Employee Experience as a Strategic Human Resource Imperative:

A Conceptual Review and Framework

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307

Abstract:

In the contemporary world of work, organisations are increasingly recognising that competitive advantage is not derived solely from financial or technological resources, but from the quality of experiences they provide to their employees. The concept of Employee Experience (EX) has emerged as a holistic approach that integrates employees' perceptions, emotions, and interactions across the entire employment lifecycle. While practitioner literature on employee experience has expanded rapidly, academic research remains fragmented, with varied definitions, dimensions, and theoretical underpinnings. This conceptual research paper aims to synthesise existing literature on employee experience, critically examine its theoretical foundations, and propose an integrated conceptual framework that positions employee experience as a strategic human resource imperative. Drawing upon theories such as human capital theory, social exchange theory, self-determination theory, and the job demands–resources model, the paper conceptualises employee experience as a multidimensional construct shaped by organisational, social, and individual factors. The study further develops research propositions linking employee experience with key organisational outcomes such as engagement, performance, retention, and well-being. The paper contributes to the literature by offering conceptual clarity, identifying research gaps, and providing directions for future empirical studies. Practical implications for HR professionals and organisational leaders are also discussed.

Introduction:

The nature of work and employment relationships has undergone a profound transformation over the past two decades as a result of globalisation, rapid technological advancement, demographic transitions, and evolving employee expectations (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017; Sparrow & Cooper, 2016). Traditional human resource management (HRM) practices, which historically emphasised efficiency, control, and administrative compliance, are increasingly being challenged to address employees' holistic experiences at work (Ulrich et al., 2012). In this evolving context, the concept of Employee Experience (EX) has emerged as a strategic approach to people management that places employees' perceptions, emotions, and lived experiences at the centre of organisational decision-making (Morgan, 2017).

Employee experience broadly refers to the cumulative perceptions and feelings employees develop through their interactions with various organisational elements across the employment lifecycle, including recruitment, onboarding, performance management, development, and exit (Gallup, n.d.; Plaskoff, 2017). These experiences are shaped not only by formal HR policies and practices but also by leadership behaviours, organisational culture,

work design, technological infrastructure, and social relationships at work (Kraus et al., 2022; Morgan, 2017). Prior research suggests that organisations that intentionally design positive employee experiences are more likely to foster higher levels of employee engagement, organisational commitment, discretionary effort, and retention, thereby contributing to sustained organisational performance and competitive advantage (Bakker et al., 2014; Saks, 2019).

Despite its increasing relevance, the academic literature on employee experience remains conceptually fragmented and theoretically underdeveloped. Several studies tend to conflate employee experience with related constructs such as employee engagement, job satisfaction, organisational climate, and employee well-being, leading to conceptual ambiguity and measurement challenges (Kahn, 1990; Saks & Gruman, 2014). While engagement focuses on employees' motivational and psychological states, employee experience encompasses the broader contextual and relational conditions that give rise to such states (Plaskoff, 2017). Furthermore, much of the existing discourse on employee experience is driven by practitioner-oriented frameworks and consultancy models, with limited integration of established organisational and psychological theories (Meister & Willyerd, 2021).

The lack of conceptual clarity and theoretical grounding limits the advancement of employee experience as a rigorous field of academic inquiry. Scholars have increasingly called for theory-driven conceptual models that explain how employee experience is formed, what dimensions it comprises, and how it influences key organisational outcomes (Saks, 2019; Kraus et al., 2022). Addressing this gap is particularly important in contemporary organisations characterised by remote work, digital HR systems, and diverse, multigenerational workforces.

Against this backdrop, the present conceptual paper seeks to address four key objectives. First, it aims to review and synthesise the extant literature on employee experience to establish conceptual clarity. Second, it examines the theoretical foundations underpinning employee experience, drawing upon perspectives such as human capital theory, social exchange theory, self-determination theory, and the job demands–resources model. Third, the paper proposes an integrated conceptual framework that captures the multidimensional nature of employee experience. Finally, it advances a set of research propositions linking employee experience with critical organisational outcomes, including engagement, performance, retention, and employee well-being. By doing so, the study aims to contribute to theory development in HRM and offer meaningful insights for organisational leaders and HR practitioners seeking to design sustainable and employee-centric workplaces.

