

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on employee motivation and organisational resilience and the role of strategic HRM: renewal of a resource-based conceptual model

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Abstract

Purpose – It has been a tremendous challenge for organisations to navigate and survive the COVID-19 pandemic. This paper proposes a novel multi-level conceptual model, based on the resource-based view (RBV), to address the pandemic crisis and highlight the importance of strategic human resource management (SHRM) in promoting employee motivation and organisational resilience. The paper aims to provide insights and practical guidance for organisations to leverage their internal resources and capabilities to thrive in the post-pandemic landscape.

Design/methodology/approach – This paper conducted a comprehensive literature review of the existing research on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, SHRM, RBV, job satisfaction, turnover intentions and organisational resilience, covering the main contributors to this research stream and their findings.

Findings – The conceptual model presented in this paper offers five testable propositions to examine the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on employee motivation and organisational resilience and how organisations can navigate challenging times through SHRM, which enables RBV. It highlights the foundational role of RBV and identifies the resources employed by SHRM as intervening constructs that significantly enhance employee outcomes, including motivation, job satisfaction, turnover intention and organisational resilience.

Practical implications – The proposed model counsels that organisations need to look beyond the straightforward application of SHRM and should enable the RBV climate to protect and uphold employee motivation and organisational resilience. Finally, measurement and analysis implications are presented for future research opportunities and managerial interventions to mitigate the impact of difficult times such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

Originality/value – Currently, there is a lack of research regarding the conceptualisation of the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on employee and organisational resilience. Therefore, the proposed model discusses the significance of the alignment of SHRM and RBV as a moderator of the relationships between the impact of COVID-19 pandemic, employee motivation and organisational resilience.

Keywords The COVID-19 pandemic, Strategic human resource management, Resource-based view, Job satisfaction, Turnover intentions, Conceptual model

Paper type Conceptual paper

1. Introduction

COVID-19, also known as novel coronavirus, is a communicable disease not previously identified in humans (WHO, 2020; Haque and Islam, 2022). A newly discovered strain



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transmits among humans and causes the common cold, fever, dry cough and shortness of breath to more severe diseases, including Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS-CoV) (WHO, 2020). The World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID-19 a pandemic or global disease outbreak on March 11, 2020 (Haque, 2020). Consequently, in addition to the adverse impact on individuals, the COVID-19 pandemic led to sharp shocks to the global economies, societies and organisations (Macintyre, 2020; Shigemura *et al.*, 2020). Within a couple of months in 2020, Global economic growth dropped to 2.4% for the whole year compared to 2019 (OECD, 2020). The current economic situation is causing a tremendous threat to organisational performance, resilience and individual employment. This unprecedented crisis has led to enormous employment problems and severely challenged human resource managers and scholars (World Economic Forum, 2020; Li *et al.*, 2011; Haque and Islam, 2022). Therefore, the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has raised the question: What about the role of strategic human resource management (SHRM)? How can organisations survive and increase their organisational resilience in this context?

SHRM has become increasingly significant in managing and applying human resources (HR) strategies for employee motivation and organisational resilience (Martell and Carroll, 1995; Armstrong, 2011). Jackson and Schuler (1990) defined SHRM as processes and activities jointly shared by HR and organisational managers to solve people-related business challenges. Armstrong (2011) suggested that SHRM manages people who deal with how the organisation's goals might be achieved through its HR utilising integrated organisational strategies, policies and practices. From an employee's perspective, SHRM focuses on how organisational characteristics shape HR practices with priorities and contribute to organisations' bottom line (e.g. operation level) (Martell and Carroll, 1995). The COVID-19 pandemic has affected the working environment and created a situation where employees suffer job losses and organisations are challenged to maintain operational costs. During the COVID-19 pandemic, especially in the lockdown situation, organisations seek solutions through SHRM and expect the best use of their organisational resources. Therefore, employee motivation and organisational resilience during this pandemic must be considered. This paper considers Birger Wernerfelt's resource-based theory to determine the resources available within organisations and relates them with the capabilities to survive adequately. Accordingly, extending RBV (Wernerfelt, 2014), this paper offers a multi-level conceptual model (see Figure 1) to overcome the ongoing post-pandemic crisis of the COVID-19 pandemic. It ratifies

