



Measuring Employee Retention and Organizational Development through Competency Development

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ABSTRACT

The study explores the possible consequences of competency development in the airline industry of Pakistan. For the purpose, a second order model was proposed. Two main hypotheses were proposed in the study, and two endogenous constructs were used. The study used purposive sampling to collect the data of more than 200 respondents. They were briefed in detail about the purpose and objectives. After the data collection, several techniques were applied to clean the data from incomplete and invalid responses. Structural equation modeling was used through SmartPLS. The common method bias was also checked and found that the data is clean from the issue. The results suggest that competency development is key in determining employee retention and organizational development. Organizations must design policies to enforce competency development programs.

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Introduction

Competencies are the core of human resource management (HRM), which helps significant HR practices i.e., performance management, selection, evaluations, growth and dealing with individuals in corporate organizations (Lucia & Lepsinger, 1999). HR has seen a substantial transformation in the last 40 years and has become a vital tool for organizations in value addition (McCartney et al., 2020). Organizations require the competencies to compete globally (Sedyastuti et al., 2021). The theory and practice of the competencies-based HRM isn't new but its applications regarding various HR indicators like employee retention and the overall organizational development.

Organizations invest in the competencies of the employees if it helps bring the change in organizations i.e. increase in productivity etc. (Kolibacova, 2014). The core of the competency related phenomena is used to determine the abilities of an individual, skills, knowledge and behavior, and performance which is result oriented in a particular organizational environment (Kolibacova, 2014). The abilities are described as various dimensions of a behavior which organizations require to achieve the required performance (Armstrong, 2002). It is noted that competency development is one of the key in determining the performance of the organization with a specific but sharper perspective to human resources (Muizu, 2016).

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Businesses based on creativity are always looking for HRM practices to modify or enhance the human resource competency to achieve better results for their organizations (Muizu, 2016). Hence, this tool is a better predictor of the performance levels in organizations which should be implemented through an organizational strategy that may lead to changes an organization requires.

The management structures in the organizations are the forces that bring change in any organization (Khan et al. 2017; Khan et al. 2016). For an organization to bring change, the competence of the individuals needs to be at par for competitiveness and abilities to adopt the dynamic changes (Manteiro & Bire, 2022; Gul et al., 2021a; Gul & Nazima, 2021). Similarly, implementing organizational development requires the evaluation of management competencies to deal with business assets and resources (May, 1999). Another significant impact of the development of competencies is on workforce turnover. Organizational turnover can be maintained and handled appropriately by giving the workforce a chance to grow their skills and abilities (Davidson et al., 2011). The retentions are intensified due to increased competition in similar industries and an effort to increase production or operational efficiencies (Hartman & McCambridge, 2011). Since the organizations' learning cultures are increasing, adopting appropriate development programs to manage or reduce the turnover rates is easier (Naim & Lenka, 2018). The competencies management system involves several organizational factors including the role of leadership, it's mentoring, it may be from social media, knowledge sharing, or talent management practices. The competencies can be evaluated through various HRM activities to identify the existing skill sets and matching it with the current and future job requirements (Venkat, & Khan, 2022; Gul et al., 2021b).

Retention of dynamic and talented employees is imperative for organizations because they possess various attributes required by an organization to be successful, like skills, knowledge, capacity to learn etc. (Younas, & Bari, 2020). Individuals in organizations or personal lives need mentoring; hence, for the growth and development of employees, the relationship between mentor and mentee brings significant development in the career of an individual (Iqbal et al., 2021; Mullen, 1994). Similarly, leaders with strategic vision bring learning cultures to organizations (Younas & Bari, 2020). Social media helps increase the communication between an organization's HR function with the staff members, which is required for better coordination (Bolton et al., 2013; Tajudeen et al., 2018). Knowledge and

skills sharing can be facilitated by using various social media applications, which help improve productivity (Hsiu-Fen Lin, 2007). Considering the scenario, this study adopted the Social-exchange theory (SET) (Emerson, 1976). It discussed the exchanges take place in societal relationships that are required to be maintained and interchanged for the shared advantage. Naim and Lenka (2018) adopted mentoring, social media, knowledge sharing and strategic leadership under the SET. However, the talent management are covered and explained about the SET (Naim & Lenka, 2018).

