



PRIMARY RESEARCH

The influence of ant fragility and cross-cultural adaptability on employee engagement: The moderated mediation role of perceived insider status

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Abstract

The purpose of the study was to examine the influence of antifragility and cross-cultural adaptability on employee engagement, directly and in the moderated mediation role of perceived insider status. A self-designed questionnaire was utilized to collect data from 207 employees from Land Record Department, Punjab, Pakistan. The collected data was analysed through confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modelling technique by utilizing AMOS as well as the moderating effects were evaluated through using Process Macro. Findings revealed that antifragility and cross-cultural adaptability has positive direct as well as indirect effect on employee engagement. Also, the moderating role of perceived organizational support is proved. This study has both theoretical and practical contributions, especially with reference to new model in Land Record Department of Punjab, Pakistan. This study will be valuable for Government of Punjab as well as other provincial Government for proper management of employees at Tehsil Land Records Centre level moreover its helpful for policy makers and administrator to appropriately deal with employees' engagement and perceived insider status in consideration of antifragility and cross cultural adaptability. These findings cannot be generalized as study is conducted in Land Record Department of Punjab, Pakistan. Organizations can improve the level of employees' engagement by focusing on antifragility, cultural adaptability, and perceived insider status at tehsil level.

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INTRODUCTION

Background

Engaging employees with their job and organization has a paramount significance to retain valuable talent in the organization (Baghdadi, Farghaly Abd-EL Aliem, & Alsayed, 2021). Committed and engaged employees play a greater role in the overall performance of an organization (Ayebare, 2021). While it also leads to increase the productivity, creativity, satisfaction, and organizational citizenship behavior (Ginsburg et al., 2016; Lavy & Littman-Ovadia, 2017; Meynhardt, Brieger, & Hermann, 2020). Therefore, researchers have extensively explored the importance as well as its significance for the organizations. Nowadays directly or indirectly employees' engagement helps organizations to achieve competitive advantage (Eldor, 2020; Lockwood, 2007). Therefore, leaders and managers try to enhance the

engagement and commitment level of their employees. Primarily, the biggest hurdle in the way of employees' engagement is stress management, which not only reduces employees' productivity but overall decreases the organizational performance (Agarwal, Mosquera, Ring, & Victorson, 2020; Bilog, 2017; Hetzel-Riggin, Swords, Tuang, Deck, & Spurgeon, 2020).

Wood, Oh, Park, and Kim (2020) have connected the stress with work-life balance and noted that employees are more stressed due to lack of balance amid work and personal life, which reduces the engagement and commitment of employees. Therefore, the recovery from stress is termed as resilience. Previous scholars have noted that resilience is the ability of individuals to quickly recover from stress, disappointment or crisis (Yörük & Güler, 2021). However, resilience only describes the recovery of employees from cri-

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sis or their vulnerable situation, while challenges and problems improve the knowledge, ability, and skills to deal with such challenges. As there was no close word to describe a situation where employees not only recover from crisis but improve themselves, Taleb (2012) coined a term, “antifragility” which he meant to those things that gain from disorder. It means antifragile employees improve their competence, knowledge, skills and abilities after every situation of shock, crisis, stress, burnout or disappointment (Aven, 2015; Ray, 2019). Froiland and Oros (2014) asserted that competent individuals are comparatively more engaged and committed. Therefore, antifragile employees work with more commitment and engagement, which can lead to better performance of the organization.

Apart from above, the second important hurdle in the way of employees’ engagement is their ability to adjust in the changed environment. Rana, Mushtaq, and Bhasin (2017) asserted that individuals face different challenges like language barrier, financial, and cultural adjustment problems. While Kai Liao, Wu, Dao, and Ngoc Luu (2021) stated that these challenges lead to stress, disappointment, burnout as well as turnover in the organization. As cultural adaptability also lead to stress, thus, employees’ engagement with their work and organization decreases (van Mol, Nijkamp, Bakker, Schaufeli, & Kompanje, 2018). Therefore, cultural adaptability is also a critical predictor of employees’ engagement.

In addition, better performance, commitment, and engagement need acknowledgement, appreciation, and importance. This appreciation and value in the organization makes employees feel that they are insider, instead of outsider. This feeling helps them increase their loyalty, engagement and commitment with the organization; thus, they put extra efforts to achieve organizational goals as being an insider (Guo, Qiu, & Gan, 2020). Such employees believe that it is their obligation and ethical duty to put their efforts to achieve organizational goals (Caron, Asselin, Beaudoin, & Muresanu, 2019). Thus, perceived insider status is also important regarding increasing work engagement. Moreover, if employees feel that their organization is supporting them through creating flexible environment, supervisor help, rewards, and appreciation, they work with more commitment and engagement (Gordon et al., 2020; Imran, Elahi, Abid, Ashfaq, & Ilyas, 2020; Reza, Rusidah, & Forasidah, 2017). Thus, there are different important factors which are not yet explored along with their relationship to employees’ engagement.

Problem Statement

Many researchers have found that the performance of public sector organizations in Pakistan is not as high as the performance of private sector organizations; however, public sector is continuously making progress (Al-Matari & Bin Omira, 2017; Chaudhry, Sabir, Rafi, & Kalyar, 2011; Iqbal, 2017; Raja, 2012). For this purpose, many researchers have highlighted the vital significance of employees’ engagement to increase this overall performance (Ahmed, Khalid, Ammar, & Shah, 2017; Arfat, Mehmood, Rehman, & Saleem, 2017; Imran et al., 2020). Although public sector is paying much attention to enhance employees’ engagement in developing countries; however, the level of employees’ engagement in private sector is comparatively high (Malik, Khan, Mahmood, & Ilyas, 2020). Previous scholars have primarily noted that public sector comparatively pays less attention to increase employees’ engagement due to financial stability and governmental support, especially in Pakistan (Malik et al., 2020; Memon, Shah, & Khoso, 2020; Sarmad, Ahmad, Khan, Irfan, & Atta, 2020). Similarly, Borst, Kruyen, Lako, and de Vries (2020) conducted a meta-analysis comprised upon 130 studies, which were carried out in both developed as well as developing countries. Authors compared the work engagement in private, semi-private and public sector. They found that the work engagement of employees in private sector is comparatively high, followed by semi-private and then the employees in public sector both in developed and developing countries. However, in developed countries, the public sector employees have high work engagement as compared to the employees of public sector in developing countries. However, now public sector organizations are also focusing on increasing work engagement in order to retain their valuable talent as the engaged and committed employees are more productive, creative and loyal with the organization, who in turn lead to the enhancement of overall performance of the organization (Memon et al., 2020; Sarmad et al., 2020).