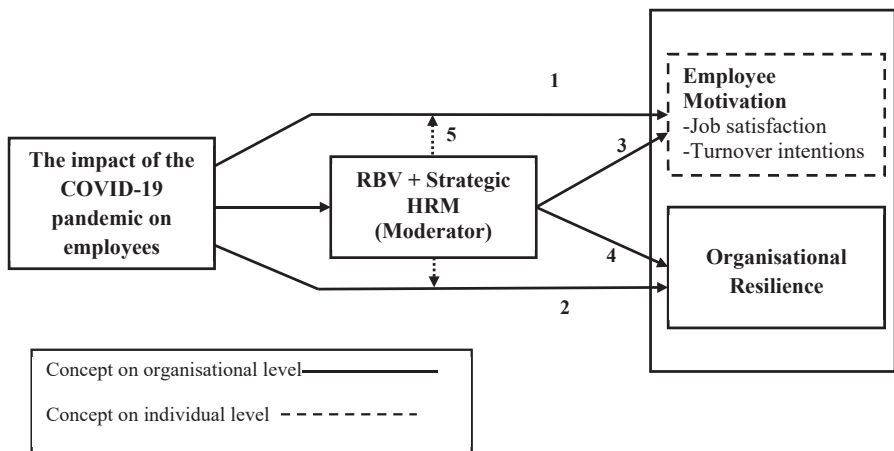


Figure 1.
The proposed conceptual model

Source(s): Figure by author

SHRM for higher employee motivation and organisational resilience. The objectives of the present paper are twofold. First, to analyse the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on employee motivation and organisational resilience. Second, justify the SHRM interventions enabling RBV (Wernerfelt, 2014), which may mitigate the current and post-pandemic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic is spreading rapidly, and there is a lack of papers explicitly considering this unprecedented situation for SHRM interventions from the RBV (Wernerfelt, 2014) perspective.

This multi-level conceptual model (Figure 1) will contribute to organisational studies in several ways. First, highlighting the current literature on SHRM and RBV (Wernerfelt, 2014), this model will clarify the crisis of the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on employee motivation (e.g. job satisfaction and turnover intentions) and organisational resilience. Second, SHRM upholds both employee motivation and organisational resilience (Schuler and Jackson, 2005; Selkowski, 2020; Hamouche, 2020; Nemțeanu and Dabija, 2020) and supports two strong imperatives: motivating employees for higher performance and retaining talented employees (Khoreva and Wechtler, 2018; Azungah, 2018; Hamouche, 2020). This model will contribute to extending the concept of SHRM to meet the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic for higher employee motivation (e.g. job satisfaction and turnover intentions) and organisational resilience. Third, this model offers a multi-level model (e.g. individual and organisational) to overcome the current and future threats of the COVID-19 pandemic and search for practical solutions for organisational resilience. Scholars suggested an urgent demand for better assessment and reporting of the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on employee motivation and organisational resilience (Fernandes, 2020; Selkowski, 2020; Hamouche, 2020; Rajhans *et al.*, 2020).

The remainder of this paper follows the following sections. Section 2 provides a background on the COVID-19 pandemic as an unprecedented organisational crisis. Section 3 discusses the resource-based view (RBV) and integration of RBV into SHRM proposed in section 4. Section 5 thoroughly discusses the proposed conceptual framework and its justifications, followed by a discussion of future research directions in section 6. Finally, section 7 offers the conceptual model's measurement and implications, and section 8 concludes.

2. The COVID-19 pandemic as an unprecedented organisational crisis

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the global business scenario. To maintain their current market shares, organisations need help managing and continuing their day-to-day operations, such as job employment, financial liquidity and supply chains. From a macro-level perspective, the World Economic Forum (2020) prescribed that the COVID-19 pandemic will have both a short-term and a long-term negative impact on global businesses for their sustainability and employment. On the other hand, from a micro (or individual) level perspective, the substantial effect of the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted employees' family and work lives and led to employee anxiety, frustration and job dissatisfaction (Jenny, 2020; Shan and Tang, 2020). As a result, COVID-19 has unleashed a shocking blow on personal lives and the global economy. As a result, organisations cannot think SHRM about how they will meet the challenge of this pandemic, regain their employee motivation and hold organisational resilience.

The global pandemic of COVID-19 has triggered a need for more innovative strategies to save employee jobs and increase motivation for higher productivity; SHRM has the call to make organisations more resilient to survive. Selkowski (2020) noted that "the shock caused by the coronavirus will not only lead to a supply and demand crisis but will also have a significant impact on employment and productivity growth" (p. 5). The economic crisis of the COVID-19 pandemic is threatening employee jobs and will have consequences for future competition. The role of SHRM in saving jobs and supporting employees' living will

significantly influence organisational resilience (Selkowski, 2020; Hamouche, 2020; Rajhans *et al.*, 2020). This paper claims that organisations' initiatives to apply SHRM enabling RBV (Wernerfelt, 1984) will make a clear difference in their ongoing crisis management and recovery.