This study aims to react on the appeals to explore further the competency development area (Gelens et al., 2013). We have provided the foundations of measuring the competency development work under several dimensions discussed above (Naim & Lenka, 2018). Moreover, we have conceptualized talent management as a separate entity and a separate dimension to competency development. The 21st century is believed revolutionary due to technological advancements (Lancaster & Stillman, 2010), especially in post-COVID-19 scenarios. The area of competency development needs to be further investigated in different study settings. Therefore, in industries where skills and competence is required, they need to be equipped with the required competencies and skills like Airline services. The industry needs the skill set of the individuals at various levels, i.e., engineering and maintenance, booking and operations, boarding and in-flight services. Considering the dynamics, this study undertakes The Pakistan International Airline (PIA) is a public enterprise that requires modern resources to operate and compete with the industry norms and practices. Hence, using the proposed model with a sample from a public entity is desired for a better and holistic view so that any lack in services provided by the company be identified to its staff. The area in which this study is conducted requires dynamic skills, motivations, up-to-date knowledge and the ability to perform the function, as this job is linked not only to the technical operations of the airline industry but also connected to other departments which operate together for smooth functioning of airlines and airports.

The primary objective of this research is to investigate the role of competency development in an organization's life and on the individuals' retention rates. The study's secondary objectives include identifying the dimension of competency development in the organizations i.e. mentoring, strategic leadership, social media, and knowledge



sharing and talent management in the study settings of a developing country.

Literature review

Competency development

Competence is core to human resource management for the progression of any organization (Rasyid, 2020). Cheetham and Chivers (2005) explained competence in a way that it is a compelling by and large execution inside employment, which may extend from the fundamental criteria of excellence to the utmost perfection. Moreover, they defined all, more precisely, the idea of professional competence as it is the ownership of the wide variety of attributes that are vital for, successful execution inside a profession and the ability to marshal these dependably to make the desirable, all-around, results. The learning aspect in the organization is gaining importance in the academic literature (Lorenz & Lundvall, 2006). Green (1999) explained that individuals' competencies are connected to their abilities and working while observing organizational management decisions. Some of the prior studies in the area described it as a fundamental requirement for performing a specific job. (Ellström, 2008). Moreover, for the growth and development of the organizations, and adopting the change or accepting new technologies, growing competition, the competencies are also required to be enhanced. Therefore, it is a growing phenomenon and may not be associated to any stage of life of the organizations or individuals (Sarala, 1993). Companies must invest in advanced technology and employees should be given training accordingly to enhance their competency (Gul et al., 2022).

Mentoring

For high performance in the workplace, mentoring is key and plays a significant role (Jyoti & Rani, 2019). The author further noted that it not only helps in professional growth but also helps improve social relationships i.e., understanding of cultural awareness, which leads to a meaningful life. People in organizations have communicated with others throughout their tenure under different positions (Hayes & Allinson, 1998). Learning from others and adopting good practices due to increased role may be considered a practice of mentoring (Kram, 1996). People in the organizations that guide the workers' right to do their jobs are the ones required to promote mentoring concepts in the organizations (Kram, 1985). The process may be formalized or informal to mentor the individuals. Roberts (2000) explained that

a formal mentoring process involves an experienced and knowledgeable person with the required supportive instincts who oversees and encourages others to perform their jobs. Mentoring is primarily required for workers in their early careers as they continuously require input, help and development (Martin, 2005). It may be done through instrumental and psychosocial capacities. Instrumental roles include training, introduction, sponsorships, and other different arrangements. At the same time, the psychosocial functions include role modeling, passionate help, guidance, acknowledgment and personal motivations (Dreher & Ash, 1990). The process leads to some successful outcomes like an increase in performance which may result in professional growth and improved financial condition (Scandura, 1992).

Strategic Leadership

The corporate world has seen many types of leadership. Leaders and managers hold a variety of roles in organizations (Ali & Anwar, 2021). In the current competitive environment, leaders must thrive to adopt the changes and work on creativity to find better ways to manage the resources in a competitive way (Birasnav & Bienstock, 2019). However, having a strategic leadership vision in any leadership may bring fruitful results for the organizations. Many areas require management to focus, like dealing with uncertainties, technology, and increased globalization (Ireland & Hitt, 1999). Future goals of individuals and organizations require strategic vision (Graybill, 2014). Such leadership is required to improve employees' capabilities, improve working conditions and manage talent (Hitt et al., 2010). The role of a strategic leader is to constantly monitor the firm's performance, which is linked to the performance of the individuals. Hence, the best practices among strategic leaders are to protect the interests of the employees (Vera & Crossan, 2004).