Objectives of the Study

The present study is conceptual in nature and seeks to advance theoretical understanding of employee experience within the domain of human resource management. The specific objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To systematically review and synthesise existing academic literature on employee experience in order to establish conceptual clarity and identify dominant themes and perspectives.

2. To critically examine the theoretical foundations underpinning the concept of employee experience by integrating relevant theories from human resource management, organisational behaviour, and psychology.

3. To conceptualise employee experience as a multidimensional construct by identifying its key antecedents and contextual dimensions.

4. To develop an integrated conceptual framework that explains the formation of employee experience and its relationship with key organisational outcomes.

5. To propose theoretically grounded research propositions that can guide future empirical investigations on employee experience.

Research Methodology

Research Design

This study adopts a conceptual research design, which is appropriate for theory development and model building in areas where empirical research is fragmented or underdeveloped. Conceptual research relies on the systematic integration and interpretation of existing literature to generate new theoretical insights, frameworks, and propositions rather than testing hypotheses through primary data collection. Given the evolving and multidimensional nature of employee experience, a conceptual approach enables a deeper theoretical examination of the construct and its underlying mechanisms.

Literature Review Strategy

A structured and systematic review of relevant literature was undertaken to capture diverse scholarly perspectives on employee experience. Academic publications were identified through established electronic databases such as Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar, and EBSCOhost. The search included peer-reviewed journal articles, scholarly books, and high-quality review papers published primarily in the fields of human resource management, organisational behaviour, psychology, and management studies.

Key search terms included employee experience, employee engagement, work experience, employee well-being, organisational climate, and human resource practices. The

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Volume No.4 Issue No.:4 October to December 2025

310

review prioritised literature published in the last fifteen years while also incorporating seminal and foundational works to ensure theoretical depth.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

To enhance the rigour of the review, clear inclusion and exclusion criteria were applied. Studies were included if they explicitly discussed employee experience or closely related constructs within an organisational context. Conceptual, empirical, and review studies published in peer-reviewed journals were considered. Practitioner reports, opinion pieces, and non-scholarly sources were excluded unless they contributed significantly to conceptual understanding. Studies focusing solely on customer experience or unrelated psychological constructs were also excluded.

Analytical Approach

The selected literature was analysed using thematic and conceptual analysis. Key concepts, definitions, dimensions, antecedents, and outcomes associated with employee experience were identified and categorised. Particular attention was given to theoretical explanations and conceptual models proposed in prior studies. Through iterative comparison and synthesis, common patterns and conceptual gaps were identified, which informed the development of the proposed conceptual framework.

Framework Development and Proposition Formulation

Drawing upon the insights generated from the literature review and theoretical analysis, an integrated conceptual framework of employee experience was developed. The framework synthesises organisational, social, and individual factors influencing employee experience and links them to key organisational outcomes. Based on established theoretical arguments and prior empirical evidence, a set of research propositions was formulated to explain the relationships among the constructs within the framework. These propositions are intended to serve as a foundation for future empirical testing.

Review of Literature

The concept of employee experience has attracted increasing scholarly attention in recent years as organisations seek to move beyond traditional measures of employee attitudes and behaviours towards a more holistic understanding of work life. Rooted in the broader experience economy and influenced by customer experience research, employee experience encompasses employees' cumulative perceptions and interactions with organisational systems, processes, people, and culture across the employment lifecycle (Morgan, 2017; Plaskoff, 2017). However, despite growing interest, the literature reflects considerable diversity in how employee experience is conceptualised, operationalised, and empirically examined.

Early research in the domain often examined constructs closely related to employee experience, such as job satisfaction, engagement, and organisational commitment. Soni, Chawla, and Sengar (2017) examined the impact of employee experience on job satisfaction across employees from different business organisations. Using correlation and regression analysis, the study established a significant relationship between employee experience and job satisfaction, highlighting career growth opportunities and rewards and recognition as key drivers of positive employee experience. This study underscored the role of developmental and recognition-based practices in shaping employees' workplace experiences and attitudinal outcomes.

Subsequent studies have focused on identifying specific drivers and dimensions of employee experience across different sectors. Kulkarni and Mohanty (2022), in their study of Information Technology employees in Pune city, empirically examined the determinants of employee experience using correlation and multiple regression analysis. Their findings revealed that empowerment, involvement, and enablement significantly enhance employee experience. The study further identified management support, encouragement for risk-taking, a conducive organisational climate, training, rewards, and participative decision-making as critical sub-drivers. These findings reinforce the argument that employee experience is strongly influenced by organisational practices that promote autonomy, competence, and psychological safety.

