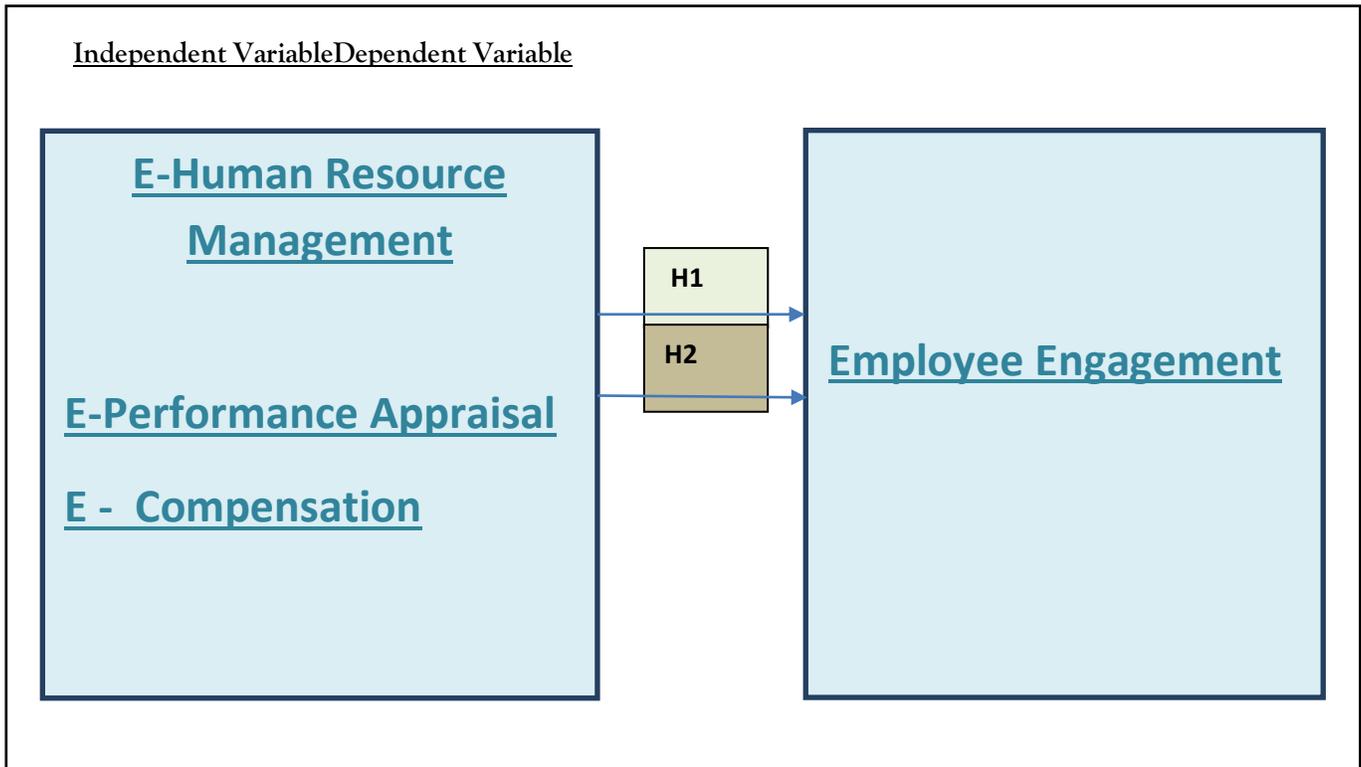
### **Substantial and Procedure**

For this study, quantitative-based primary data has been collected and analyzed for testing above mentioned hypothesis. 4 major private commercial banks namely United Bank, MCB Bank, Allied Bank, and Habib bank were selected for this study. E- Compensation and E-Performance Appraisal (Independent variables) has been measured by the modified electronic-hrm scale of (Shane, 2009) and Employee Engagement (dependent variable) has been measured by Utrecht Work Engagement (UWE) of (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004) after some modification.