Shah, Shah, Ullah, and Yasir (2021) noted that public sector of Pakistan is also focusing on enhancing employees’ engagement to increase their overall work performance. This changing is primarily occurring due to governmental preferences of changing government institutions into semi-government to increase their performance. Therefore, these institutions are enhancing their employees’ productivity and performance. Although already many predictors of work engagement are highlighted in the literature; however, there is little evidence regarding the relationship of cross-cultural adaptability and perceived insider status

with employee engagement. While the relationship of anti fragility with employee engagement has not studied before. Thus, based on these important factors, this study is aimed at evaluating the direct influence of antifragility and cross-cultural adaptability on work engagement, as well as indirect effect through the mediation role of perceived insider status. Also, it examines the moderating effects of perceived organizational support on the relationship of independent variables (antifragility and cross-cultural adaptability) and dependent variable (employee engagement).

Research Gap

As governmental institutions are paying attention to increase employees' engagement, they need to focus on factors which are directly or indirectly influential over employees' work engagement. Previous authors have extensively highlighted such factors; however, there is still need more evidence regarding multiple factors which are not much focused. For instance, employees with different background, language, culture or values come together to work in an institution; therefore, in order to adjust in new environment; they face certain challenges. In other words, cross cultural adaptability is a big challenge, which not only influential over employees' engagement but also equally effective over their overall performance. [Gabel-Shemueli, Westman, Chen, and Bahamonde \(2019\)](#) asserted that employees with high level of cultural intelligence and adaptability are more engaged and committed as they can easily adjust in the new environment; thus, they comparatively face less psychological and economic challenges while adjusting in the new environment.

Apart from above, the relationship of antifragility has been not evaluated in any study before. However, resilience as the close word of antifragility has been examined along with employees' engagement. [Meintjes and Hofmeyr \(2018\)](#) noted that the ability of employees to quickly recover from stress is the leading predictor of work engagement. If resilience is positively related to work engagement, then the advance form of resilience, which is antifragility (when employees not only recover from stress or crisis but also improve their skills and abilities) will have stronger role in the enhancement of employees' engagement. Similarly, those persons who consider them to be an insider; they put their extra efforts to get their job done ([Guo et al., 2020](#)).

Research Objectives

Based on the research gap and problem statement, following research objectives are developed.

- To evaluate the direct and indirect influence of antifragility

on employee engagement.

- To examine the direct and indirect impact of cross-cultural adaptability on employee engagement.
- Evaluating the mediation role of perceived insider status between antifragility, cross cultural adaptability (independent variables) and employee engagement (dependent variable).
- Analysing the moderating effects of perceived organizational support on the relationship of antifragility and perceived insider status.
- Examining the moderating role of perceived organizational support on the relationship of cross-cultural adaptability and perceived insider status.

Significance

This study will provide both theoretical and methodological contribution. As previous researchers have not evaluated the impact of antifragility and cross-cultural adaptability on employees' engagement in the mediation role of perceived insider status, while in the moderating role of perceived organizational support. Thus, this research will be beneficial for policy makers in different public sector institutions to increase work engagement of their employees through managing their cross-cultural adaptability as well as through making them anti-fragile. Also, it will be valuable for policy makers and managers to increase the employees' perception regarding their insider status in the organizations. While this study will also provide theoretical contribution for the researchers and students.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Antifragility and Employee Engagement

Many scholars have asserted that disruptions and fluctuations negatively affect the organization as well as employees' performance ([Parast & Shekarian, 2019](#); [Tucker & Edmondson, 2003](#)), however, [Tucker and Edmondson \(2003\)](#) noted that some systems and things are improved and benefitted due to disruptions, challenges, risks and crisis, which he named 'antifragility'. For instance, body muscles grow after an individual damage their fibres through weightlifting. Many other researchers have examined that owing to facing certain challenges, risks or crisis, the abilities and skills of individuals increase ([Baik & Greig, 2009](#); [Goswami & Jha, 2012](#); [Ramezani & Camarinha-Matos, 2020](#); [Ruiz-Martin, López-Paredes, & Wainer, 2018](#)). On the other hand, employee engagement is characterised as the quality of individuals to put their best effort to achieve their goals, and committedly performing their job on daily basis ([Macey & Schneider, 2008](#)). Although researchers have identified

many predictors of employee engagement like perceived organizational support, motivation, appreciation, organizational justice, job clarity, career development, and many others (Albrech, 2011; Anitha, 2014; Saks, 2006, 2019; Sun & Bunchapattanasakda, 2019); however, there is still lack of evidence regarding the connection between antifragility and engagement.

Organizations deliberately create challenging environment, especially the businesses where innovation, creativity and competence are the main requirements. Owing to dealing with new challenges on regular basis, employees' skills and abilities improved, and they learn how to deal with uncertainty (Meswantri & Ilyas, 2018). These improvements in skills and abilities can lead individuals to perform their duties with more commitment, engagement and enthusiasm. Monica and Krishnaveni (2018) asserted that competence and improved skills are amongst the importance enablers of employee engagement. Similarly, Markey-Towler (2018) noted that antifragile employees can better deal with stress and uncertain events. They further noted that such employees work more enthusiastically as compared to those who do not face any challenges, risk or uncertainty.

Many previous authors have evaluated that resilience, which is the ability of an individual to quickly recover from stress, problem or crisis, is the strong predictor of employees' engagement (Cooke, Cooper, Bartram, Wang, & Mei, 2019; Moon, Park, & Jung, 2013). In case of resilience, employees only recover from difficulty; however, in case of antifragility, employees get benefit in the form of improvement of skills and abilities (Ramezani & Camarinha-Matos, 2020). Thus, if resilience has strong relationship with employees' engagement, the similar and advance term, which is antifragility, also proposed to have strong positive relationship with employee engagement. Thus, following hypothesis is proposed.

H1: Antifragility has significant and positive influence on employee engagement.

Cross Cultural Adaptability and Employee Engagement

Cross cultural adaptation theory states that individuals struggle to adjust in the new and adversarial environment (Kim, 2017; Rodriguez, Baumann, & Schwartz, 2011). Primarily, the psychological challenge is considered the biggest challenge while adjusting in the new environment. As humans are considered the social animals, who always want to live with other humans (Grunbaum & Okubo, 1994); therefore, individuals in new environment face social challenges, particularly when there is no family member, friend or relative in the new environment. Similarly, another common

challenge is lack of sufficient finance, which is also problematic when the new environment has only strangers (Castro, Barrera Jr, & Holleran Steiker, 2010; Tremblay et al., 2020). Therefore, in the presence of these challenges, employees often bear stress, disappointment and often result in developing intention to leave the organization. While certain other outcomes also result due to increasing stress, as Eldor (2020) found that stressed employees cannot work with commitment and engagement.

Apart from above, Simon and Amarakoon (2015) asserted that increasing stress, disappointment and burnout reduce the engagement of employees in addition to decreasing their productivity. It means cross cultural adaptation creates certain challenges which, if not dealt properly and timely, result in lack of engagement, commitment, and organizational citizenship behavior (Alghamdi et al., 2021; Bodycott, Mak, & Ramburuth, 2014; Kim, 2017). On the contrary, Cross Cultural Adaptability (CCA) is the ability of an individual to adopt feasible choices in order to adjust in the new environment (Lim & Park, 2013). This ability helps individuals to deal with challenges, issues and problems; thus, lead to retain their engagement level (Elphinstone, Whitehead, Tinker, & Bates, 2019; Hicks & Knies, 2015; Holliman, Martin, & Collie, 2018; Kim, 2017). Although the researchers have evaluated the relationship between cultural adaptability and engagement; however, mostly this relationship is studied with reference to international students. There is still lack of sufficient evidence regarding the application of this relationship in the context of employees in different organizations.