Similarly, Joshi, Sekar, and Das (2023) identified skill development opportunities, perceptions of salary fairness and growth prospects, work–life balance, rewards and recognition, and a supportive organisational climate as key antecedents of employee experience. Their study contributes to the literature by highlighting the combined influence of both tangible (compensation, growth opportunities) and intangible (supportive climate, balance) factors in shaping employee experience. This supports the view that employee experience is a multidimensional construct shaped by structural, social, and psychological elements.

The role of organisational culture and environment has been consistently emphasised in recent studies. Harlianto and Rudi (2023) demonstrated that the cultural environment is a significant driver of employee experience and has a direct impact on employee performance. Using structural equation modelling on data collected from university employees, the study confirmed that a supportive and enabling cultural context enhances positive employee experiences, which in turn translate into improved performance outcomes. This finding aligns

with the growing consensus that culture acts as a contextual mechanism through which employee experience is formed.

Veena (2022), in her doctoral research, provided a comprehensive examination of employee experience and its impact on organisational commitment and effectiveness. Using an exploratory-descriptive research design and structural equation modelling, the study identified cultural, physical, and technical environments as core dimensions of employee experience. The findings indicated that employee experience significantly influences employee engagement and organisational performance. This study contributes to conceptual clarity by categorising employee experience into distinct yet interrelated environmental dimensions and by empirically establishing its strategic relevance.

More recent international studies have extended the scope of employee experience research to include psychological well-being and mental health outcomes. Lee and Kim (2023), in their study of Korean corporate employees, found that effective management of employee experience enhances organisational commitment through improved job satisfaction and psychological well-being. Their findings revealed that physical and cultural experiences significantly affect organisational commitment, suggesting that employee experience plays a mediating role between organisational context and employee outcomes. This study highlights the relevance of employee experience in promoting sustainable and healthy workplaces.

In healthcare settings, Surucu, Elci, and Toker (2023) adopted a longitudinal intervention-based approach to examine organisational commitment before and after the implementation of employee experience improvement policies. Their study identified six core themes of employee experience, namely openness, support, value, convenience, improvement, and change. The results indicated a marked increase in organisational commitment following the implementation of employee experience initiatives, thereby providing strong empirical support for the strategic value of experience-focused HR practices.

Conceptual and exploratory studies have further enriched the theoretical discourse on employee experience. Melazzini and Carella (2024) argued that employee experience represents an enduring and evolving relationship between employees and organisations, distinct from the more episodic nature of employee engagement. Using experimental and exploratory qualitative methods, including interviews and digital ethnography, the authors demonstrated that intentionally designed employee experience routines stimulate engagement among knowledge workers, particularly during periods of organisational change. This study highlights the dynamic and adaptive nature of employee experience over time.

From a strategic HR perspective, Tucker (2020) observed that organisations increasingly integrate employee experience into their engagement strategies. Based on a survey of HR professionals, the study revealed that organisations achieving superior engagement outcomes were more likely to invest in training leaders and HR professionals in employee experience design principles. This finding reinforces the role of leadership capability and HR competence in translating employee experience philosophy into practice.

Finally, Chawla and Grover (2022), through a systematic literature review, attempted to conceptualise employee experience by synthesising prior studies. Their review highlighted the absence of a unified definition and called for theory-driven frameworks that integrate individual, organisational, and contextual factors. This reinforces the need for conceptual research that brings coherence to the fragmented literature.

Overall, the review of literature indicates that while empirical evidence strongly supports the positive influence of employee experience on engagement, commitment, performance, and well-being, the field remains theoretically dispersed. Studies vary in terms of dimensions examined, contexts studied, and methodological approaches adopted. There is a clear need for integrative conceptual frameworks that consolidate existing findings and provide a foundation for systematic empirical investigation. The present study seeks to address this gap by synthesising prior research and proposing a comprehensive conceptual model of employee experience grounded in established theoretical perspectives.

Conceptual and Theoretical Framework of Employee Experience

The concept of Employee Experience (EX) is largely derived from the marketing and service management literature, particularly from the notion of customer experience. In the marketing domain, customer experience refers to the cumulative perceptions and emotions formed through interactions with an organisation's products, services, and touchpoints over time. Drawing parallels, employee experience represents the internal counterpart of customer experience, wherein employees' perceptions of organisational touchpoints influence their attitudes and behaviours (Morgan, 2017). The relationship between customer experience and employee experience is deeply interconnected, as positive employee experiences are likely to translate into improved customer satisfaction, service quality, and organisational reputation. Consequently, the growing recognition of this interdependence has amplified scholarly and practitioner interest in employee experience as a strategic human resource construct.