3. Enabling resource-based view (RBV)

The fundamental lesson of the RBV (Wernerfelt, 1984) is that organisations should capitalise on their internal strengths and available financial and HR resources (Wernerfelt, 1984; Teece *et al.*, 1997). This is because organisations' internal resources, including the physical, financial and SHRM, are valuable, costly to imitate for others and capable of providing sustainable competitive advantages (Teece *et al.*, 1997; Grob, 2012). Competitive advantage from the RBV (Wernerfelt, 1984) benefits organisations by implementing a value-creating strategy that is not always easy to meet with other competitors (Barney, 1991). As a result, sustainable competitive advantage is reflected in better performance than a benchmark of some or all its rivals (Wernerfelt, 1984; Teece *et al.*, 1997; Fenton and Carroll, 2010). Scholars have increasingly investigated the attributes associated with RBV (Wernerfelt, 1984) and attempted to determine how SHRM contributes to organisational capability and resilience (Boxall, 1998; Karami *et al.*, 2004; Papatya and Hamsioğlu, 2018). Organisational capabilities are complex bundles of skills and accumulated knowledge that enables organisations to coordinate activities and best use their assets (Teece *et al.*, 1997). However, internal resources and external opportunities for organisations are crucial for competitive success (Hansen and Wernerfelt, 1989; Ubeda-Garcia *et al.*, 2019). Scholars have attempted to integrate both the internal and external perspectives under organisations' 'resource-based' view for higher organisational performance (see Barney, 1991; Wernerfelt, 1984).

The notion of RBV (Wernerfelt, 1984) has become instrumental to the development of SHRM (Wright *et al.*, 2001; Karami *et al.*, 2004; Papatya and Hamsioğlu, 2018). RBV (Wernerfelt, 1984) restores the balance between internal and external analysis in strategic management (Collis, 1991). Furthermore, scholars have linked RBV (Wernerfelt, 1984) as a part of competitive advantage (Barney, 1991), Strategic assets and organisational rent (Amit and Schoemaker, 1993) and value creation (Peteraf and Barney, 2003). However, RBV (Wernerfelt, 1984) is not above criticism. For example, Priem and Butler (2001) criticised RBV (Wernerfelt, 1984) with the following. First, resources that generate sustained strategic advantage are not manipulable. Second, the context within which the theory applies is not specified. Third, resources are defined all-inclusive. Finally, the theory is static and not dynamic. Despite these criticisms, most of the critics agree that the impact of RBV (Wernerfelt, 1984) on strategic management and SHRM is significant, and its effort to focus on the internal aspects of the organisation for explaining competitive advantage has proven effective and profitable (Priem and Butler, 2001; Karami *et al.*, 2004; Papatya and Hamsioğlu, 2018). This paper argues that RBV (Wernerfelt, 1984) can make a significant contribution to SHRM by improving employee motivation and organisational resilience (Wright *et al.*, 2001; Karami *et al.*, 2004; Papatya and Hamsioğlu, 2018).

4. Integration of RBV into SHRM

RBV is a theoretical perspective highlighting the importance of strategic resources and capabilities in shaping firm performance (Wernerfelt, 1984; Papatya and Hamsioğlu, 2018). However, it is possible to measure RBV as a construct using a multi-item scale developed from RBV theory. Several studies have developed and validated measurement scales for RBV (e.g. Beltrán-Martín *et al.*, 2009; Nevo and Wade, 2008; Zafer and Zehir, 2009). Future researchers may use one of these scales to measure RBV in future empirical studies.

Regarding the role of RBV in the proposed conceptual model (see [Figure 1](#)), it is not a moderator but a potential determinant of HRM practices. This paper argues that the organisation's strategic resources and capabilities, as reflected in the RBV, will shape the HRM practices adopted by the organisation. For example, future studies may include this relationship in empirical models and test them using appropriate statistical techniques such as regression analysis or structural equation modelling.

[Boxall \(1996\)](#) proposed the alignment of RBV ([Wernerfelt, 1984](#)) with SHRM for organisational resilience, such as human capital and process advantages. Human capital advantage refers to retaining talented employees as they are mostly "latent with productive possibilities" (p. 67). On the other hand, human process advantage can be clarified as a "function of causally ambiguous, socially complex, historically evolved processes such as learning, cooperation, and innovation" (p. 67). He prescribed this integration for two specific justifications. First, organisations must create a talented and committed workforce to acquire the best human capital advantage to maintain their sustainable competitive advantage. Second, organisations must develop employees to learn and believe in the value of RBV ([Wernerfelt, 1984](#)) to achieve both human capital and process advantages. [Wright et al. \(2001\)](#) noted that "the conceptual development within the field of SHRM has leveraged the RBV to achieve some consensus on the areas within the human resource architecture in which sustainable competitive advantage might be achieved" (p. 704).