### **Data Collection**

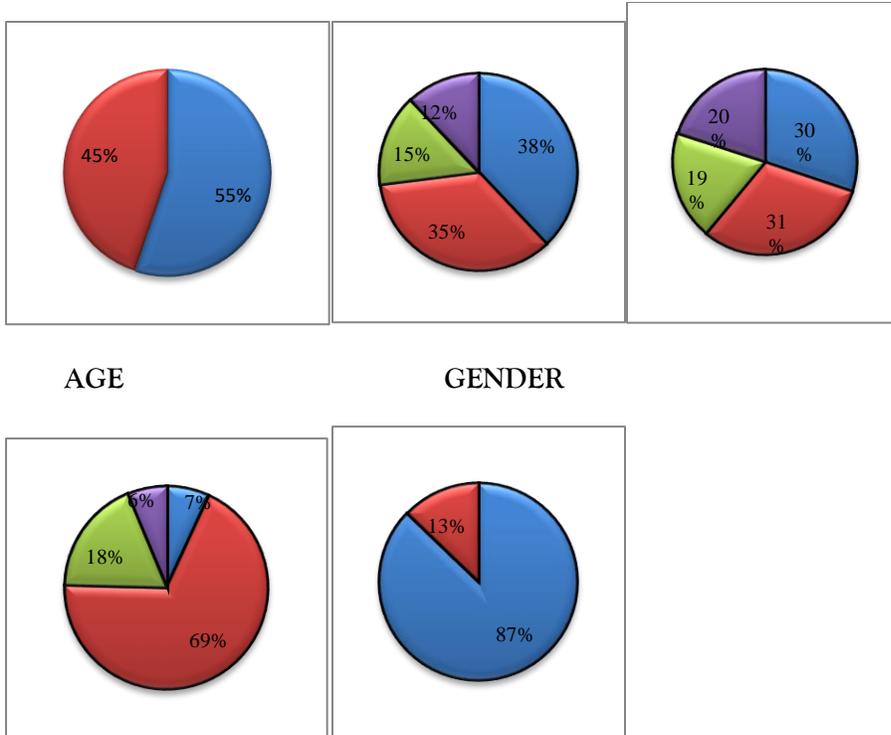
For Data collection, a close-ended questionnaire was distributed in those bank branches of Sukkur and Khairpur districts which staff members are 10 or more than 10. As per regional authorities, 1500 personnel are working in Sukkur and Khairpur private commercial banks branches which will be treated as a sampling frame. As per (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2009), 305 is the sample size in which 165 are from Sukkur and 140 are from Khairpur districts. 330 questionnaires were distributed in which 150 were distributed in district Khairpur and 180 were distributed in district Sukkur. In response to this, 145 duly filled questionnaires were returned from Khairpur and 170 from Sukkur district making a total of 315 questionnaires. In 315 returned questionnaires, only 305 questionnaires were usable of which 137 were from Khairpur and 168 were from the Sukkur district. The adopted questionnaire used in this study is divided into two parts, the first part contains participant demographic information and the second part comprises questions regarding Electronic Compensation and Electronic Performance Appraisal and Employee Engagement.

Study Model



Descriptive Analysis of Demographic Variables

DISTRICT (DIS) BANKS EXPERIENCE



Above series of chartsshow the descriptive Analysis of demographic variables in which the first chart shows 55% and 45% ratio of Sukkur and Khairpur districts respectively. 2<sup>nd</sup> Chart shows bank-wise respondents percentage in which ABL respondents are 12%, UBL respondents are 15%, HBL respondents are 38% and MCB respondents are 35%. Respondents which are below 25 years of Age are 7%, from 25 to 35 years are 69%, from 36 to 45 years are 18%, from 46 years of age and above are 6%. Male respondents are 87% and females are 13%. Respondents which have 3 years of experience are 30%, 3 to 6 years of experience are 31%, 6 to 9 years of experience are 19% and 9 years of experience or above are 20%.

**Descriptive Analysis of Study Variables:**

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
EPA	4.01	0.799
E.COMP	4.02	0.625
VIG	4.00	0.656
DED	4.00	0.649
ABS	4.02	0.643

Above table shows the descriptive Analysis of the study variable in which Electronic Performance Appraisal has a mean value of 4.01, Electronic Compensation with the mean value of 4.02, Vigor with the mean value of 4.00, Dedication with a mean value of 4.00, and absorption with a mean value of 4.02. Therefore, it is

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concluded that Sukkur and Khairpur private bank employees agreed that Electronic Performance Appraisal and Electronic Compensation have a positive impact on employee engagement.

**Reliability Analysis**

Variables	Dimensions	Reliability Score
E-HRM	E-Performance	0.736
	E-Compensation	0.705
Employee Engagement	Vigor	0.716
	Absorption	0.729
	Dedication	0.737

The reliability figure of E-Performance is 0.736 and E-Compensation is 0.705 and the reliability of Vigor is 0.716, Absorption is 0.729, and Dedication reliability is 0.737. All are conferring to Pallant (2005) defined parameters and recommending strong reliability of user data.

