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## TQM Soft Practices and Job Satisfaction; Mediating Role of Relational Psychological Contract

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### Abstract

The present study examines the direct and indirect effect of total quality management (TQM) soft practices on job satisfaction within the context of Pakistan banking industry. Relational psychological contract (RPC) mediates the relationship between TQM soft practices and job satisfaction. A questionnaire was designed and distributed to 400 employees of different management cadres. The useful response rate was 74% (236 employees). The data were analyzed through SEM-PLS technique. The main findings are: (1) Three TQM soft practices (Teamwork, Rewards & Recognition and Education & Training) have direct and indirect significant effect on job satisfaction. Organization culture (OC) does not have a direct effect on job satisfaction; however, RPC significantly mediates the indirect effect of OC on job satisfaction. This is one of the few papers that have successfully integrated the four exogenous constructs and one mediator into a single framework to investigate their effects on employees' job satisfaction in the context of Pakistan banking industry.

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*Keywords:* Job Satisfaction; TQM soft practices; Relational Psychological contact; Pakistan

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### 1. Introduction

The importance of employees' job satisfaction and its association with TQM practices is gaining significance in contemporary businesses since it affects organizational performance significantly (Gray

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*et. al.*, 2003). Job satisfaction effects on employees' performance, leading to organization performance. Saleem, (2015) defined job satisfaction as a sense of pride and internal satisfaction while performing a specific task. Spector, (1997) explained that job satisfaction is directly linked to the feelings of employees about their job content and environment. Job satisfaction is a psychological state that develops employees' evaluation about their work and work experience (Poon, 2003). It is a multi-dimensional phenomenon which is affected by different internal and external aspects, for instance, individuals' beliefs and values, principles, personality characteristics, job content, working environment, and career growth etc. (Kabak *et. al.*, 2014). Scholars suggested different variables to measure the employees' job satisfaction, for instance, financial benefits (pay, bonus, increments, conveyance etc.) and non-financial benefits (promotion, working environment, respect, liberality, nature of work and coworkers relationship etc.) (Spector, 1997; Kabak *et.al.*, 2014). Any increase or decrease in these financial and non-financial benefits determines the employees' job satisfaction level. However, job satisfaction is not a constant phenomenon; its change with any external (organizational change) or an internal change in employees' behavior or attitude (Kabak *et.al.*, 2014).

Merger and acquisition (henceforth M&A) deals bring transformational changes in organizational structure, culture and human resource & management policies. At the post-M&A stage, employees interact with new work follows in a changed organizational culture and environment which create the changes/ incidents of employees and cultural clashes. Such a changed and stressful environment creates stress, tension and sense of insecurity among employees which ultimately effect on employees job satisfaction and performance. From 2002-2011, fifty-seven deals of M&A were performed in the banking industry of Pakistan in which 38 mergers and 19 were acquisition deals (Abbas *et. al.*, 2014). Several authors found that M&A performance in Pakistan banking industry is not satisfactory and newborn organizations as a result of M&A could not perform well (Abbas *et. al.*, 2014; Kouser & Saba, 2011; (Haider, Shoaib, & Kanwal, 2015). Employees' dissatisfaction due to changed and uncertain environment at the post-M&A stage can be a reason of M&A underperformance (Buiter & Harris, 2013).

In literature, multiple Total Quality Management (TQM) soft practices (People related TQM practices) are recommended that effect on job satisfaction. For instance, Boon Ooi *et. al.*,(2007) concluded that TQM soft practices i.e. organizational trust, customer focus, reward and recognition, teamwork and organizational culture have an impact on employees' job satisfaction. Another study explains that employees training and education, relation and teamwork, reward and recognition, quality culture and employees empowerment positively effect on employees' job satisfaction (Kabak *et.al.*, 2014). Prajogo & Cooper, (2010) reported that senior managers commitment, empowerment, training involvement, teamwork, work and growth satisfaction effect on employees soft performance or job satisfaction. Changes in the organization due to M&A may create uncertainty and distrust between employees and employer that may trigger the job dissatisfaction. This scenario indicates the need of relational psychological contract (RPS) between employees and employer to make TQM soft practices more rewarding to increase the employees' job satisfaction. An extensive body of literature explains the association between TQM practices and job satisfaction in various contexts (Noorliza & Zainal, 2000; Boselie & Wiele, 2002; Boon Ooi, *et. al.* 2007; Prajogo & Cooper, 2010; Kabak *et. al.*, 2014). However, As per authors knowledge, there is no existing literature that explains the relationship between TQM practices and job satisfaction in the post- M&A scenario within the context of Pakistan banking industry.