5. Measuring the COVID-19 pandemic as a construct

The measurement approach for the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on employee motivation and organisational resilience can be multi-faceted and include both subjective and objective measures. For example, the subjective measures may include self-reported measures of employee job satisfaction ([Haque and Khan, 2023](#)), turnover intentions ([Long and Perumal, 2014](#)), and employee perceptions of the organisation's response to the pandemic ([Nemteanu et al., 2021](#)). On the other hand, Objective measures may consist of data on employee absenteeism ([Grigore, 2020](#)), productivity ([Oswald et al., 2015](#)) and financial performance ([Huselid, 1995](#)) of the organisation during and after the pandemic. Moreover, the measurement approach can also consider the impact of various HRM practices, such as training and development, employee communication and remote work arrangements, on employee motivation and organisational resilience during the pandemic ([Haque, 2021b](#)). Hence, a comprehensive measurement approach may capture the multi-dimensional impact of the pandemic on employee motivation and organisational resilience and provide a holistic understanding of the effectiveness of SHRM practices in mitigating the effects of the pandemic on organisational outcomes.

6. Conceptual framework and discussion

SHRM ([Wright et al., 2001](#); [Karami et al., 2004](#)) aligned with the RBV ([Wernerfelt, 1984](#)) has been researched in the literature and has shown encouraging outcomes in terms of improved organisational performance, employee motivation and job satisfaction (e.g. [Karami et al., 2004](#); [Papatya and Hamşioğlu, 2018](#); [Haque and Khan, 2023](#)). SHRM can help organisations build sustainable competitive advantage and enhance their organisational capabilities ([Boxall, 1998](#)). Moreover, SHRM has been identified as crucial in building organisational resilience, especially during and after the COVID-19 pandemic ([Nemteanu et al., 2021](#); [Haque, 2021b](#)). By aligning SHRM practices with the organisation's strategic goals, RBV can help organisations effectively manage the impact of the pandemic on their employees, maintain employee motivation and build organisational resilience.

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of organisational resilience in managing crises (Macintyre, 2020; Nemteanu *et al.*, 2021). In this context, resilience may be defined as an organisation's ability to adapt to changing circumstances, learn from experiences and continue to perform effectively (Nemteanu *et al.*, 2021; Haque, 2021b). In the context of the pandemic, SHRM practices can help organisations build resilience by providing support to employees, enhancing their job satisfaction and reducing turnover intentions (Karami *et al.*, 2004; Papatya and Hamsioğlu, 2018; Haque and Khan, 2023). Employee motivation is a crucial factor in organisational resilience and job satisfaction and turnover intentions are significant dimensions of employee motivation (Haque, 2021b). Therefore, organisations need to prioritise employee motivation by adopting effective SHRM practices to build resilience.

It has been suggested that aligning SHRM with RBV can lead to improved organisational performance and sustainable competitive advantage (Haque, 2021b; Hamouche, 2020). Additionally, SHRM practices can be crucial in building organisational resilience during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. Employee motivation, including job satisfaction and turnover intentions, is essential in building resilience and has been linked to effective SHRM practices. It is, therefore, critical for organisations to adopt effective SHRM practices that are aligned with their strategic goals for increasing employee motivation, reducing turnover intentions and building resilience during crisis periods.

6.1 The impact COVID-19 pandemic on employee motivation

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed workplace expectations and influenced employees' behaviour and motivation in a new manner. For example, employees at work are suffering and expressing anxiety, translating into a significant shortage of hand sanitisers and facial germ-protecting masks (Shigemura *et al.*, 2020; Wells and Miklencicova, 2021) or toilet paper (Corkery and Maheshwari, 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic can be associated with several motivating factors that may harm employees' psychological health and motivation even after the pandemic. It has been suggested by Hamouche (2020) that the COVID-19 pandemic can result in enormous stress on employees to cope with their social and organisational job demands. During this pandemic situation, employees can have stressors such as fear of health-hazard and risk of contagion (Brooks *et al.*, 2020; Xiang *et al.*, 2020; Gibson and Janikova, 2021), anxiety from overloaded information or infobesity (Lewis and Zauskova, 2021), stigma and social exclusion (Brooks *et al.*, 2020; Xiang *et al.*, 2020) and financial loss and job insecurity (Brooks *et al.*, 2020). Consequently, these issues will not help employees be more engaged and may impact their motivation through reduced job satisfaction and increased turnover.

The notion of job satisfaction is also defined from various perspectives, and researchers acknowledge both cognitive (thoughts) and affective (feelings) characteristics. For example, Greenberg and Baron (1997) define job satisfaction as individuals' cognitive, affective and evaluative reactions toward the job. Similarly, it is recognised as an affective state and refers to a person's feelings regarding multiple aspects of the job (Brown and Peterson, 1993). Cognitive components also include employees' judgements and beliefs about their jobs (Organ and Near, 1985). Therefore, Locke (1976) suggests job satisfaction is where needs and outcomes match. This paper claims that SHRM can enhance employee job satisfaction. Furthermore, researchers suggested that job satisfaction can enhance organisations' sustainable competitive advantage by building valuable and challenging resources for competitors to poach (Wernerfelt, 1984; Hu *et al.*, 2018; Nemteanu *et al.*, 2021).