Knowledge sharing

Knowledge sharing in an organization is an integral part of learning which leads to organizational development (Singh et al., 2021). One reason for knowledge sharing or transfer is to achieve a competitive advantage. It has two stages i.e. explicit and tacit (Bock et al. 2005). Explicit or open knowledge is oral, composed of learning, or object-oriented, whereas tacit deals with the subjective area of transfer of knowledge. Organizations that are dynamic deal with knowledge management systems for improving performance through storing, securing and reusing the knowledge (Rowley, 2000). Hence,



this construct is crucial for managing and spreading employees' commitment and competencies (Sveiby, 2001). It requires an employee's ability to share different practices that he/she has gained/learned throughout his/her tenure in an organization (King, 2007). Younas and Bari (2020) used this construct in defining and explaining the context of competency development.

Social Media

The role of social media is well observed, believed, discussed and researched over the years in a person's and organizations' lives. Web 2.0 provided users and producers a great chance to interact and develop communities (Universal, 2008; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Since 2005, another way of information sharing network has emerged with the name Social Media influencing the human resource function to the greatest extent (Hosain, 2021). It may also be used in the organizational context. For example, the quick arrival of employees, discussing official affairs, sharing of data, connecting to various staff members, dealing with consumers and attending the meeting can be some of the functions an organization can perform on social media (Reitz, 2012). This may be the most efficient way to deal with employees for information and knowledge sharing, which can improve productivity and increase socialization within the diverse organization (Leidner et al., 2010). The general nature of social media makes it convenient for companies and employees to adopt quick changes and improves communication and coordination (Vuori, 2012).

Talent Management

Workforce diversity, digitization, increased globalization, increase competition, downsizing and other factors are responsible for the organizations to consider talent management practices (Boudreau & Ramstad, 2004). The talent in any organization is like a guarantee to success or bring quality and improved organizational structure (Charan, 2006). It is highly required to achieve the better operational and strategic results. Organizations use talent management techniques to retain their employees through various activities included better working conditions and financial structures. Motivations and recognition are also some of the tools to retain the employees. Hence, the development of the organizations and competencies of the individuals needs talent management approaches and framework that provides individuals a chance to grow in their careers (Van Dam, 2006).

Relationship between competency development and employee retention

Cole (1999) suggested that literature is evident of competence development is key to retain the employees. Hay (2002) confirmed that improvement in capacities of the individual and skill development are the key to retain the employees. A study conducted by Herzfeldt & D'Amato (2008) noted a positive relationship between employee development and retention. Their study also revealed that this process leads to improvement in the performance. The sentiments of the individuals for organizations helps them remain with the organizations if they are appropriately skills and developed and help improve the organizational performance as well (Kennedy & Daim, 2010; Chukumbi, 2012). Chan (2010) noted that organizations ought to this in this fashion about employee development just to retain their employees and improve their performances. The authors further suggested that as a part of competency management, employee development is the key. The short and long-term objectives of the organizations and department are linked to the development of the employees. In the light of discussion above, we proposed to adopt the following hypothesis:

H1: There is a significant relationship between Competency Development and Employee Retention

Competency development and organizational development relationship

Organizational development is key to achieve the organizational goals. One of the goals of organizational development is to meet the long-term objectives of the firms. The literature on organizational development is rich (Beer & Walton, 1987) and suggested several factors that affect the organizational development which includes competency development. The development of competencies are based on the premise that they would help improve the performance of an organization to make it more successful (Eubanks et al. 1990). An organization is powerful itself where the workers are competent (Krishna et al. 2016). Hence, the organizations are largely dependent on the competency's development of their workforce (Wright & Kehoe, 2013). The author further added that human development is an essential factor which help improves the organizational effectiveness. It is therefore proposed that:

H2: There is significant relationship between Competency Development and Organization