The contemporary discourse on employee experience gained substantial momentum following Jacob Morgan's seminal work, The Employee Experience Advantage (2017), which positioned employee experience as a source of competitive advantage. Morgan conceptualised

VNSGU Journal of Research and Innovation (Peer Reviewed)
ISSN:2583-584X
Volume No.4 Issue No.:4 October to December 2025

314

employee experience as comprising three interrelated elements within the workplace, namely the physical work environment, the technological infrastructure, and the organisational culture or climate. This perspective marked a significant shift in human resource practices by encouraging organisations to intentionally design work environments that cater to the diverse expectations of a multigenerational workforce. Since then, employee experience has been increasingly viewed not merely as an outcome of HR practices, but as a strategically designed journey that influences employee engagement, retention, and performance.

Despite its growing acceptance in practice, the concept of employee experience presents several conceptual and scholarly challenges. One of the primary challenges lies in the lack of a universally accepted definition and the frequent overlap of employee experience with related constructs such as employee engagement, job satisfaction, and organisational commitment (Morgan, 2017; Plaskoff, 2017). While engagement reflects employees' psychological presence and motivational state, satisfaction denotes affective reactions to job conditions, and commitment captures attachment to the organisation, employee experience is broader in scope. It encompasses the contextual, relational, and perceptual conditions that shape these attitudinal and behavioural outcomes. Furthermore, the literature reveals a relative scarcity of theory-driven empirical research on employee experience, with much of the existing discourse being practitioner-oriented. This gap underscores the need for robust conceptual frameworks grounded in established organisational and psychological theories.

Various scholars and institutions have attempted to define employee experience from complementary perspectives. Morgan (2017) identifies employee experience as the interaction of physical surroundings, technological systems, and organisational climate that collectively shape employees' daily work lives. Gallup (n.d.) conceptualises employee experience as the journey an individual undertakes within an organisation, encompassing all interactions across the employee lifecycle, including role-related experiences, supervision, work environment, and welfare provisions. Plaskoff (2017) defines employee experience as employees' perceptions of all organisational touchpoints encountered throughout their employment lifecycle. Similarly, Yohn (2018) views employee experience as the aggregate of all encounters an employee undergoes, beginning from initial contact as a prospective recruit and continuing until exit. Qualtrics (n.d.) further emphasises that employee experience is shaped by everything employees observe, feel, and accomplish, starting from their first exposure to the organisation and continuing throughout their tenure.

Synthesising these perspectives, employee experience can be understood as a comprehensive, dynamic, and evolving journey that an individual undertakes within an

VNSGU Journal of Research and Innovation (Peer Reviewed)
ISSN:2583-584X
Volume No.4 Issue No.:4 October to December 2025

315

organisation, characterised by subjective perceptions formed through continuous interactions with organisational systems, people, and environments across the entire span of employment. Collectively, these definitions position employee experience as a holistic, perception-driven construct that reflects the quality of the relationship between the employee and the organisation over time.

Theoretical Underpinnings of Employee Experience

The conceptualisation of employee experience in this study is grounded in multiple theoretical perspectives that explain how organisational contexts influence employee perceptions and outcomes. Human capital theory suggests that employees represent valuable organisational assets, and investments in enriching work environments enhance their skills, commitment, and productivity (Becker, 1993). From this perspective, designing positive employee experiences is a strategic investment that strengthens organisational capability.

Social exchange theory provides a foundational explanation for the employee–organisation relationship by proposing that interactions are governed by reciprocal exchanges (Blau, 1964). When employees perceive that the organisation provides supportive, fair, and meaningful experiences, they are likely to reciprocate through positive attitudes such as engagement, commitment, and discretionary effort. Employee experience thus becomes a mechanism through which social exchange relationships are developed and sustained.

Self-determination theory further explains employee experience by emphasising the fulfilment of basic psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Work environments that empower employees, provide opportunities for skill development, and foster supportive relationships contribute to intrinsically motivating experiences, enhancing well-being and sustained engagement.