Employee turnover is considered a hindrance to achieving higher levels of productivity and efficiency in business operations (Deery and Shaw, 1997), where employee turnover intentions are considered the withdrawn behaviour of employees. It is also defined as individuals

withdrawing from the occupation or organisation and looking for other job or career alternatives (Martin, 1979; Mobley, 1982; Blau *et al.*, 2003; Stevens, 2020). Hellman (1997) says employee turnover intentions are behavioural intentions indicating an individual's intention to leave the organisation. It is an employee's conscious and deliberate willfulness towards voluntary permanent withdrawal from the organisation (Mobley, 1982; Blau *et al.*, 2003; Basnyat and Clarence Lao, 2019). Work-related issues (e.g. managerial leadership or organisational commitment), personal (e.g. health condition or illness), external (e.g. the social impression of the organisation) and job-related factors (e.g. job environment) may play an important role in employees' decision to remain or leave the organisation (Mobley, 1982; Blau *et al.*, 2003). Moreover, demographic variables like age and tenure are related to employee turnover intentions (Cohen, 1993). Previous studies suggested employee turnover intentions as an effective and essential organisational outcome and a predictor of actual voluntary turnover (Mobley, 1982; Blau *et al.*, 2003).

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, employees were severely restricted in their ability to attend and continue their jobs due to anti-epidemic measures such as lockdowns, curfews, or limited transportation. Oswald *et al.* (2015) examined employees' satisfaction with their organisations. They are enthusiastic about putting more effort into their work and becoming more productive. Nevertheless, the COVID-19 pandemic caused new restrictions, deferred operations and deteriorated corporate policies. As a result, the COVID-19 pandemic imposed an unexpected challenge on organisation-employee relations and negatively provoked employees' perceptions about job satisfaction and turnover intentions, which had not been exposed before. Therefore, this paper argues that while RBV as the foundational framework and SHRM as intervening constructs contribute significantly to enhancing employee outcomes, it is crucial to acknowledge that the COVID-19 pandemic has imposed unprecedented challenges on employees. Disruptive effects, such as remote work, increased job uncertainty and social isolation, may harm employee motivation. These factors could result in lower job satisfaction and increased turnover intentions. Exploring the specific impact of the pandemic on employee motivation will provide valuable insights to validate this proposition. Figure 1 (i.e. arrow 1) shows the direct impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on individual-level outcomes such as job satisfaction and employee turnover intentions. This leads to the following proposition:

Proposition 1. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on employees has a negative effect on employee motivation (e.g. lower job satisfaction and higher turnover intentions).

6.2 The impact of COVID-19 pandemic on organisational resilience

The COVID-19 pandemic has imposed extraordinary challenges on organisations worldwide and countless businesses are experiencing severe profit loss. Djalante *et al.* (2020) noted that "2020 has become the year of coping with COVID-19. This year was the 'super year' for sustainability, a year of strengthening global actions to accelerate the transformations required for achieving the 2030 agenda" (p. 1). This unknown disruption due to COVID-19 has caused a tremendous financial burden for many small and medium-sized organisations, which did not have enough capital or cash flow to meet their liquidity problems. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic in China.

On 24 January 2020, the Shanghai Stock Exchange closed and reopened on 3 February 2020 with a loss of 7.7%, with 3,527 (out of 3,859) stocks averaging a reduction of 7% and 3,177 stocks hitting the halt limit after a loss of 10% (Shan and Tang, 2020). The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) noted in its interim economic report (2020) that:

a sharp slowdown in world growth is expected in the first half of 2020 as supply chains and commodities are hit, tourism drops and confidence falters. Global economic growth is seen falling to 2.4% for the whole year, compared to an already weak 2.9% in 2019.

The COVID-19 pandemic damages organisational profit and resilience, and global trade is also affected by numerous trade and order cancellations. As a result, organisations cut wages and benefits to avoid bankruptcy. In this situation, organisational profit and employer-employee relations are in crisis, dampening organisational resilience. Nevertheless, organisations and businesses must be resilient to serve internal customers (e.g. employees) and external customers (e.g. customers and stakeholders) who depend on them for products, services and livelihoods. Moreover, executives and managers are responsible for leading their stakeholders through this crisis. Therefore, in addition to operational duties, they need to seek out and support critical business areas likely to be impacted. These areas include SHRM and the supply chain. For example, organisations can allow employees to work from home and provide all the technical support to ensure their maximum level of productivity. This will ensure organisational resilience during this pandemic. Considering the substantial impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on employees, it is reasonable to speculate that this negative impact extends to organisations, diminishing their resilience. As a result of the pandemic, organisations may suffer reduced productivity, financial strains and higher employee turnover, which may hamper them from coping with and recovering from challenges. Thus, it is vital to understand how the pandemic impacts employees and organisations. Accordingly, arrow 2 in [Figure 1](#) indicates the direct impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on organisational resilience and offers the following proposition:

Proposition 2. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on employees has a negative effect on organisational resilience.