Holliman et al. (2018) found that the ability of an individual to cope with change and adapt in the new environment, enables him/her work with full commitment and engagement. Similarly, Ahmed et al. (2017) asserted that adaptability of change is an important predictor of engagement. In addition, Bodycott et al. (2014) conducted a similar study on international student and found that students' ability to cope with challenges which arise from cultural change, can lead them to high level of engagement in the current cultural, their roles and education. Therefore, based on above discussion, following hypothesis is proposed.

H2: Cross cultural adaptability has significant and positive impact on employee engagement.

Antifragility and Perceived Insider Status (PIS)

Another name for PIS is insider identity recognition, where the extent individuals perceive them to be an insider member of the organization, rather than outsider (Choi et al., 2018). Hui, Lee, and Wang (2015) asserted that employees

with high level of PIS, consider them to be an important part of the organization's family; therefore, put their best efforts to achieve organizational goals. In addition, such employees consider organizational problems as their own problems; thus, work enthusiastically to help organization to get out of such issues (Guerrero, Sylvestre, & Muresanu, 2013; Wang, Chu, & Ni, 2010). Furthermore, social identity theory explains the importance of PIS for an organization as it states that employees have positive attitudes and behaviour towards an organization which highlights their self-identity within an organization (Hogg, 2020).

Nowadays organizations are focusing on making them antifragile, for which they often creates a challenging workplace, where competition, knowledge sharing, support, creativity, innovation, and engagement are the main targets, in addition to dealing with uncertain and challenging goals, for an organization (Zwieback, 2014). In order to create these behaviours among employees, organizations support them, make strategic plans for their motivation, focuses on their appreciation, and offering certain rewards in return of high level of engagement, creativity, and motivation to deal with uncertainty (Jaaron & Backhouse, 2014). Ramezani and Camarinha-Matos (2020) stated that antifragile organizations appreciate individuals' efforts, their contribution and successes, which help individuals to believe that they are the important part of the organization. Similarly, Ramezani and Camarinha-Matos (2020) organizations give value and importance to its employees as they are considered the valuable assets, who are the real reasons behind the success of an organization.

According to leader member exchange theory, the relationship amid leader and followers is based two-way approach, where one party fulfils its obligations in exchange of expecting something in return. For instance, leader supports employees to get their productivity, high level of creativity, innovation, and good performance (Erdogan, Kraimer, & Liden, 2004). Contrarily, employees fulfil their duties and give good performance in return of good rewards, which not include financial (like salary and bonuses) but also non-financial rewards like appreciation of employees' efforts. Therefore, in consideration of fulfilling the duties of organization, employees consider them valuable, insider and appreciated; thus, put their high efforts to achieve organizational goal (Wang et al., 2010). Therefore, it is assumed that antifragile organizations increase the perceived insider status of individuals, which means antifragility leads to high level of PIS (Hui et al., 2015). Thus, based on this discussion, following hypothesis is proposed.

H3: Antifragility has positive and significant impact on per-

ceived insider status.

Cross Cultural Adaptability and PIS

Kim (2017) asserted that cultural adaptation theory highlights the challenges and difficulties which individuals often face when moved to a new culture, environment, or place. Primarily, such individuals do not consider them to be an important part of the organization, rather they consider them to be a stranger; thus, face problems to adjust in the changed environment (Caron et al., 2019). Similarly, Cicognani, Sonn, Albanesi, and Zani (2018) asserted that individuals who have not ability to adjust in the new culture, they often face the problem of social exclusion; therefore, lack of social support is the main reason behind individuals' perceptions to be outsider in an organization. Apart from this, if organization does not help such employees, through providing seniors or colleagues' support, lack of perceived insider status enhances, which often lead to create employees' intention to leave the organization.

On the contrary, Zheng, Li, Zhang, and Zhu (2019) noted that employees with high level of cultural intelligence, can adjust easily in the changed environment as well they consider themselves to be part of the new family; thus, put their efforts to build social networking to better adjust in the environment. Similarly, Qi, Smith, and Yeoman (2018) stated that cultural intelligence helps individuals to quickly adjust in the changed environment; therefore, when they adjust in the environment, they perform better to attain organizational goals. Furthermore, it is also significant to note that employees' adaptability skills help them adjust in the new environment, and perform well, which in turn leads to high level of appreciation and appraise from seniors, management, and colleagues. In this case, high appreciation and value leads to develop perception of an insider (Caron et al., 2019). Previous studies have not highlighted direct relationship between CCA and PIS. Therefore, based on above discussion, following hypothesis is proposed.

H4: Cross cultural adaptability has positive and significant impact on perceived insider status.

Perceived Insider Status and Employee Engagement

As it is mentioned above that leader member exchange theory proposes a two-way relationship, where if organization does not fulfil its duty, which may include rewarding them, appreciating, support and motivation, employees do not fulfil their obligations; thus, often they do not work with commitment and engagement. However, if organizations provide every kind of support to individuals, they are more likely to perceive organizational support. In this case,

employees will work with commitment and engagement. [Guo et al. \(2020\)](#) studied the effect of workplace incivility on work engagement in the mediation role of PIS. Authors found a positive relationship between PIS and employees' engagement. They further noted that employees perceive their insider status as an important tool to decide whether to put their efforts in accordance with the goals' attainment of organization or not. Apart from above, [Parast and Shekarian \(2019\)](#) conducted a study to investigate the impact of Perceived insider status on employee engagement, in the mediation role of psychological capital. Author found a positive relationship between PIS and engagement. Author further noted that those employees who consider them to be an insider, they accept the rules & regulations as well as the culture of the organization. Therefore, they align their values and preferences with organizations' values and preferences, which will help them to adopt proactive approach, and generate engagement. Similarly, [Dai and Chen \(2015\)](#) conducted a systematic review of perceived insider status and listed employee engagement as an important outcome of PIS. Therefore, based on these discussed relationships, following hypothesis is developed.

H5: Perceived insider status has positive and significant influence on employee engagement.

Mediation Role of Perceived Insider Status

During working in an organization, employees face certain challenges, which often prove to be the source of stress, disappointment, burnout or even failure ([Agarwal et al., 2020](#)). However, some employees learn from these challenges, which make them capable to deal such uncertain situations in the future. It means the challenges, risks and crisis improve the capabilities, skills, and knowledge of employees, which in other words can be called anti-fragile ([Aven, 2015; Jaaron & Backhouse, 2014](#)). Scholars have extensively explored the effects of improved competence, skills, and knowledge on their performance. As the improvement leads to enhancement of productivity, creativity, innovation or overall performance of employees, their organization acknowledge their abilities due to increasing performance ([Markey-Towler, 2018; Ramezani & Camarinha-Matos, 2020](#)). Owing to appreciation, employees feel valued with the organization, which make them feel as an important part and an insider ([Guo et al., 2020](#)).