The aim of present paper is to investigate the role of TQM soft practices in job satisfaction and the mediating role of RPC to make these TQM soft practices more rewarding to the job satisfaction in the banking industry of Pakistan. In view of post-M&A job dissatisfaction, lack of research and focus on job satisfaction and relevant TQM soft practices within the context of Pakistan banking industry, the present empirical study focuses on TQM soft practices and job satisfaction in Pakistan banking industry. The contribution of the present paper is threefold: (1) it proposes TQM practices to increase the level of job satisfaction; (2) it empirically investigates the specific relationships, if any, between proposed TQM soft practices in Pakistani banking industry and job satisfaction level at post M&A stage; (3) it investigates the mediating role of RPC between TQM soft practices and job satisfaction in the context of Pakistan banking industry.

## **2. Literature Review and Hypotheses Development:**

### *2.1. Job Satisfaction:*

Job satisfaction is very popular and frequently investigated phenomena in literature. Job satisfaction is a collection of feelings that an employee keeps towards her/his job (Robbins, 2005). Locke, (1976) explained job satisfaction as “results from the perception that one’s job fulfills or allows the fulfillment of one’s important job values, provided that it is to the degree that those values are congruent with one’s needs”. As a theoretical paradigm, Job satisfaction is a mental, physiological, and environmental situation which stimulates to a person to express satisfaction with his occupation ( Saleem, 2015). There are multiple indicators of job dissatisfaction which include absenteeism, complaint, demotivation, high turnover, tardiness etc. Numerous factors which determine job satisfaction level of employees, for instance, financial benefits and perks, career growth and promotion, working environment, supervisors and colleagues (Kabak et. al., 2014).

### *2.2. TQM Practices:*

Several authors explain the relationship between TQM soft practices and job satisfaction of employees. With reference to synergy theory and social exchange theory, a successful teamwork increases the level of efficiency and effectiveness of employees and also helpful to fulfill their social needs (Rahman & Bullock , 2005). Prajogo & Cooper, (2010) concluded that teamwork (TW) has an effect on employees’ job satisfaction. Tailored education and training to employees not only enhance their work performance but also reflects the organization commitment to help in their career growth (Prajogo & Cooper, 2010). Kabak et. al., (2014) described that education and training (E&T) play a significant role in job satisfaction. As per organizational justice theory, justified financial and non-financial (respect & appreciation) rewards motivate employees and increase their satisfaction level. Reward and recognition (R&R) positively effect on employees job satisfaction (Boon Ooi et. al., 2007). Organizational culture (OC) refers to a set of values, norms and guiding beliefs shared by employees of an organization. OC effects on thought, emotion, mutual collaboration and performance of employees within the organization (Yusof & Ali, 2000). Kabak et.al., (2014) found that good quality culture has positive effective on employees’ job satisfaction. Based on above literature references about the relationship among TQM soft practices and job satisfaction following hypotheses are proposed;

H1: Teamwork has an positive effect on employees’ job satisfaction.

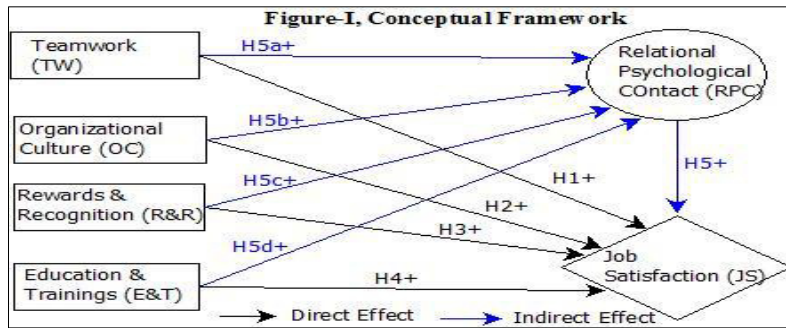
- H2: Organizational Culture has an positive effect on employees’ job satisfaction.
- H3: Rewards & Recognition has an positive effect on employees’ job satisfaction.
- H4: Education & Training has an positive effect on employees’ job satisfaction.