Development

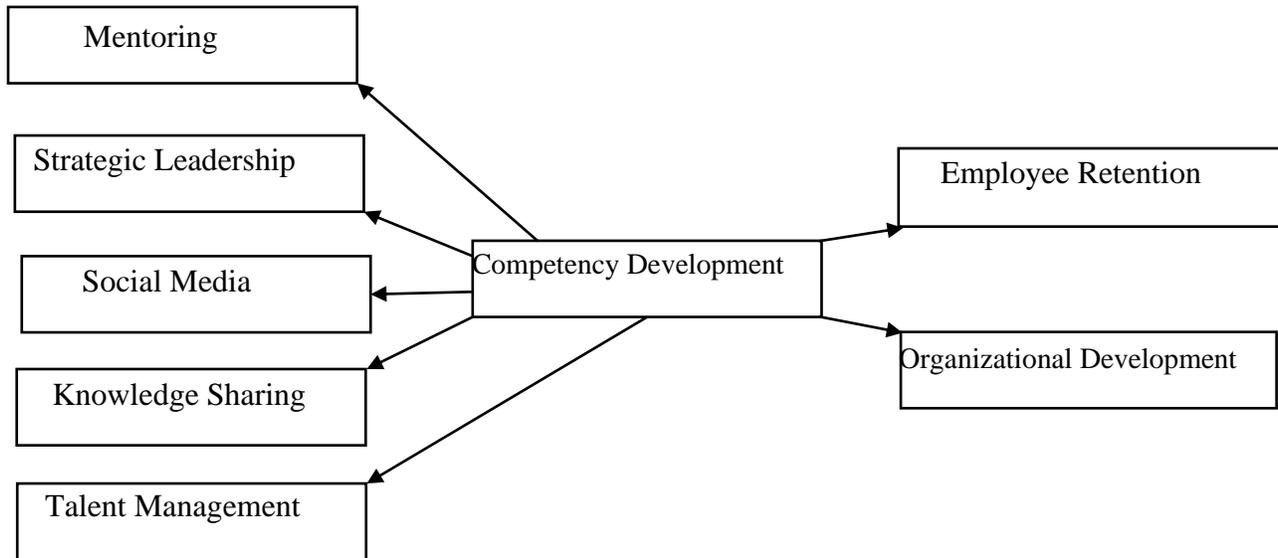


Figure 1: Research (Naim & Lenka, 2018; Krishna, Potnuru, & Sahoo, 2016)

Methodology

The study used survey method to collect the primary data. There were seven constructs as a part of the research instrument and hence it followed structured questionnaire. The survey was scheduled as per the instructions of the departments of the concerned organization, Pakistan International Airlines (PIA). The questionnaire was developed in hard and soft copies for a better reach. The personal visits helps this study explain the objectives and purpose of the study in detail to the respondents. PIA is a big airline and has thousands of employees, this study approached the employees of traffic department, who is responsible for the smooth flight operations and is involved in the communication with several other departments and agencies. Hence, a purposive sampling method was followed. The final sample sized after removing incomplete and invalid responses was 250. As per Hair et al. (2017) the sample is enough to predict the outcomes. We used Microsoft excel to identify the missing and invalid responses.

The study adopted four items of the construct mentoring from Omoikhudu (2017). From Chomley’s

(2015) study, four items for strategic leadership were adopted. Four items for social media constructs were adopted from McGowan et al. (2012). For the construct knowledge sharing, the measures were adopted from Chomley’s (2015) study. Talent management construct was measured using four items used by Koranteng (2014). Employee retention and organizational development constructs were adopted from Omoikhudu (2017) and Armstrong & Foley (2003) respectively. The study then used Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) to test the data. It used measurement model to check the validity and reliability of the surveyed data, after achieving the best fit of the reliability and validity indicators, we have then applied structural model using 5000 sub-samples to check the proposed hypotheses.

Results and Analysis

Table 1 of the study suggested the demographic profiles of the respondents. Most of the respondents were males, having decent education, income and experiences. The department requires adequate experience, exposure and education which is reflected in the data.