In previous sections, it is also evaluated that some scholars have evaluated the impact of perceived insider status on employees' engagement ([Guo et al., 2020](#)). Employees who consider them to be an insider, they accept the rules, principles, and standards of the organization. Apart from

this, they align their own goals with organizational goals, thus, make them more focused and clearer about their goals. Thus, in this case, employees adopt proactive approach and work with full commitment and engagement in order to not only increase their own performance but also enhance the overall organizational performance ([Guo et al., 2020](#)). As antifragility increases the perceived insider status, which in turn leads to increasing employees' engagement, therefore, it is proposed that perceived insider status plays a mediating role in the relationship of antifragility and employees' engagement. Thus, following hypothesis is proposed.

H6: Perceived insider status play a mediation role between antifragility and employee engagement.

Not only at international level but also at national level, there are changes of culture, values, and environment, which can be problematic for employees who move from a different culture ([Al-Matari & Bin Omira, 2017; Bodycott et al., 2014](#)). Owing to changing environment and culture, employees face psychological and financial challenges, which cause stress and even burnout. If employees have low level of cultural intelligence, they cannot easily adjust in the changed environment; thus, they cannot work properly ([Torres, 2010](#)). This stress and burnout not only affect the employees' productivity and creativity but also negatively affect their perceptions regarding organizational support. In this difficult situation, often employees expect that their organization will support both psychologically and financially; therefore, lack of support further increases the stress, which make them feel that they are not an insider, and not being valued by the organization ([Qi et al., 2018](#)).

Contrarily, employees with high level of cultural intelligence can easily adjust in the changed environment, which help them to retain their performance level ([Caron et al., 2019; Cicognani et al., 2018](#)). In addition, despite of changed environment, the continuously good performance is appreciated by the organization, which further enhances the value of employees, and they consider themselves to be an important part of the organization ([Rana et al., 2017](#)). This is the main reason that modern organizations made it compulsory for employees to move from one branch to another brand in order to provide them experience of the changed environment, which make them capable to deal with uncertain environment's challenges. Therefore, the perception of employees regarding an important part and insider of the organization motivates them to work for the betterment of the organization ([Hall, McKyer, Outley, & Ballard, 2014](#)). Therefore, the work with more commitment and engagement. As increasing cultural adaptability leads to high level of perceived insider status, which in turn enhances employees'

engagement; thus, it is assumed that perceived insider status plays an important and significant mediation role between cross cultural adaptability and employees' engagement. Based on these assumptions, following hypothesis is proposed.

H7: Perceived insider status play a mediation role between cross cultural adaptability and employee engagement.

Moderating Role of Perceived Organizational Support

Employees always need support of their organizations because it helps them perform better. This support can be in the form of supervisor's help, flexible environment, issuing bonuses due to high profitability, motivating employees, appreciating their efforts, and considering their participation as important – all these things can be termed as organizational support (Pathak, 2012). As leader member exchange theory states that employees fulfil their duties when they see the fulfilment of duties from organization's side; thus, this two-way process benefits both parties. The importance of organizational support increases when employees face challenges, which put them in the situation of disappointment, stress and failure (Ding & Shen, 2017). Thus, in this situation, organizational support help employees to build their positive perception about organization and make them feel to be an important insider part of the organization. Therefore, in the relationship of antifragility and PIS, perceived organizational support as a moderator enhances their positive relationship.

Similarly, during cross cultural adaptation, as employees with low level of cultural intelligence face severe challenges,

organizational support plays a significant role to manage their challenges and adjust in the new environment. Therefore, this support helps individuals to cope with acculturation, thus, make them feel an insider and an important part of the organization (Brunelli, Estrada, & Celano, 2018). Therefore, it is also assumed that perceived organizational support as a moderator enhances the positive relationship between cross cultural adaptability and perceived insider status. Based on above discussion, following two hypotheses are proposed.

H8: Perceived organizational support plays a moderating role on the relationship of antifragility and perceived insider status.

H9: Perceived organizational support plays a moderating role on the relationship of cross-cultural adaptability and perceived insider status.

Research Framework

As the relationships among variables are discussed in the above sections, based on these relationships, following research model is proposed (see Figure 1). In this model, antifragility and cross-cultural adaptability have influence on perceived insider status and employee engagement. However, perceived insider status is playing a mediation role here. In addition, perceived organizational support is the moderating variable, which is influencing the relationship of antifragility and perceived insider status as well as the relationship of cross-cultural adaptability and perceived insider status.

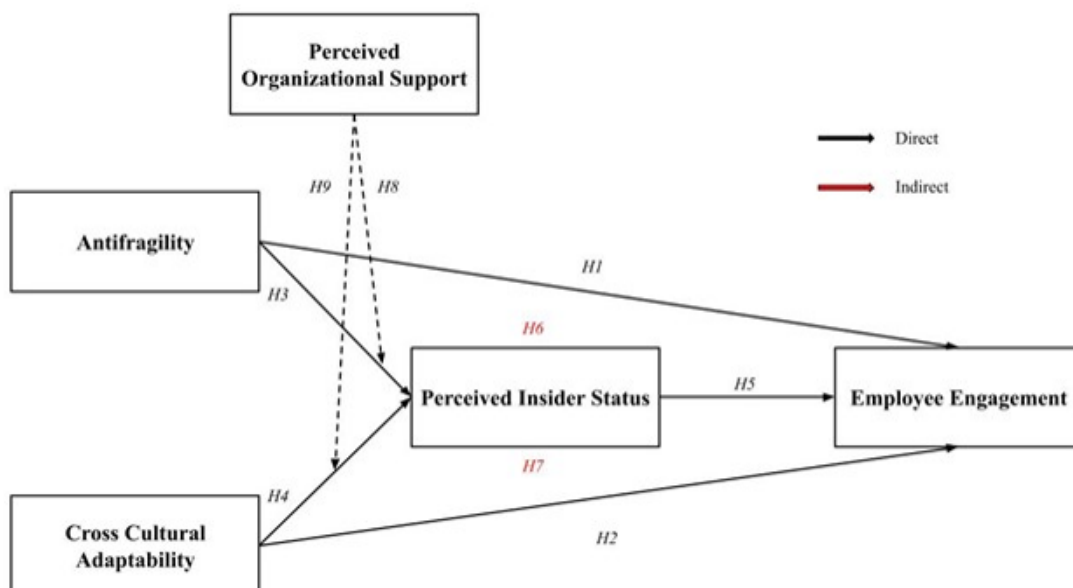


FIGURE 1. Research framework

METHODOLOGY

Population and Samples

Previous scholars have defined population as the sum or total of all the individuals, institutions, organizations, or objects, which are the matter of interest for researcher as well as have the similar characteristics (Adams, Khan, & Raeside, 2014). In this study, the targeted population includes all those employees, who came from cross cultural areas and working in Land Record Management (a department of Punjab Land Records Authority), Pakistan. There are certain reasons behind selecting a government department for this study. Firstly, private organizations support their employees while they are working across different cultures to increase their engagement, perception as an insider or to make them antifragile (Abbasi & Alvi, 2012).