2.3. Relational Psychological Contract:

The psychological contract is a reciprocal promise among stakeholders to perform perception based mutual obligations (Rousseau, 1998). Psychological contract has two dimensions *i.e.* transactional and relational (Rousseau, 1998). In transactional PC, the relationships are clearly defined and stated without any implied expectations as contract is based on explicit performance outcomes, constrained diversity, and time bound (Yan & Zhu, 2013), RPC refers to trust, mutual stability and commitment based promise where partners are positively motivated to help each other’s (Lee & Liu, 2009). Several authors confirmed the relationship between employees’ emotional adjustment and their levels of job satisfaction (Haq *et. al.*, 2011; Hoppock, 1935). As per expectancy theory, individuals react positively when they found outcomes consistent with their expectations or perceptions (Locke, 1976). In view of this argument, it is cleared that level of job satisfaction is increased as received outcomes are consistent with perceived or expected outcomes. RPC based on the interchange of socio-emotional features like commitment, trust, and loyalty; therefore individuals with RPC are normally happier and satisfied (Haq *et. al.*, 2011; Rousseau, 1998; Raja *et. al.*, 2004). RPC has a positive effect on job satisfaction (Haq *et. al.*, 2011; Raja *et. al.*, 2004). By considering this literary evidence, following hypotheses are proposed.

- H5: RPC mediates the relationship between proposed TQM soft practices (TW, OC, R&R, and E&T) and employees’ job satisfaction (H5a, H5b, H5c, H5d).

3. Conceptual Framework:



4. Methodology:

4.1. Context and Sample:

To seek the goals of the present study, seven banks were selected who observed and experienced the whole process of M&A during 2002 to 2011. The population of this study consists of about 20,231 (KPMG, 2013) employees in seven different banks, which are located in Karachi, Pakistan. We selected

Karachi because it is biggest economic, business and social hub and the highest populated city of Pakistan. A bilingual questionnaire (English and Urdu) was developed to make understandable for the respondents. Through “purposive sampling” 400 bank employees from different management cadre were selected as a sampling unit regardless of their gender, education, designation, and experience. From 400 respondents, 320 sent back/ handover filled questionnaires followed by one soft reminder. After initial screening, from 320 questionnaires 236 were completed and properly filled. Thus, the useable response for this study was 74%.

#### 4.2. Construct Measurements:

All items are measured at five-point Likert scale where “1” agreed to “strongly disagree” and “5” agreed to “strongly agree”. High averages scores indicate high levels of agreement with the statements. The following items are designed to measure employees’ perceptions regarding constructs. To what degree do you agree or disagree with the next items?

*Teamwork (TW)*: TW refers to employees’ mutual relations and consideration for each other’s. It is an important factor for an employee to feel pleased and relaxed at work in the organization. The four items under this variable adopted from the scales developed by (Zhang et. al., 2000) were used to measure the employees’ response about TW.

*Organizational Culture (OC)*: OC refers to organizational customs, values, and environment which impact on the satisfaction level of employees. The four items under this construct adopted from the scales developed by (Zhang et. al., 2000) were used to measure the employees’ response about OC.

*Rewards and Recognition (R&R)*: R&R includes conveyance allowance, health insurance, house rent promotions, sufficient salaries and provision of social benefits in the organization. The four items under this variable used from the scales developed by (Zhang et. al., 2000) were used to measure the employees’ response about R&R. *Education and Training (E&T)*: E&T are key aspects that affect the work quality, and productivity of the employees and organizations. The three items under this variable adopted from the scales designed by (Zhang et. al., 2000) were used to measure the employees’ response about E&T. *Relational Psychological Contract (RPC)*: Four dimensions, job content, social atmosphere, organizational policies and career development are used to measure RPC. The four items under this variable are adopted from the scales developed by (Freese et al., 2008; Smissen et al. 2013) were used to measure the employees’ response about RPC.

*Job Satisfaction (JS)*: Two dimensions, work satisfaction, and growth satisfaction are used to measure the level of JS. The four items under this construct adopted from the scales developed by (Prajogo & Cooper, 2010) were used to measure the employees’ response about JS.

#### 4.3. Partial Least Squares Regression:

Partial least squares (PLS) regression was used to validate the hypotheses of this study (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hartmann, 2005; Sholihin & Pike, 2009). PLS is a popular multivariate technique that used to scrutinize complex research problems (a multifaceted interaction of different kinds variables) (Hartmann *at. el*, 2010). The sample size used in this study (N=236) was comparatively small that also required PLS ( Ali & Park, 2016). Furthermore, this study not only predicts but also explains the variance among main targeted constructs. We employed Partial least squares based structural equation modeling approach (PLS-SEM) through software package Smart PLS 3.