Table 1: Demographics

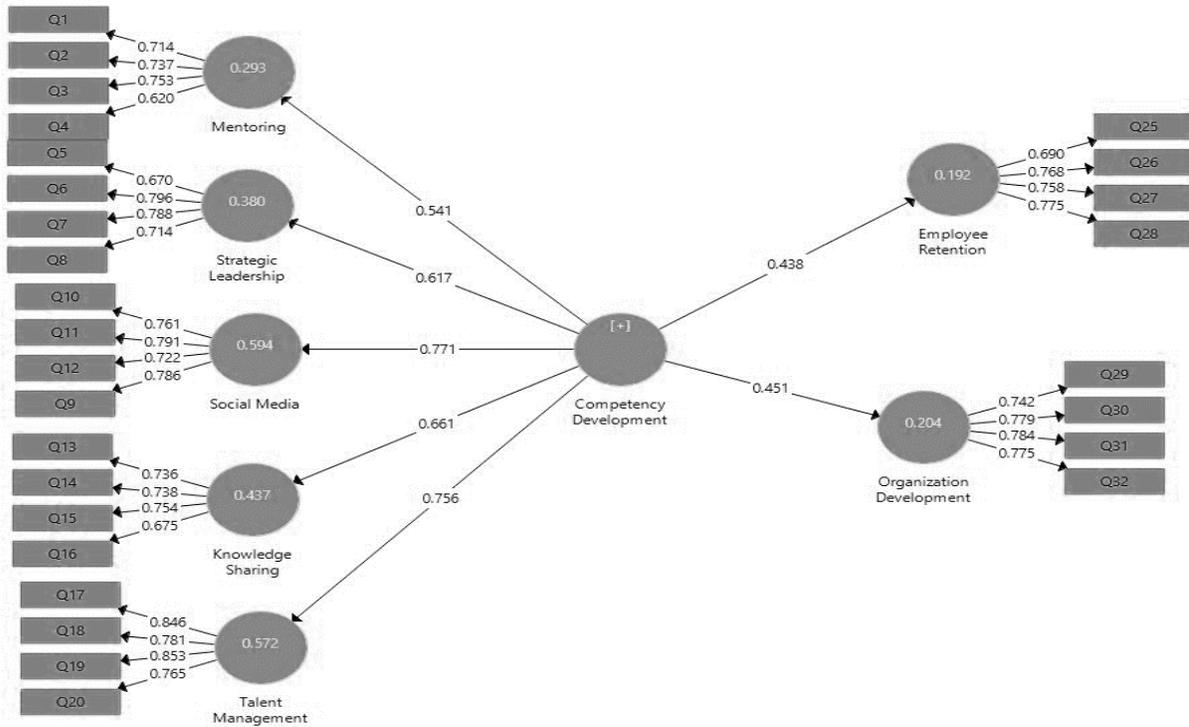


Variables	Category	Sample Size	Percentage %
Gender	Male	162	64.80
	Female	88	35.20
Age Group	21 to 30 years	9	3.60
	31 to 40 years	185	74.00
	41 to 50 years	35	14.00
	51 and above+	21	8.40
Income Level	21,000 to 30,000	63	25.20
	30,001 to 40,000	37	14.80
	40,001 to 50,000	31	12.40
	50,001 to 60,000	44	17.60
	Others	75	30.00
Qualification	Intermediate	4	1.60
	Bachelors	44	17.60
	Masters	119	47.60
	Diploma Certificate	73	29.20
	Others	10	4.00
Work Experience	Less than 1 year	87	34.80
	1 to 3 years	61	24.40
	4 to 6 years	50	20.00
	7 to 10 years	29	11.60
	Above 10 years	23	9.20

For measurement model, the model was formed on SmartPLS and used PLS algorithm approach to obtain the results. It was run twice, as in the first

attempt, the outer loading values were not up to the minimum thresholds (Hair et al. 2017). Figure 2 is the representation of the initial measurement model.

Figure 2: Initial Model on PLS



After removing Q4, Q5, Q16, and Q25, the model was run again. The minimum value requirements of outer loadings were found satisfactory, which is more

than 0.7. Hence, it was decided to further proceed with the analysis.