However, government organizations are not much concerned regarding these factors, not only in Pakistan but in all the developing countries (Albdour & Altarawneh, 2012). Besides, previous researchers primarily focused on private

sectors; therefore, there is still room for exploration of current study variables with reference to government sector, especially the land record department.

Owing to lack of information regarding exact number and size of targeted population, researcher has selected convenience sampling technique for data collection. In this technique, researcher selects sampling units in accordance with his/her easiness (Suen, Huang, & Lee, 2014). Current study employed G*Power software for sample size calculation as this software provides accurate sample size as well as it is suggested by previous scholars, especially in social sciences (Cunningham & McCrum-Gardner, 2007). Figure 2 shows that by selecting 15% effect size, 5% probability, 95% confidence interval and 4 predictors, G*Power calculates 129 sample size, which is the minimum requirement for this study. However, scholars suggest that larger sample size represents results which are closer to the population (Castro et al., 2010).

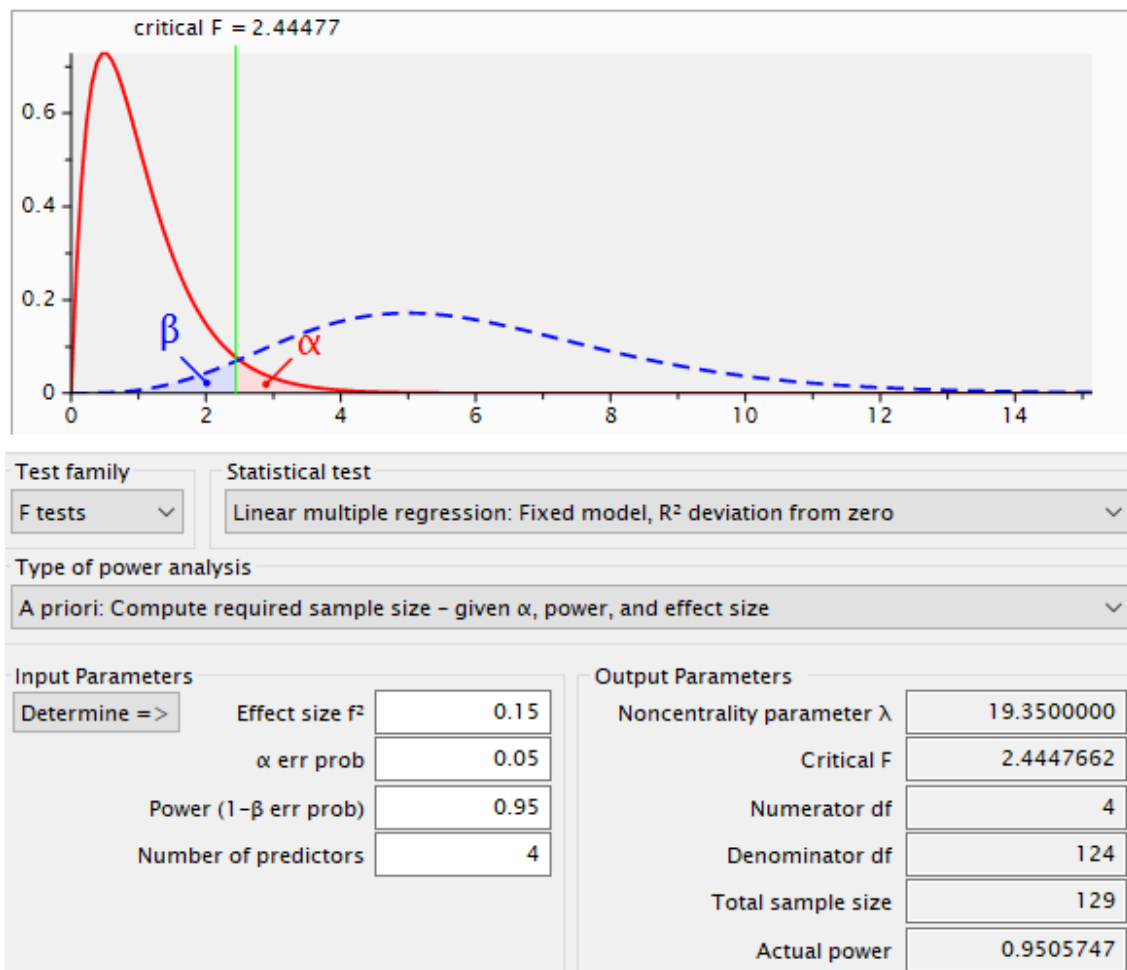


FIGURE 2. G*Power sample size calculation

Instruments

For data collection, this research adopted structured questionnaire, which was based on various scales developed by previous scholars. Antifragility was measured through a 7 items scale developed by [Al-Matari and Bin Omira \(2017\)](#). While cultural adaptability was measured on a 7 items scale adapted from ([Kim, 2017](#)). Perceived insider status was measured through a 6 items scale developed by [Sarmad et al. \(2020\)](#). While employee engagement was measured through a 5 items scale adapted from [Saks \(2006\)](#). Finally, perceived organizational support is measured through 6 items scale adapted from [Albdour and Altarawneh \(2012\)](#). These all scales were measured on a 7-points Likert scale, where 1 is considered to be strongly agree, while 7 is considered as strongly disagree.

Research Design

In this study, researcher adopted a deductive approach, where hypotheses and existing theories are tested, rather than developing a new theory ([Adams et al., 2014](#)). [Zwieback \(2014\)](#) proposed that deductive approach and positivism philosophy are connected and should be adopted while doing a quantitative study. In positivism philosophy, researcher detach himself/herself from collected data – it means researcher does not interfere or manipulate the data ([Zwieback, 2014](#)). Conversely, interpretivism philosophy allows researcher to manipulate the collected data in accordance with the understanding of the researcher. However, [Qi et al. \(2018\)](#) asserted that positivism philosophy is suitable where causal effects are examined. This study is intended to examine the causal effects of antifragility and cultural adaptability on employee engagement in the mediation role of perceived insider status; therefore, positivism philosophy is considered appropriate.

Apart from above, this study has adopted cross sectional time horizon, in which researcher collects data only one time to examine the relationships. Furthermore, this study has used survey strategy to collect data as previous scholars have highlighted the importance of survey strategy to collect large amount of data for quantitative study ([Zwieback, 2014](#)).

Data Collection

Researcher took appointment from management at different centres of land record departments. In accordance with appointments, researcher visited different centres to collect data. In this study, there are three types of employees with respect to their designations, including low, middle and high-level employees. Researcher distributed questionnaire in hard form to every respondent. However, be-

fore distribution, each respondent was asked to participate willingly, without any pressure. Apart from this, a prerequisite information was necessary to ensure that respondents are working in different culture compared to their hometown culture. Moreover, employees with at least 21 years age and intermediate qualification were eligible to participate in this survey. At the beginning, a total of 220 questionnaires were distributed among employees; however, 207 responses were appropriately filled to finally include in the sample.