## 5. Analysis and Results

### 5.1. Reliability and Validity of Model:

Reliability test is used to measure the factors consistency, whereas convergent validity is known as a degree in which all included multiple items are used to measure at the same concept (Surienty et al. 2013). Outer loading values of all constructs (items) are within range and found significant at the 0.05 level by scrutinizing  $t/$  and  $p/$  values. Composite reliability (CR) of all constructs which is the measure of the overall reliability of a collection of heterogeneous but similar items and its value should be greater than 0.70 (Mihail & Kloutsiniotis, 2016). All constructs are meeting the minimum threshold level of 0.70 for Cronbach's Alpha (Mihail & Kloutsiniotis, 2016). The values of average variance extracted (AVE) are above the threshold limit of 0.500 (Bagozzi et. al., 1991). All constructs and measurements are provided in table-I.

**Table-I, Reliability and Validity Measurement Model (Reflective)**

Constructs	Items	L.Vs	CR	$\alpha$	AVE	R <sup>2</sup>
<b>Teamwork (TW)</b>	TW-1	0.802	0.825	0.715	0.543	
	TW-2	0.693				
	TW-3	0.813				
	TW-4	0.624				
<b>Organizational Culture (OC)</b>	OC-1	0.820	0.882	0.826	0.651	
	OC-2	0.784				
	OC-3	0.770				
	OC-4	0.851				
<b>Rewards &amp; Recognition (R&amp;R)</b>	R&R-1	0.657	0.836	0.750	0.561	
	R&R-2	0.764				
	R&R-3	0.772				
	R&R-4	0.795				
<b>Education &amp; Trainings (E&amp;T)</b>	E&T-1	0.883	0.905	0.841	0.761	
	E&T-2	0.873				
	E&T-3	0.862				
<b>Relational Psychological Contract (RPC)</b>	RPC-1	0.860	0.924	0.890	0.752	0.641
	RPC-2	0.875				
	RPC-3	0.881				
	RPC-4	0.851				
<b>Job Satisfaction (JS)</b>	JS-1	0.875	0.942	0.918	0.803	0.719
	JS-2	0.902				
	JS-3	0.903				
	JS-4	0.906				

Note: All loadings are significant at 0.050 level (2-tailed); LV= Outer Loading Values;  $\alpha$  = Cronbach's alpha

Table II, Robustness of the model is verified through Collinearity statistic (VIF) which is significant (<5).

**Table II, Collinearity Statistic (VIF)**

Variables	JS	RPC
TW	2.873	2.664
OC	2.892	2.750
R&R	1.883	1.873
E&T	2.480	2.239
RPC	2.784	

Discriminant validity of all reflective constructs in the model is measured through Fornell-Lacker criterion. As per Fornell-Lacker criterion, the square root of each AVE is compared to the correlation of all constructs along with their items and confirmed that all AVE square root (values) are higher than the correlation values ( Mihail & Kloutsiniotis, 2016; Ali & Park, 2016). The details measurement through Fornell-Lacker criterion is given in table-III.

**Table-III, Discriminant Validity**

	E&T	JS	OC	R&R	RPC	TW
E&T	0.873					
JS	0.725	0.896				
OC	0.664	0.677	0.807			
R&R	0.624	0.621	0.594	0.749		
RPC	0.706	0.810	0.706	0.604	0.867	
TW	0.659	0.688	0.758	0.573	0.713	0.737

5.2. Hypotheses Verification:

Table IV; summarize the results of the best-fitted model and explains the direct relationship between exogenous variables and endogenous variable. Three exogenous variables TW, R&R and E&T have a direct significant effect on JS. Thus, the H1, H3 and H4 of this study are supported. Results indicate that there is no significant relationship between OC and JS. Therefore, H2 is not accepted due to incomplete information. All variables are significant at 0.05% level of significance.

**Table-IV, Direct Relationship**

Constructs	Co-efficient of Regression		
	T-statistics	P Values	Conclusion
TW→ JS	2.105	0.036	H <sub>1</sub> : Supported
OC→ JS	1.082	0.280	H <sub>2</sub> : Not Supported
R&R→JS	3.417	0.001	H <sub>3</sub> : Supported
E&T→JS	5.114	0.000	H <sub>4</sub> : Supported