Figure 3: Final measurement model

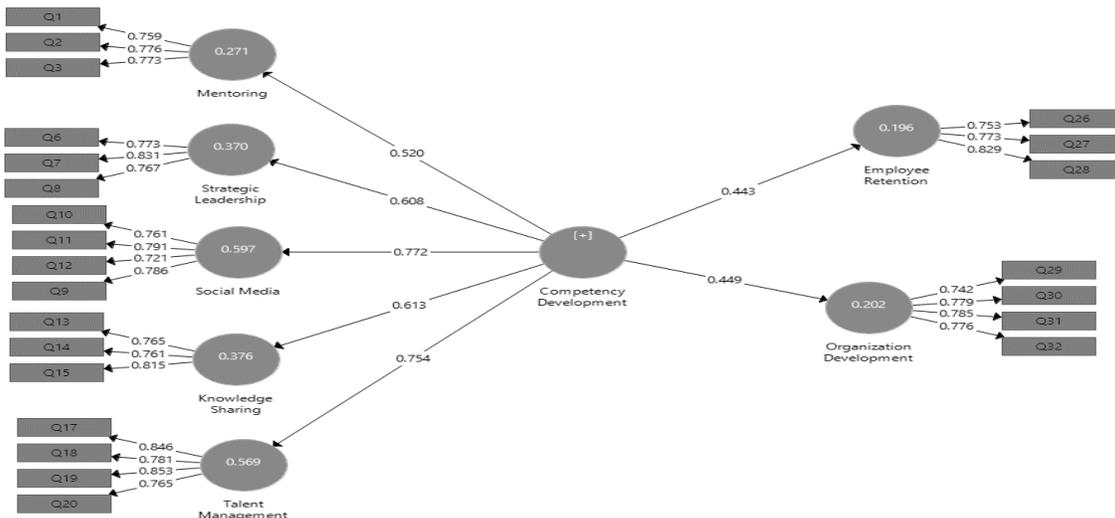




Table 2 of the study represent several indicators like outer loadings, Cronbach’s Alpha, composite reliability, average variance extracted, R squares and VIF. All the items’ outer loadings were more than 0.7 and less than 0.9, indicated that the perfect inter-item reliability for the study was achieved (Hair et al.

2017; Riaz et al. 2022). The other reliability indicators included Cronbach’s Alpha and composite reliability values were also more than 0.7 indicated that there is no issue of consistency in the data and is reliable to predict the outcomes (Hair et al. 2016; Khan et al. 2022).

Table 2: Construct Reliability and Validity

Constructs	Items	Outer Loadings	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	R Square	VIF
Mentoring	Q1	0.759	0.657	0.813	0.595		1.303
	Q2	0.776					1.468
	Q3	0.773					1.224
Strategic Leadership	Q6	0.773	0.701	0.833	0.626		1.387
	Q7	0.831					1.323
	Q8	0.767					1.746
	Q10	0.761					1.468
Social Media	Q11	0.791	0.764	0.85	0.586		1.586
	Q12	0.721					1.399
	Q9	0.786					1.527
	Q13	0.765					1.604
Knowledge Sharing	Q14	0.761	0.683	0.824	0.61		1.342
	Q15	0.815					1.314
	Q17	0.846					1.948
	Q18	0.781					1.706
Talent Management	Q19	0.853	0.827	0.886	0.66		2.023
	Q20	0.765					1.602
	Q26	0.753					1.226
Employee Retention	Q27	0.773	0.69	0.828	0.617	0.196	1.445
	Q28	0.829					1.482
	Q29	0.742					1.499
Organization Development	Q30	0.779	0.772	0.854	0.594	0.202	1.555
	Q31	0.785					1.538
	Q32	0.776					1.501

The study used AVE as convergent validity indicator. All the values of AVE were found above 50%, this means that the variances explained by the constructs are more than 50% and more than the errors explained by each construct. Hence, meeting another statistical requirement (Hair et al. 2016; Salim et al. 2021). The R squares of the study were around 20% for both the endogenous construct, which may be

considered as weak but are acceptable to proceed for the analysis (Hair et al. 2017). Finally, the Table 2 also provided the VIF values which are all less than 5, means that there is no issue of multicollinearity in the data. Kock (2015) suggested that if the values of VIF are less than 3.3 in the data, this reflects that there is no issue of common method bias in the data.