In addition, the Job Demands–Resources (JD–R) model offers a useful framework for understanding how job resources such as supportive leadership, development opportunities, and enabling technology enhance employee experience by buffering job demands and promoting positive motivational outcomes (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). Integrating these theories allows employee experience to be viewed as a multidimensional construct shaped by organisational resources, social relationships, and individual psychological processes.

Proposed Conceptual Framework

Based on the synthesis of literature and theoretical perspectives, the proposed conceptual framework positions employee experience as a central construct influenced by three primary dimensions: organisational environment, social-relational environment, and individual factors. The organisational environment includes physical workspace design, technological

VNSGU Journal of Research and Innovation (Peer Reviewed)
ISSN:2583-584X
Volume No.4 Issue No.:4 October to December 2025

316

infrastructure, HR practices, and organisational culture. The social-relational environment encompasses leadership behaviour, supervisory support, peer relationships, and perceptions of inclusion and fairness. Individual factors include employees' expectations, values, psychological capital, and prior experiences.

These dimensions interact dynamically across the employee lifecycle to shape overall employee experience. In turn, positive employee experience is proposed to influence key organisational outcomes such as employee engagement, job satisfaction, organisational commitment, performance, retention, and psychological well-being. This framework reinforces the view that employee experience is not a static outcome but an evolving process that requires continuous alignment with organisational changes and employee needs.
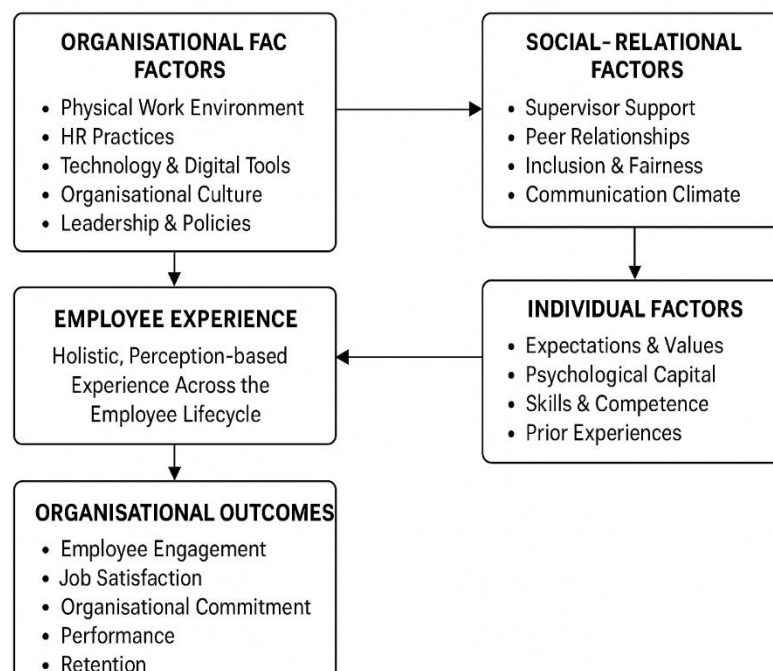
Proposed Conceptual Framework of Employee Experience

Drawing upon the review of extant literature and established theoretical perspectives, the present study proposes an integrated conceptual framework of employee experience that is anchored in three core and interrelated dimensions, namely organisational factors, social–relational factors, and individual factors. These dimensions are conceptualised as antecedent conditions that collectively and dynamically shape employees' holistic experiences across the entire employee lifecycle, from entry into the organisation to eventual exit (Morgan, 2017; Plaskoff, 2017).

VNSGU Journal of Research and Innovation (Peer Reviewed)
ISSN:2583-584X
Volume No.4 Issue No.:4 October to December 2025

317

Organisational Factors

Organisational factors constitute the structural and contextual foundation of employee experience. These include human resource practices, leadership approaches, organisational culture, work design, and the physical and technological work environment. Prior research indicates that HR practices related to recruitment, training and development, performance management, rewards, and career progression play a pivotal role in shaping how employees perceive their work environment and their relationship with the organisation (Becker & Huselid, 1998; Saks, 2019). Supportive and transparent leadership further reinforces positive employee experience by fostering trust, psychological safety, and clarity of expectations (Ulrich et al., 2012).