Verification of mediating effect, bootstrapping technique (Smart-PLS) is used with 2000 randomly drawn samples with replacement at 0.05% level of significance (Ringle et al., 2015; Hair, et al., 2014). As shown in table-V, three different levels of mediating effects of four exogenous constructs are verified in this study. (1) TW has partial mediation effect on JS through RPC and supports H5-a, (2) OC has an

indirect mediation effect on JS through RPC and supports H5-b. (3) R&R have partial mediation effect on JS through RPC and support H5-c (4) E&T has partial mediation effect on JS through RPC and support H5-d. In literature, there is no covenant yet that the relationship between independent and dependent variables can be significant excluding defined mediator ( Ali & Park, 2016; Zhao, Lynch, & Chen, 2010). However, it is a condition that indirect effect through mediator has to be significant and mediation is creating a significant effect on endogenous variables by fascinating some indirect effect of exogenous variables (Ali & Park, 2016). In table-V, variance accounted for is used to recognize the indirect effect size with reference to the total effect (Hair et.al, 2013).

**Table-V, Mediating Role of Relational Psychological Contract:**

PC as Mediator	Direct Effect (t-value)	Indirect Effect (t-value)	Total Effect	VAF %	Effect	Results
TW→RPC→ JS	0.099 [2.105]	0.135 [5.440]	0.233	57.93%	Partial Mediation	H5-a, Supported
OC→ RPC→ JS	0.052 [1.082]	0.118 [3.960]	0.160	73.75%	Indirect Mediation	H5-b Supported
R&R→ RPC→ JS	0.107 [2.944]	0.062 [3.286]	0.169	36.68%	Partial Mediation	H5-c Supported
E&T→ RPC→ JS	0.219 [5.142]	0.142 [5.463]	0.361	39.33%	Partial Mediation	H5-d Supported

VAF = variance accounted for; |t|>=1.96 at p=0.05 level; The VAF> 80% designates full mediation, 20% ≤ VAF ≤ 80% shows partial mediation while VAF <20% as no mediation ( Ali & Park, 2016).

**6. Conclusion, Limitations, and Recommendations:**

The main objective of the present paper was to study the association between TQM practices and employees’ job satisfaction at a post-M&A stage within the context of Pakistan banking industry. The results of this paper shown that three TQM soft practices TW, R & R, and E&T have direct and indirect (through RPC) significant relationship with job satisfaction which is also supported by others studies from the literature (Kabak et. al., 2014; Boon Ooi et.al., 2007). On the other hand, there was a feeble direct association between OC and job satisfaction. OC was found to has an insignificant contribution towards’ job satisfaction in the context of Pakistan banking industry. This indicated that OC required mutual trust, integrity, and fairness among employees and between employer and employees. The mediating role of RPC proved this argument as it mediates the effect of OC on job satisfaction and makes it highly significant (H5b). The OC (direct effect) results in contrast with the results from prior studies conducted by Kabak et. al., (2014) and Boon Ooi et.al., (2007), in which they found that the OC has a positive effect on employees’ job satisfaction. RPC was also established to have a positive input towards job satisfaction (H5a, H5b, H5c, and H5d). These finds suggest that employees need support and confidence from senior management and supervisors, for better TQM soft practices. Decentralization, authorization, and faith on employees’ capabilities increase control over their operational environment and enhance their motivation level. The results of the present paper are consistent with literature which found that RPC among employees and between employer and employees increase the level of employees’ satisfaction, commitment, and performance (Flaherty & Pappas, 2000; Noorliza & Zainal, 2000; Boon Ooi et.al., 2007). The results of this study also confirm and contribute to the organizational justice theory,



social exchange theory, emotions theory, learning theory and relational psychological contract theory. The overall result from the present paper is that TQM soft practices can be helpful not only for employees' job satisfaction but also to enhance their individual growth and development which also confirmed by previous studies (Prajogo & Cooper, 2010). However, TQM soft practices are not only effective practices to increase job satisfaction. There are many human resource management (HRM) practices such as reward system and career development which also effect on employees' job satisfaction at the post-M&A stage. The alignment of HRM practices with TQM principles can increase the level of job satisfaction (Prajogo & Cooper, 2010; Snell *et. al.*, 2000).

Like other studies, this paper also has some limitations. First, this research is being conducted in Karachi within the context of Pakistan banking industry at M&A stage which indicates a limited scope. Research on complete banking industry or other industries of Pakistan is recommended to increase the generalizability of the present study model. Second, this study based on cross-sectional data to investigate the behavior of constructs which may effect on results, thus, longitudinal research approach is recommended for future research. Last, it is possible that the association between TQM soft practices and employees' job satisfaction may have been disturbed by common method variance. To overcome this issue, the constructs measurement from different data sources is recommended (Prajogo & Cooper, 2010).

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