Analysis

developed hypotheses. This technique was performed in three steps. In first step, path coefficients were calculated, while second step was related to mediation analysis between independent variables (antifragility and cultural adaptability) and dependent variable (employee engagement). However, third step was related to moderation analysis. Path coefficients and mediation analysis was performed through AMOS software; however, moderation analysis was performed through employing Process Macro in SPSS. Apart from this, factor analysis, reliability, validity, correlation, and descriptive statistics were performed through SPSS.

Ethical Considerations

[Borst et al. \(2020\)](#) asserted that ethical considerations have paramount significance as they ensure the moral standards, mutual respect for research scholars, and credibility of the study. For instance, utilizing previous published knowledge without acknowledging or referring the original author is considered unethical ([Anitha, 2014](#)). Therefore, during current research study, no one was physically or emotionally harmed. The knowledge utilized from previous scholars was properly referenced and acknowledged. Participants were ensured that their personal data will be kept confidential. They were asked to voluntarily participate in this study, it means no one was forced or bribed to participate in the survey or provide biased responses.

RESULTS

Demographic Profile

This study included 207 respondents, whose demographic profile is presented in Table 1. Although both males and females participated in the study; however, more than 73% of the participants are comprised upon male respondents. More than 50% of all the respondents belong to the age range of 21-30, while more than 50% are middle level employees of Land Record Department. It is also important to note that more than 40% individuals are graduated while having 1 to 5 years working experience.

TABLE 1. Demographic characteristics

		Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	153	73.9
	Female	54	26.1
	Total	207	100.0
Age	21-30 Years	114	55.1
	31-40	60	29.0
	41-50	25	12.1
	More than 50 Years	8	3.9
	Total	207	100.0
Designation	Lower-level employee	73	35.3
	Middle level employee	111	53.6
	High rank employee	23	11.1
	Total	207	100.0
Qualification	Intermediate	32	15.5
	Graduation	92	44.4
	Master or Above	72	34.8
	Professional Qualification	11	5.3
	Total	207	100.0
Experience	Less than one year	35	16.9
	1-5 year	90	43.5
	6-10 year	68	32.9
	More than 10 years	14	6.8
	Total	207	100.0

Descriptive Statistics

In Tabl 2, the information is presented regarding mean values, Cronbach's alpha and correlation. Mean score of antifragility is 3.1525 (1.077), which shows that employees have moderate level of agreeableness regarding their efforts to achieve antifragility at individual as well as organizational level. Cross cultural adaptability has 3.2377 (1.016) mean score, which indicates that employees have moderate level of capability to deal with cultural adaptability chal-

lenges. Similarly, the mean score of perceived insider status is 3.0599 (1.012), which denotes the moderate level of employees' perception regarding their insider status. While perceived organizational support has 2.9308 (0.99), which indicates that employees have strong perceptions regarding organizational support. Also, mean value 3 (0.967) denotes that employees are moderately engaged with their job, workplace, colleagues and organization.

TABLE 2. Descriptive statistics

	Mean (SD)	Cronbach's Alpha	1	2	3	4	5
(1) Antifragility	3.1525 (1.077)	.869	-				
(2) Cross Cultural Adaptability	3.2377 (1.016)	.833	.487**	-			
(3) Perceived Insider Status	3.0599 (1.012)	.837	.478**	.554**	-		
(4) Perceived Organizational Support	2.9308 (0.990)	.868	.635**	.462**	.365**	-	
(5) Employee Engagement	3.0016 (0.967)	.810	.534**	.519**	.570**	.500**	-

Note: **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Hogg (2020) proposed that the value of Cronbach's alpha is acceptable as low as 0.5; however, generally higher than 0.7 is preferred. Table 2 shows that all the values of Cronbach's alpha are greater than the threshold value; therefore, it proves the internal consistency of the scale. Also, Table 2 highlights that all the variables are positively correlated at 0.01 significance level.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

The reliability, validity and model fitness are confirmed through performing CFA. Table 3 presents factor loadings, which were found to be significant at $p < 0.01$ level. Similar to Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability also proves the

reliability of the scale. The convergent validity was tested through Average Variance Extracted (AVE), which is proved as all the values are higher than 0.5 (Caron et al., 2019). While discriminant validity is measured through Froiland and Oros (2014) proposed method, in which the values of AVE should be higher than the square correlation between any two variables. Table 3 also shows that the values of AVE met these requirements; thus, both convergent and discriminant validity is proved. Apart from this, the multicollinearity is assessed through Variance Inflation Factor (VIF), and the standard values are generally acceptable between 1 to 5 (Torres, 2010), which is also proved.

TABLE 3. CFA

Variables and Items	Factor Loadings	Composite Reliability	AVE	VIF
Antifragility	.876	.503	1.938	
AF1	.65			
AF2	.75			
AF3	.72			
AF4	.76			
AF5	.71			
AF6	.76			
AF7	.60			
Cross Cultural Adaptability	.833	.502	1.661	
CCA1	.68			
CCA2	.81			
CCA3	.77			
CCA4	.68			
CCA5	.58			
Perceived Insider Status	.831	.501	1.572	
PIS1	.55			
PIS2	.60			
PIS3	.80			
PIS4	.81			
PIS5	.74			
Perceived Organizational Support	.864	.515	1.765	
POS1	.67			
POS2	.72			
POS3	.72			
POS4	.70			
POS5	.77			
POS6	.72			
Employee Engagement	.856	.502	1.651	
EE1	.67			
EE2	.68			
EE3	.77			
EE4	.80			
EE5	.78			
EE6	.51			

One of the key reasons of performing CFA is to confirm the model fitness before conducting SEM technique. Therefore, Figure 3 shows the CFA model along with calculated and

standard model fit indices. All the model fit indices are under decided standards; therefore, model is fit for SEM.