Organisational culture and climate also exert a strong influence on employee experience by shaping shared norms, values, and behavioural expectations (Harlianto & Rudi, 2023). A culture that promotes openness, empowerment, and learning enables employees to experience autonomy and meaning at work, which enhances their overall perceptions of the organisation. Additionally, work design and technological infrastructure influence employees' daily interactions with tasks and systems, thereby affecting their sense of efficiency, control, and satisfaction (Morgan, 2017; Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). Collectively, these organisational factors provide the formal environment within which employee experiences are formed.

Social–Relational Factors

Social–relational factors refer to the quality of interpersonal interactions and relationships employees experience within the organisation. These include relationships with supervisors, peers, and teams, as well as broader perceptions of inclusion, fairness, and communication climate. Social exchange theory suggests that employees interpret organisational and managerial actions as indicators of support and care, which in turn influence reciprocal attitudes and behaviours (Blau, 1964).

Empirical studies have consistently demonstrated that supervisory support and positive peer relationships significantly enhance employee experience by fostering belongingness and emotional security at work (Kulkarni & Mohanty, 2022; Joshi et al., 2023). Inclusive practices and fair treatment further strengthen employees' perceptions of organisational justice, which is a critical determinant of trust and commitment (Surucu et al., 2023). Thus, social–relational factors act as relational mechanisms through which organisational policies and practices are experienced at an interpersonal level.

VNSGU Journal of Research and Innovation (Peer Reviewed)
ISSN:2583-584X
Volume No.4 Issue No.:4 October to December 2025

318

Individual Factors

Individual factors represent the personal attributes and psychological resources that employees bring to the workplace, which influence how organisational and social cues are perceived and interpreted. These include employees' expectations, values, prior experiences, skills, and psychological capital. According to self-determination theory, employees' experiences are more positive when work environments support their needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

Individual differences in psychological capital, such as optimism, resilience, and self-efficacy, shape employees' capacity to respond positively to workplace challenges and opportunities (Luthans et al., 2007). Furthermore, employees' expectations regarding career growth, work–life balance, and meaningful work influence their evaluations of organisational practices and experiences (Joshi et al., 2023). These individual-level factors thus moderate the relationship between organisational conditions and perceived employee experience.

Employee Experience and Organisational Outcomes

The proposed framework conceptualises employee experience as a holistic, perception-driven construct emerging from the interaction of organisational, social–relational, and individual factors. Rather than being a static outcome, employee experience is viewed as an evolving process that develops over time through continuous interactions across the employee lifecycle (Plaskoff, 2017; Yohn, 2018).

A positive employee experience is proposed to result in favourable organisational outcomes, including higher levels of employee engagement, job performance, organisational commitment, retention, and psychological well-being. Prior studies have empirically linked positive employee experience to enhanced engagement and job satisfaction (Soni et al., 2017; Veena, 2022), improved organisational commitment (Lee & Kim, 2023), and superior performance outcomes (Harlianto & Rudi, 2023). Consistent with the Job Demands–Resources model, enriched employee experiences increase job resources that motivate employees and buffer the negative effects of job demands, thereby promoting well-being and sustained performance (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017).

Overall, the proposed conceptual framework integrates multiple levels of analysis to explain how employee experience is formed and how it influences critical organisational outcomes. By synthesising organisational structures, social relationships, and individual psychological processes, the framework provides a comprehensive foundation for future empirical testing and theory development in the domain of employee experience.

VNSGU Journal of Research and Innovation (Peer Reviewed)
ISSN:2583-584X
Volume No.4 Issue No.:4 October to December 2025

319

Research Propositions

Based on the proposed conceptual framework and the integration of organisational, social–relational, and individual factors influencing employee experience, the following research propositions are developed to guide future empirical investigations.

Proposition 1:

Organisational factors, including HR practices, leadership style, organisational culture, work design, and technological infrastructure, are positively associated with employee experience.

This proposition is grounded in strategic HRM and job design literature, which suggests that supportive organisational structures and resources enhance employees' perceptions of their work environment and strengthen the quality of their employment relationship (Becker & Huselid, 1998; Morgan, 2017).

Proposition 2:

Social–relational factors, such as supervisory support, peer relationships, team cohesion, inclusion, and perceived fairness, are positively associated with employee experience.

Drawing on social exchange theory, this proposition posits that high-quality interpersonal relationships foster trust, belongingness, and emotional attachment, thereby enriching employees' experiences at work (Blau, 1964; Kulkarni & Mohanty, 2022).

Proposition 3:

Individual factors, including employees' expectations, values, and psychological resources, significantly influence employee experience.