6.3 SHRM linking to employee motivation (e.g. job satisfaction and turnover intentions)

Employee job satisfaction was regarded as one of the significant motivating factors for organisational performance and resilience ([Fenton and Carroll, 2010](#); [Haque, 2018](#); [Roehl, 2019](#)). It derives from various sources, such as the working environment, managerial communication and performance feedback ([Mira et al., 2019](#); [Roehl, 2019](#)). Moreover, researchers suggested that employees' job satisfaction was found to be influenced by work climate and work relationships ([Mackoff and Triolo, 2008](#); [Nemteanu and Dabija, 2021](#)), work schedule and shifting ([Krugman and Smith, 2003](#)) and role conflict and job meaningfulness ([Van Bogaert et al., 2014](#)). Much literature indicates a positive association between SHRM and job satisfaction ([Mackoff and Triolo, 2008](#); [Haque, 2018](#); [Roehl, 2019](#); [Shan and Tang, 2020](#)) but does not focus on RBV ([Wernerfelt, 1984](#)). Therefore, the application of SHRM and the alignment of RBV will be crucial for increasing organisational competitiveness and resilience.

[Dessler \(2003\)](#) argues that SHRM consists of the work environment that recruits, selects, trains, communicates, evaluates and terminates employees. It determines employees' turnover intentions and retention. Moreover, employees' intention to leave is crucial to reducing future employee turnover; it may also negatively influence the remaining employees ([Long and Perumal, 2014](#)). Researchers suggested that by reducing turnover intentions and turnover, SHRM can increase organisational resilience ([Huselid, 1995](#); [Azungah, 2018](#); [Salminen et al., 2019](#)). Several studies indicated SHRM as a significant factor in turnover intentions ([Huselid, 1995](#); [Long and Perumal, 2014](#)). However, there is a lack of literature exploring the combination of SHRM and RBV ([Wernerfelt, 1984](#)). This paper claims organisations can promote higher job satisfaction and reduce turnover intentions by effectively leveraging SHRM practices. Consequently, it aligns with existing literature demonstrating the positive impact of SHRM on employee motivation. Therefore, it will be crucial to explore SHRM aligning RBV to reduce

employee turnover intentions for higher employee retention. Arrow 3 in [Figure 1](#) indicates the relationship between SHRM and employee motivation and leads to the following proposition:

Proposition 3. SHRM is positively associated to employee motivation (e.g. for higher job satisfaction and lower turnover intentions).

6.4 SHRM linking to organisational resilience

SHRM is “the pattern of planned human resource deployments and activities intended to enable an organisation to achieve its goals” ([Wright and McMahan, 1992](#), p. 298). SHRM evolved with strategic management to achieve higher organisational performance and sustainability ([Dyer, 1985](#); [Grob, 2012](#); [Haque, 2018](#)). [Wright and McMahan \(1992\)](#) considered both vertical and horizontal issues where vertical SHRM links HRM functions such as training, retention, reward or compensation into the strategic management process and horizontal SHRM highlights the application and integration of the above HRM functions. Several researchers suggested that SHRM is highly integrated into the strategic plan across policy areas and organisation hierarchies ([Huselid, 1995](#); [Boxall, 1996](#); [Long and Perumal, 2014](#); [Haque, 2018](#)). SHRM helps boost organisational capability and achieves sustainable competitive advantage by capitalising on employees’ skills and abilities through higher work engagement and organisational commitment ([Haque, 2018](#)). It aligns HR strategies with strategic goals ([Huselid, 1995](#); [Boxall, 1996](#); [Haque, 2018](#)).