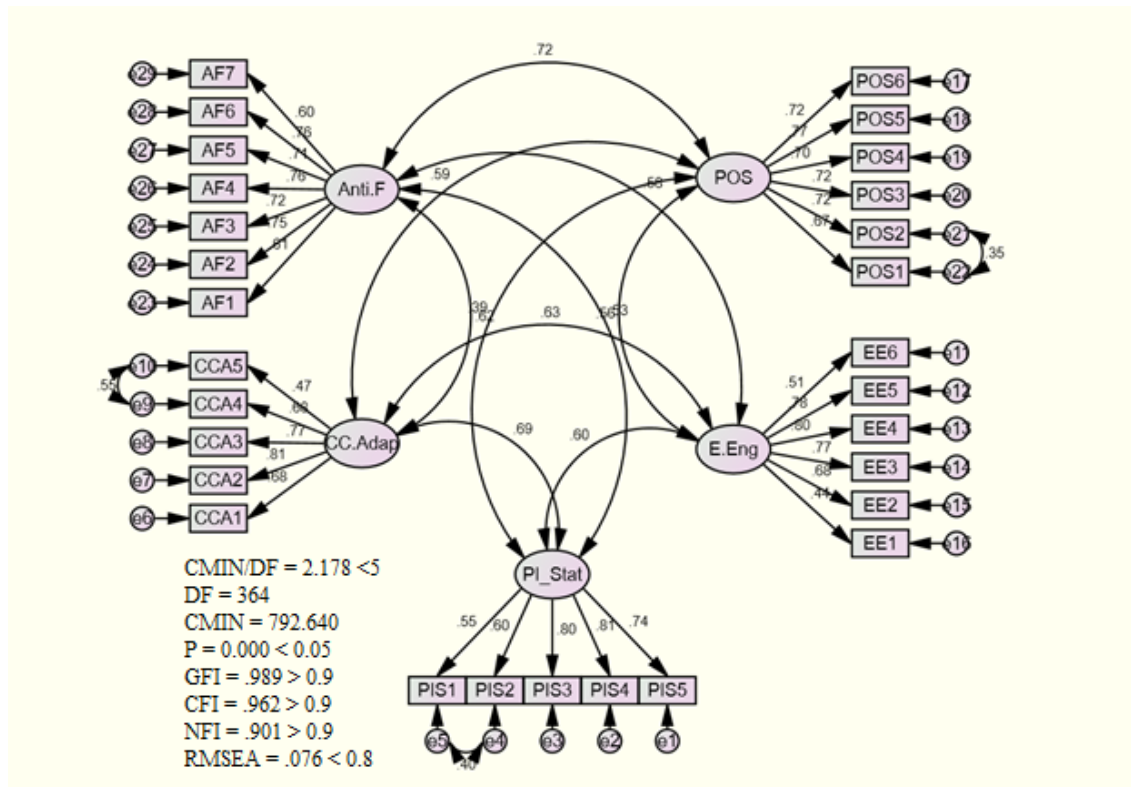


FIGURE 3. CFA

SEM

Holliman et al. (2018) asserted that SEM can be used for evaluating the causal relationships as well as for factor analysis. This study also used SEM for hypothesis testing and the results of direct relationships are presented in Table 4. Antifragility has 25.1% positive impact on employee engagement, which indicates that antifragility enhances the employee engagement; therefore, the H1 of this study is accepted. Similarly, cross cultural adaptability has 19.4% positive direct impact on employee engagement, which indicates that cultural adaptability helps gaining employee engagement, and this leads to acceptance of H2. Also, antifragility has 25.6% positive impact on perceived insider

status, which means owing to enhancing antifragility, the perception of employee being an insider enhances; thus, H3 of this study is accepted.

Interestingly, compare to the impact of cross-cultural adaptability on employee engagement, its impact on perceived insider status is about double in percentage (41.9%), which indicates that cultural adaptability has stronger impact on perceived insider status; thus, the H4 is accepted. Table 4 also shows that perceived insider status has direct 31% positive impact on employee engagement, which means with increasing the perception of employee as being an insider, he/she is more dedicated, enthusiastic and committed to work; thus, H5 is supported.

TABLE 4. Path coefficients (Direct effects → unstandardized)

	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Hypothesis
Antifragility → Employee Engagement	.251	.056	4.492	.000	Accepted
Cross Cultural Adaptability → Employee Engagement	.194	.063	3.097	.002	Accepted
Antifragility → Perceived Insider Status	.256	.060	4.287	.000	Accepted
Cross Cultural Adaptability → Perceived Insider Status	.419	.063	6.622	.000	Accepted
Perceived Insider Status → Employee Engagement	.310	.063	4.954	.000	Accepted

Similar to Table 4, Figure 4 shows the path coefficients; however, it highlights the standardized regression scores; thus, either in standardized or unstandardized, direct hypotheses are supported.

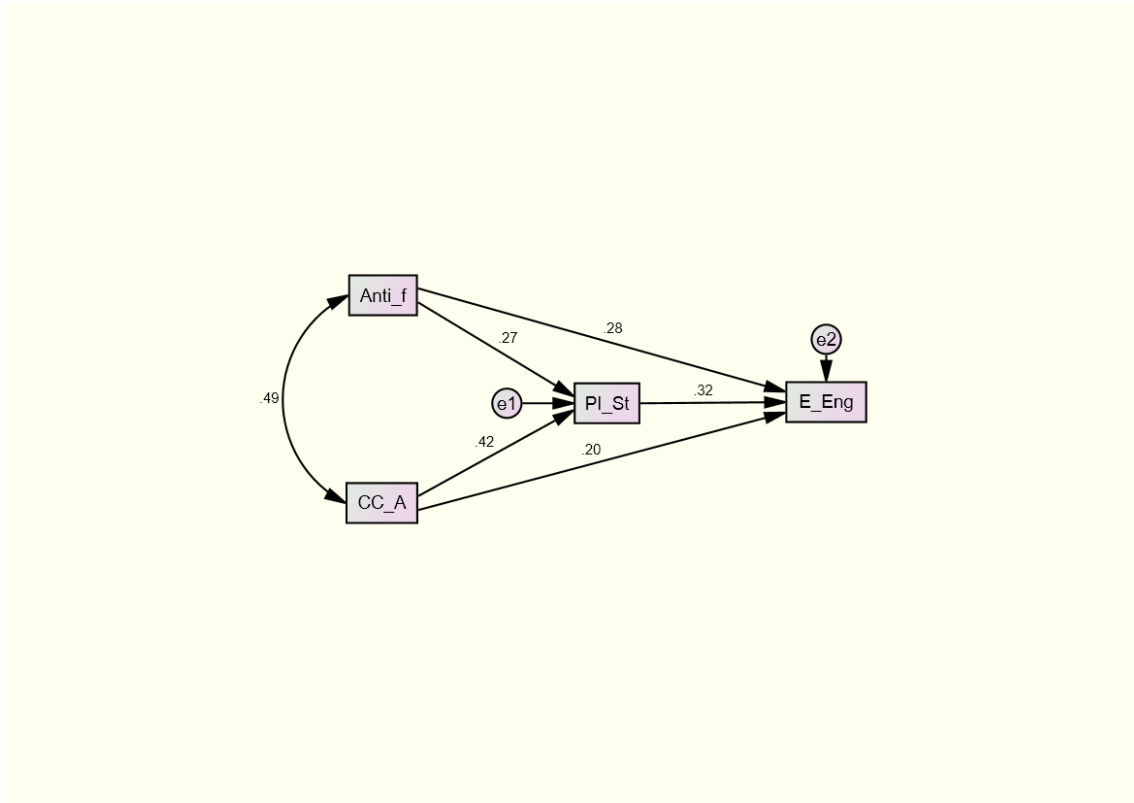


FIGURE 4. Mediation analysis through SEM

In order to find indirect effects, same model (see Figure 4) is used, and results are presented in Table 5. Antifragility has indirect 7.9% positive impact on employee engagement, and this effect is smaller than the direct effect. As both direct and indirect effects are proved; therefore, the model presents partial mediation. This relationship has supported the H6 of this study. Similarly, cross cultural adaptability

has indirect 13% impact on employee engagement, which is also smaller than its direct effect. As indirect relationship of cultural adaptability and employee engagement is also significant; therefore, H7 of this study is supported. This relationship is also concluded that perceived insider status has partial mediation between both independent and dependent variables of current study’s model.