**Correlation Analysis**

Correlation investigation depicts the association among variables and the impact of the level of deviations on one variable by another variable.

Correlations Analysis of Study Variables					
Variable	E.COMP	EPA	VIG	DED	ABS
E.COMP	1				
EPA	.301**	1			

VIG	.542**	.330**	1		
DED	.624**	.381**	.677**	1	
ABS	.608**	.371**	.668**	.688**	1

The above table shows that E-Compensation is positively correlated with Vigor, Dedication, and Absorption, which means a 1% increase in E-Compensation will increase 54% Vigor, 62% Dedication, and 61% Absorption or vice versa. E-Performance Appraisal is also positively correlated with Vigor, Dedication, and Absorption, which means a 1% increase in E-Performance Appraisal increase Vigor with 33%, Dedication with 38%, and Absorption with 37%. In the same pattern, Independent and dependent are also correlated with each other just like a 1% increase in E-Compensation will bring a 30% increase in E-Performance Appraisal. Simultaneously, a 1% increase in Vigor will bring a 68% increase in Dedication and 67% increase in Absorption, and lastly, a 1% increase in Dedication will bring a 99% increase in Absorption.

**Results of Regression Analysis**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Beta	Sig.
1	.776	.656	.747		
Electronic Compensation				0.576	.000
Electronic Performance Appraisal				0.204	0.000
a. Predictors: (Constant), Electronic Performance Appraisal, Electronic Compensation,					
b. Dependent Variable: EE (Employee Engagement)					

In the above table, the R-value is .776 which shows adjustment between detected and projected values of the dependent variable. A high degree of correlation is depicted in R-value. The R<sup>2</sup> depicts the effect of the Independent variable on the dependent variable. R<sup>2</sup> value .656 states that E-HRM (E-Compensation and E-Performance Appraisal) describes 66% of the change in employee engagement and adjusted R<sup>2</sup> which is .747 is an unbiased estimator of the population. A beta value is standardized coefficients showing values of Electronic Compensation as 0.576 and Electronic Performance Appraisal as 0.204. The P-value of both

Electronic Compensation and Electronic Performance Appraisal are significant because they both are less than 0.05.

### **Discussion and Conclusion**

The main motive of this paper is to pursue the influence of E-HRM (E-Compensation and E-Performance Appraisal) on working engagement in the banking sector of district Sukkur and Khairpur because Information technology plays a very critical role in today's working environment. While reviewing the implication of this study, both hypotheses 1 and 2 which states, E-Performance Appraisal and E-Compensation have a positive and significant influence on Employee engagement have been accepted. These results are in confirmation with studies conducted by (Dulebohn & Marler, 2005) for E-Compensation and (Gruman & Saks, 2011) for E-Performance Appraisal. Hence, the outcome of this reveals that both E-Compensation and E-Performance Appraisal have a constructive influence on working engagement among private banks branch employees.

This research study strongly proposes conversion from Manual HRM to Electronic Human Resource Management in the banking sector of Pakistan. E-HRM can enhance Employee engagement levels among employees particularly branch banking employees. Imagine an environment where rapid competition couple with innovations, increasing risk level, strict laws and regulations, shrinking timelines, and extensive branch network making it impossible for the HR department to maintain quality service level without the support of E-HRM which is the utmost part of motivation and Employee Engagement. Electronic HRM is a mix of IT and HRM where all tasks particularly E-compensation and E-performance appraisal perform through IT. E-HRM is a crucial milestone towards Digital Employee Engagement.

### **Suggestions for Future Research:**

This study is only limited to checking the impact of only two dimensions of E-HRM which are Electronic Performance Appraisal and Electronic Compensation on banking sector branch level employee's engagement level. Upcoming research can include other dimensions like E-Recruitment, E-Communication, etc. Further, more districts, cities, and countries should be added for generalizing its outcomes at province, national, regional, and international levels. Future researchers can compare its result with Area, Zonal, and Regional level employees. Comparative study within the banking industry can be done i.e government banks, microfinance banks, industrial banks, Islamic banks and investment banks, etc. A comparative study can also be done among other industries of the financial sector like insurance, Leasing, and Mudarba, etc. Comparison of the impact of E-HRM between financial and non-financial firms i.e FMCG, Oil & Gas, Pharma industry, etc will add a new dimension in Literature and HRM field. Employee Engagement can also be used as a mediatory variable between E-HRM and other variables like organizational performance and employee's performance etc.

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