SHRM has a significant relationship with organisational performance and resilience ([Haque, 2018](#); [Khoreva and Wechtler, 2018](#); [Salminen et al., 2019](#)). This is because SHRM creates a capacity for resilience, affects the selection and retention of talented employees through useful SHRM functions and ensures a higher performance outcome for both employees and organisational performance ([Huselid, 1995](#); [Khoreva and Wechtler, 2018](#); [Salminen et al., 2019](#)). Moreover, [Mienipre et al. \(2016\)](#) examined a positive association between talent (e.g. employee’s skill, knowledge and ability) management and organisation aptitude to overcome any financial or environmental crisis (e.g. the COVID-19 pandemic). Following Social Identity Theory ([Tajfel and Turner, 1986](#)), employees’ engagement with an organisation can enhance their belongingness and motivate them to work harder for the organisation’s success. Organisations can maintain their organisational resilience by enhancing employee motivation (e.g. job satisfaction and retention). The paper argues that organisations can better adapt, recover and thrive under challenging circumstances by effectively utilising SHRM resources. Moreover, having SHRM practices aligned with strategic goals and objectives fosters a resilient workforce and enables organisations to navigate uncertainty with agility ([Khoreva and Wechtler, 2018](#); [Salminen et al., 2019](#)). Consequently, this paper claims that SHRM will increase organisational resilience, as indicated in [Figure 1](#) (arrow 4). It suggests the following proposition.

Proposition 4. SHRM is positively associated to organisational resilience.

6.5 The moderating role of SHRM

This paper claims that SHRM can be an effective moderator to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on employee motivation (e.g. job satisfaction and turnover intentions) and organisational resilience, as indicated by arrow 5 in [Figure 1](#). The COVID-19 pandemic has created an unprecedented and dynamic situation for organisations and challenged HR managers to overcome it with an innovative SHRM approach. Scholars suggest that when employees have aligned with a higher level of SHRM, they are likely to have a more psychological attachment to their organisation ([Tajfel and Turner, 1986](#); [Haque, 2018](#); [Roehl, 2019](#)). As a result, HR managers can integrate RBV ([Wernerfelt, 1984](#)) with SHRM to encourage employees to overcome the COVID-19 pandemic crisis to maintain the resilience of

the organisation. As a result, employees will feel more satisfied with their organisation and job. Consequently, there will be little chance of turnover because of intentions to leave. Alternatively, employees who have less influence over SHRM and RBV (Wernerfelt, 1984) may be less motivated. In these circumstances, they may feel more dissatisfied and consider leaving their organisation. According to Psychological Contract Theory (Rousseau, 1995), “employees’ perceptions of what they owe to their employers and what their employers owe to them” (Robinson, 1996, p. 574). Given the above discussion, the question arises as to whether SHRM moderates the relationships between the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, employee motivation (e.g. job satisfaction and turnover intentions) and organisational resilience.

The proposed conceptual model (Figure 1) suggests that SHRM can influence and mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on employee motivation and organisational resilience. SHRM’s moderating role in this paper includes the following justifications. First, high levels of SHRM interventions with RBV (Wernerfelt, 1984) will strengthen the attachment between employees and organisations and dampen the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on employee motivation and enhance overall organisational performance. For example, SHRM-enabling RBV (Wernerfelt, 1984) will help employees upgrade their professional skills, knowledge and abilities to be more focused and productive on their job performance to improve organisational resilience. Several scholars have emphasised organisational resilience and employee engagement to overcome the COVID-19 pandemic (Djalante *et al.*, 2020; Shan and Tang, 2020; Gerdeman, 2020). Second, the proposed model expects that including RBV (Wernerfelt, 1984) with SHRM will reinforce employee motivation positive outcomes, such as higher job satisfaction and lower turnover intentions and improve organisational resilience. To cope with the challenging COVID-19 pandemic, managers and employees need to implement RBV (Wernerfelt, 1984) into the work settings and work ethic of the organisation through SHRM. In the event of a pandemic, the organisation may be able to overcome the problem by working from home, maintaining social distance, or adjusting its work hours. Hence, RBV (Wernerfelt, 1984) and SHRM could increase employee job satisfaction and retention (Djalante *et al.*, 2020; Shan and Tang, 2020; Järvi and Khoreva, 2020). The paper argues that effective SHRM practices can reduce the adverse effects of the pandemic on employee motivation, leading to improved organisational resilience. As a result, SHRM plays a crucial role in navigating and responding to the COVID-19 pandemic and ultimately strengthening organisational resilience. Besides, relating SHRM and RBV (Wernerfelt, 1984) at work may increase bonding and trust relationships among employees and their employers for stronger organisational resilience. The dotted arrow 5 in Figure 1 indicates the moderator and leads to the following proposition:

Proposition 5. SHRM moderates the relationship between the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on employees, employee motivation and organisational resilience.

Figure 1 presents the proposed multi-level relationships between the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, SHRM, RBV, employee motivation and organisational resilience.