TABLE 5. Indirect effects (unstandardized)

	Coeff.	P	Hypothesis
Antifragility → Perceived Insider Status → Employee Engagement	.079	.000	Accepted
Cross Cultural Adaptability → Perceived Insider Status → Employee Engagement	.130	.000	Accepted

For moderation analysis, Process Macro is used, which is commonly preferred for moderation and mediation analysis (Hetzl-Riggin et al., 2020). Table 6 shows that antifragility has 14% positive impact on perceived insider sta-

tus in the presence of perceived organizational support, while cross cultural adaptability has 13% positive impact on employee engagement in the presence of perceived organizational support; thus, H8, 9 are accepted, respectively.

TABLE 6. Moderation effects

	Coeff.	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI	Hypothesis
Model 1 → Antifragility * POS_int	.14	.03	3.91	.000	.20	.07	Accepted
Model 2 → CCA * POS_int	.130	.05	3.02	.000	.24	.05	Accepted

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Discussion

This study has found the direct and indirect effects of antifragility and cross-cultural adaptability on employee engagement. The mediation effects of perceived insider status and the moderating effects of perceived organizational support are also supported. The current model is not studied before; therefore, most of the relationships which are proved in this study, are not studied before.

Firstly, this study has examined the positive link between antifragility and employee engagement. Instead of antifragility, researchers have investigated employee engagement with resilience, where those employees who are highly resilient, have comparatively high level of engagement (Meintjes & Hofmeyr, 2018). Here resilience gives meaning of quickly recovering from stress, crisis, and shocks, while antifragility gives meaning of improving employees' skills, abilities, knowledge, or capabilities after going through shocks, crisis, or stressor; therefore, after improving this capability, employees are more able to work with high dedication, commitment, and engagement. Besides, Guo et al. (2020) asserted that employees who perceive themselves to be an insider and an important part of the organization, their level of commitment and engagement is increased. It means antifragility increases the competence of employees, which increases their value in the organization, and they consider them to be an insider. This insider status increases their level of engagement with their job and the organization.

Secondly, this study has proved that cross cultural adaptability has positive impact on engagement of employees and perceived insider status. Previous scholars have not studied the link between cultural adaptability and perceived insider status; however, the link of cultural adaptability with engagement is consistent with previous studied. For instance, Hicks and Knies (2015) asserted that high level of adaptability increases employees' engagement as they can easily adapt in the changing situations, cultures and environments. Similarly, Grunbaum and Okubo (1994) has found the positive association between the cultural intelligence (where employees are capable to adjust in the new environment) and engagement of employees. Here the positive relationships represents that those employees who can easily adapt the new situations, environment or culture, their level of engagement increases. However, from another perspective, before adaptability, employees perceive them to be a stranger in the new culture and place (Brunelli et al., 2018); however, after successful adaptability, they consider them to be an insider and a part of the organization, which fur-

ther enhances their level of engagement. Thus, perceived insider status is playing a mediation role between cultural adaptability and employees' engagement.

Many scholars have noted that during cultural adaptability, employees need organizational support in order to adjust in the new environment, culture and place. Especially, the social assistance, a place to live and financial easiness help such employees to quickly manage the changings. Owing to increasing challenges of new culture, employees' engagement often decreases, and they are often not capable of retaining their productivity level. Therefore, organizational support help them to stay strong and manage their challenges quickly (Wang et al., 2010). The support of organization help employees to quickly realize that they are insider and important members (Ding & Shen, 2017). Therefore, in the presence of organizational support, employees quickly manage to adapt in the changed culture; thus, develop their perception to be an insider, which help them enhance their engagement level.

Similarly, in case of antifragility, current study has investigated the moderating effects of perceived organizational support on the relationship of antifragility and perceived insider status. This relationship is also not studied before; however, it is important to note that employees' abilities, knowledge and skills to deal with challenges increase after coping the crisis, shocks or problems (Taleb, 2012). These improved skills and competence not only enhance the performance of employees but also get appreciation from organization, which make employees realize that they are being valued in the organization (Caron et al., 2019; Guo et al., 2020). Therefore, their perception being an insider may enhance, which will further increase their engagement with their job and organization. Therefore, in the presence of perceived organizational support, the positive effects of antifragility on perceived insider status will increase.

Implications

This study has several theoretical contributions as most of the current study proposed relationships are not studied before. This study has contributed in the literature especially with reference to antifragility and cultural adaptability in the context of Land Record Department in Pakistan. Also, it has some practical contributions. Many scholars have studied the processes and techniques which can be utilized to convert an organization into an antifragile entity. Amongst such proposed methods, one is creating a challenging workplace, where employees need to regularly face challenges in order to practice uncertainty, which enhances their capability to deal with crisis, shocks and stressors;

thus, make them antifragile (Tucker & Edmondson, 2003). The management and executives can create such environments at workplace to enhance their employees' capability to deal with such challenges.

Secondly, to enhance employees' engagement, they need organizational support, especially when they face challenges or problems. During cultural adaptability, organization should support its employees, and this support will increase their perception of being an insider as well as it can enhance their level of engagement (Guo et al., 2020). Ding and Shen (2017) asserted that organizations are investing huge money to increase the level of employees' perception of being supported by the organization. This perception enhances their level of perceived insider status; therefore, being an insider, employee increases its efforts to achieve organizational goals. In this regard, organizational support plays a key role to enhance perceived insider status and employees' engagement.

Limitations and Future Recommendations

This study is conducted in Land Record Management; therefore, the implications may be different for other departments or sectors. Future researchers are recommended to adopt a wider approach. As there is very limited evidence regarding applying cultural adaptability at national level; therefore, it is suggested to utilize this model at national level in a country, other than Pakistan. Moreover, an-

tifragility is particularly not explored much; therefore, researchers are suggested to further explore its predictors and outcomes.

Conclusion

Despite of many published studies regarding cross cultural adaptability, employee engagement and perceived insider status, no previous scholar has evaluated the relationship between antifragility and cross-cultural adaptability. Also, the antifragility is not examined in relation to employee engagement and perceived insider status. Therefore, in order to fill this wide gap, this study aimed at evaluating the impact of antifragility and cross-cultural adaptability on employee engagement in the moderated mediation role of perceived insider status. For this purpose, data were collected from employees of Land Record Department from Punjab province of Pakistan. The collected data were examined through SEM. Findings of this study has supported the developed hypotheses. This research concludes that apart from other predictors of employee engagement, antifragility and cultural adaptability are also amongst the strong predictors. However, there is lack of evidence regarding these relationships. Therefore, there is a need to explore them in different contexts. To increase employees' engagement, management of organizations can specifically focus on these dimensions as well.

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