This proposition is supported by self-determination theory and psychological capital research, which highlight the role of individual-level characteristics in shaping how employees interpret and respond to organisational and social cues (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Luthans et al., 2007).

Proposition 4:

Employee experience mediates the relationship between organisational factors and key employee outcomes, namely employee engagement, job performance, organisational commitment, retention, and well-being.

This proposition positions employee experience as a central explanatory mechanism through which HR practices and organisational environments translate into desirable employee outcomes (Saks, 2019; Harlianto & Rudi, 2023).

Proposition 5:

Employee experience mediates the relationship between social–relational factors and employee outcomes, including engagement, commitment, and psychological well-being.

Positive interpersonal interactions enhance employees' emotional and cognitive evaluations of the organisation, which in turn influence attitudinal and behavioural outcomes (Surucu et al., 2023).

Proposition 6:

Individual factors moderate the relationship between organisational and social–relational factors and employee experience.

This proposition acknowledges that employees differ in their expectations and psychological capacities, which may strengthen or weaken the impact of organisational and social contexts on employee experience (Joshi et al., 2023).

Implications of the Study

Theoretical Implications

The present conceptual paper offers several important theoretical contributions to the human resource management and organisational behaviour literature. First, it advances conceptual clarity by positioning employee experience as a distinct, holistic, and perception-driven construct, rather than treating it as synonymous with employee engagement, job satisfaction, or organisational commitment. By synthesising insights from marketing, HRM, and psychology, the study contributes to theory development in an area that has remained fragmented and practitioner-driven.

Second, the proposed framework integrates multiple theoretical perspectives, including social exchange theory, self-determination theory, and the job demands–resources model, to explain how employee experience is formed and sustained. This multi-theoretical approach provides a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamic processes underlying employee experience and addresses calls for stronger theoretical grounding in EX research.

Third, by conceptualising employee experience as a mediating mechanism between antecedent factors and employee outcomes, the paper extends existing HRM models that primarily focus on direct relationships. This opens new avenues for empirical research to test complex causal pathways and longitudinal effects of employee experience across the employee lifecycle.

Practical Implications

From a practical standpoint, the findings of this conceptual analysis offer valuable insights for HR professionals, organisational leaders, and policymakers. First, the framework

VNSGU Journal of Research and Innovation (Peer Reviewed)
ISSN:2583-584X
Volume No.4 Issue No.:4 October to December 2025

321

underscores the importance of adopting a holistic approach to managing employee experience, rather than implementing isolated HR initiatives. Organisations must align HR practices, leadership behaviours, and work design with employees' social and psychological needs to create meaningful and positive experiences.

Second, the emphasis on social–relational factors highlights the critical role of managers and supervisors in shaping employee experience. Training leaders to foster inclusive, supportive, and fair work environments can significantly enhance employees' day-to-day experiences and strengthen organisational commitment.

Third, the recognition of individual differences suggests that organisations should move towards more personalised and flexible HR practices. By understanding employees' expectations, values, and psychological resources, organisations can design tailored employee experience strategies that cater to diverse workforce segments and enhance overall well-being and retention.

Finally, the proposed framework provides a diagnostic tool for organisations to assess and redesign employee experience across the employee lifecycle. By systematically evaluating organisational, social, and individual drivers, organisations can identify experience gaps and implement targeted interventions to improve engagement, performance, and long-term sustainability.

Conclusion

In an era characterised by rapid technological change, evolving workforce expectations, and heightened competition for talent, employee experience has emerged as a strategic imperative for contemporary organisations. This conceptual paper sought to address the conceptual ambiguity surrounding employee experience by reviewing existing literature, integrating key theoretical perspectives, and proposing a comprehensive conceptual framework.

The proposed model conceptualises employee experience as a holistic and dynamic construct shaped by organisational, social–relational, and individual factors, and positions it as a central mechanism influencing critical employee and organisational outcomes. By developing research propositions, the paper provides a clear agenda for future empirical research aimed at validating and refining the proposed relationships.

Overall, this study contributes to the growing body of academic literature on employee experience by offering conceptual clarity, theoretical integration, and practical relevance. Future research may empirically test the proposed framework across different organisational

contexts, industries, and cultural settings, thereby strengthening the theoretical and practical foundations of employee experience as a core domain of human resource management.

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Volume No.4 Issue No.:4 October to December 2025

323

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324

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325