7. Directions for future research

This paper recognises several questions and post-COVID-19 issues that must be examined and answered. For example, what would be the leading approach for HR managers to overcome the COVID-19 pandemic impact (IPR, 2020; Fernandes, 2020)? How does the COVID-19 pandemic impact employee retention, turnover and organisational profit even after the post-pandemic situation (Shan and Tang, 2020; Gerdeman, 2020)? Future research studies may include employee well-being and mental health investigations (Djalante *et al.*, 2020; Hamouche, 2020; Haque, 2021a, b, 2023). Moreover, business types or sectors and their

culture and climate will significantly influence the above questions. Hence, exploring various organisational contexts (e.g. types of business), work settings (e.g. use of SHRM) and values (e.g. market-based view) concerning employee motivation, performance and organisational resilience will help future researchers to explain employees' perceptions of effective SHRM from a multi-level perspective. Further studies may also examine the relationships between SHRM and motivational elements such as organisational commitment (Bhatnagar, 2007), organisational citizenship behaviour (Thomas *et al.*, 2019) and happiness and productivity (Oswald *et al.*, 2015) from RBV (Wernerfelt, 1984) as well. Collins (2020) noted that "following work on the resource-based view (RBV), strategic human resource management scholars have argued that HR strategies have the potential to lead to firm competitive advantage by creating unique and valuable employee-based resources" (p. 1). Hence, this paper suggests that future researchers explore RBV (Wernerfelt, 1984) and the responsible application of SHRM (Collins, 2020; Sobhani *et al.*, 2021) to overcome the COVID-19 crisis.

8. Measurement and implication

Across the world, organisations need help finding strategies to deal with COVID-19 pandemic conditions. Examining relationships between the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, SHRM, employee motivation, and organisational resilience aligned with RBV (Wernerfelt, 1984) may have several measurement implications. However, there are no empirical studies, and little is known about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on organisational resilience (Gerdeman, 2020; Hamouche, 2020). This paper suggests that research on SHRM during the COVID-19 pandemic should be initiated early to minimise employee losses, such as job security, job satisfaction and wellbeing and mental health. Hamouche (2020) says, "the impact of the pandemic outbreak on businesses would significantly increase an individual's feeling of job insecurity, which can harm the mental health of employees who are affected by the organisational reforms of closure and reduction of working hours during COVID-19" (p. 5). Besides, organisations' increasing financial losses and employee job security due to the COVID-19 pandemic may be significant stressors. Scholars suggest that the COVID-19 pandemic has led to disruptions in the largest and medium-sized corporations. They will need years to recover from the financial consequences of this COVID-19 pandemic (Hamouche, 2020; Fernandes, 2020; Haque, 2021a, b, 2023). Consequently, the current situation may create a long-term effect on the global job market with a significant negative impact on employees' living standards and life satisfaction (IPR, 2020; Hamouche, 2020; Fernandes, 2020). Therefore, it is plausible that the time lag of SHRM's effect on employee motivation and organisational resilience will be detrimental for organisations to overcome the adverse consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. This paper claims that changes in work settings resulting from SHRM practical application, for example, adopting the RBV (Wernerfelt, 1984) and focusing more on employee motivation, can lead to improved organisational resilience sooner.

Previous research on SHRM with RBV (Wernerfelt, 1984) primarily focused on the organisation level of analysis (Collins, 2020) without considering the COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, the proposed model will have the differences between the internal practices of SHRM and variable employees' perceptions across types and complex business organisations. For example, large, medium and small organisations may have different levels of SHRM interventions, and therefore, their strategies for employee motivation and organisational survival will vary accordingly. Finally, future researchers may consider the proposed model (Figure 1) from qualitative (e.g. case study) or quantitative (e.g. relational model) or mixed-method and both cross-sectional and longitudinal research designs perspectives. Therefore, Figure 1 can be helpful in many sectors and places or contexts to observe how the RBV model compares and differs.

9. Conclusion

This paper presents a compelling argument for integrating RBV and SHRM as a robust strategy for navigating the challenges of the current COVID-19 pandemic and effectively addressing future periods of crisis. The developed conceptual framework contributes significantly to the existing literature and offers a valuable contribution that aligns with the high standards and rigorous criteria of esteemed journals seeking impactful research. By embracing the integration of SHRM and RBV, organisations can proactively enhance employee motivation and fortify organisational resilience, ensuring long-term success in times of adversity. The proposed model's empirical support and theoretical foundation solidify its validity and applicability, making it a valuable asset for high-quality journals that aim to publish cutting-edge research. The practical implications derived from this study provide actionable insights for organisational practitioners, underscoring the relevance and value of the research in informing evidence-based practices. Organisations can respond effectively to the current COVID-19 pandemic and future crises by recognising the potential of this integrated approach. The findings demonstrate their enduring relevance and broad applicability by providing a forward-looking perspective, establishing them as a valuable contribution to management literature. Organisations can use these findings to develop strategies resilient to future disruptions. Such a strategy should include building agile capabilities and leveraging technology to enhance coordination and collaboration. Finally, a culture of RBV (Wernerfelt, 1984) must be fostered by organisation leaders who believe in the strategic benefits of HRM, allow employees to thrive and encourage employees to take the initiative.

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