Table 3: Discriminant Validity

	Employee Retention	Knowledge Sharing	Mentoring	Organization Development	Social Media	Strategic Leadership	Talent Management
Employee Retention	0.786						
Knowledge Sharing	0.251	0.781					



Mentoring	0.191	0.212	0.770				
Organization	0.903	0.243	0.237	0.770			
Development	0.358	0.351	0.289	0.387	0.765		
Social Media	0.290	0.228	0.190	0.253	0.403	0.791	
Strategic	0.295	0.342	0.302	0.281	0.402	0.283	0.812
Leadership							
Talent							
Management							

The Table 3 represents the discriminant validity. All the values of the diagonal values of the tables are greater than their below values or their left side values in the model. Since the construct competency development is a second order construct, and used the items values twice, one for dimension and one for the

main construct, hence it should be ignored. Therefore, this study concluded that there is no issue of discriminant validity in the data (Hair et al. 2017). Which means that items are explaining their own constructs rather explaining the other constructs.

Table 4: Path Coefficients

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values
Competency Development > Employee Retention	0.443	0.443	0.067	6.583	0.000
Competency Development > Organization Development	0.449	0.450	0.069	6.507	0.000

Finally, the study has applied structural model using 5000 subsamples using bootstrapping technique to test both the hypotheses. The *p* value of competency development and employee retention was found 0.000 and the *T* value was about 6.5. The variance explained in the relationship was above 44%. Hence, it is concluded that there is a strong and positive impact of competency development on employee retention. Moreover, the *p* value between competency development and organizational development was 0.000 and the *T* value was again 6.5. The variance explained by the relationship was nearly 45%. Therefore, this study conclude that H2 is also positive and significant and has a strong relationship between the two.

Conclusion, Discussion, Limitation, Recommendation & Future Research

The rise of HR in the last 40 years has been phenomenal. The inclusion of technology and competitiveness in the industries have forced the management and leaders of the corporate world to work on the competence of human resources to stay relevant and competitive. Several factors include strategic leadership, the rise of social media, knowledge sharing, mentoring, etc., which may increase the competencies of the individuals working in organizations. The entry of competency development along with different other aspects of

human resources has enhanced the management of human capital in corporate firms. This effective management also contributes to successful organizational transformation. This concept of workforce utilization has obstructed the individuals themselves, firms, and the economy as a whole. This study explores several dimensions of competency development that could affect organizational dimensions like human resource retention and organizational development. This research signifies that the role of competency development is the key to an organization's success and acts as a driving force throughout the process. For this purpose, this study proposed several dimensions to gauge the construct competency development. These include mentoring, talent management, knowledge sharing, social media, and strategic leadership. It was noted that all the dimensions were significantly and positively related to its central construct competency development. There were two hypotheses proposed in the study. The first hypothesis was related to the relationship between competency development and employee retention. The study found the results in accordance with the available literature (Younas & Bari, 2020).

Moreover, the second hypothesis was a relationship between competency development and organizational development. This was again found strong, positive and significant. Both hypotheses were measured and



tested as a second-order factor and in line with the available literature.

Hence, companies operating in the airline industry in particular and in other industries in general must involve competency-based development programs for their employees. Doing this will bring fruitful results for the companies in the future. It will also help them achieve their organizational targets. The competencies enhancement programs improve the skills and abilities of the individuals, yielding better individual performances. Individuals with improved skills and abilities are assets to organizations and may prefer to stay with organizations if have the skills associated to him/her. Therefore, the study recommends that managers of the industry focus on the dimensions of the competency development program and the consequence it could have on having or not having them in the organizations.

Limitations and Future Research

No research is free of limitations. This study also has many limitations. *First*, this study is conducted as a cross-sectional research where the data was collected once, future studies could explore the same framework from longitudinal way. *Second*, the study was conducted in one city of the country, hence results should be carefully evaluated. *Third*, the study included a public sector organization, future research could use this framework in other industries like banks, private universities, manufacturing etc. *Fourth*, the consequences used in the study were limited due to the shortage of time and resources. Future studies could include more consequences like organizational performance, individual performance, individual's commitment to organization etc. *Finally*, this study was conducted from one perspective, future studies could use this framework and conduct the study from different perspectives i.e. taking mediators and moderators in the model such as organizational learning, employee empowerment etc.

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