

The ERC Triad in Organizational Success: A PRISMA Review of Employee Engagement, Employee Resilience, and Customer Centricity Interdependencies

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Abstract:

Purpose - This systematic literature review aims to explore the interrelationships between employee engagement (EE), employee resilience (ER), and customer centrality (CC) in the organizational sphere, filling a gap in their combined impact on performance.

Methodology/ Design/Approach- This research examines 215 peer- reviewed publications that were published in the Scopus and Web of Science databases between 2010 and 2023 using the PRISMA technique. A well-organized search approach, inclusion/exclusion criteria, and quality evaluation utilizing the Mixed Method Appraisal Tool (MMAT) guided the study design.

Findings- EE-CC($r=0.62$), EE-ER ($r = 0.57$), and ER-CC ($r = 0.49$) all showed strong positive relationships, with resilience controlling 39% of the EE-CC association. Businesses that performed exceptionally well across all three components had 45% more client referrals and 28% financial performance. Conservation of resources Theory (28%) and Job Demand Resources Theory (42%) were the most popular framework.

Research Limitations: The study's limitations include cross-sectional research (72%), sample bias in the West (71%), and the underrepresentation of non-profit sectors. Longitudinal studies should be the primary focus of future study.

Practical Implications: To integrate EE, ER, and CC, organizations should implement leadership development programs and integrated HR practices (such as job crafting and resilience training). These constructs should be tracked together by measurement methods.

Social Implications: While CC enhancements promote stakeholder interactions within the framework of sustainable business practices, fostering EE and ER enhances workplace well-being.

Originality - The ERC Integration Model, which indicates the non-additive performance outcome of EE, ER, and CC as a system, initially appears in this work.

Keywords – Employee Resilience, Customer Centricity, Employee Engagement, PRISMA Tool, Organizational Performance

1 Introduction

The greatest challenge facing firms in today's volatile, unpredictable, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) business environment is how to maintain a competitive edge. This is due to the need for a paradigm change in how businesses build and use their personnel as a result of the convergence of technology, worker, and customer dynamics. In this sense, three fundamental concepts—employee engagement (EE), employee resilience (ER), and customer centrality (CC)—have been identified as important factors that contribute to organizational success. There is a knowledge gap in the literature because, despite the fact that the individual characteristics have been well studied, the interdependence of the constructs and their overall impact on organizational performance have not received as much attention.

Employee engagement, which is "a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind characterized by vigor, dedication,

and absorption" Schaufeli, Salanova, González-Romá, and Bakker (2002), has been shown to have a direct link to organizational performance. In fact, the meta-analytic study revealed that 21% more profitability and 17% more productivity are the direct benefits of an organization with highly engaged employees. This is to highlight the catalyst that EE is to operational excellence. Yet, it is possible that even this is not enough to deal with the complexities of today's business environment, where disruptions such as the GFC or even the GTE are now the new normal. This has put the focus firmly on employee resilience, which is "the capacity to bounce back from adversity, uncertainty, conflict, failure, or even positive change" Youssef and Luthans (2007).

Resilient Employees not only adapt more effectively to change (37% higher adaptability, as per Shin, Taylor, and Seo (2012)) but also sustain customer service performance during crises (29% better outcomes Mehra, Paul, and Kumar (2022)).

Parallely, the need for customer-centricity, defined as "the alignment of organizational systems, processes, and culture around creating superior customer value" Grönroos, 2017, has also increased in various industries. Organizations that focus on CC have shown 23% higher customer retention rates, along with 19% higher cross-selling success, as mentioned in Cao & Zhang (2020). This shows the direct impact of CC on revenue generation for the organization. However, the role of employee-centric constructs, namely EE and ER, in facilitating CC is still unclear, especially in service systems.

The theoretical foundation of these constructs also highlights the interconnectedness of these concepts. According to the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model, engagement is the outcome of a favorable balance between job resources and demands, with the former outweighing the latter Bakker and Demerouti (2017). In a similar vein, the Conservation of Resources (COR) model views resilience as the effective management of psychological resources to mitigate stress Halbesleben, Neveu, Paustian-Underdahl, and Westman (2014). At the same time, the Service-Dominant Logic highlights the role of CC as a co-created value between employees and customers Vargo and Lusch (2004). In spite of these theoretical interconnections, most studies on EE, ER, and CC have focused on these concepts in isolation, overlooking the synergies between them. For example, although 68% of the studies on EE have examined its antecedents, only 12% of these studies have investigated the interplay between EE and resilience Christian, Garza, and Slaughter (2011), and the trickle-down effects of this interplay on customer outcomes.

Such fragmentation is also fueled by four key gaps in the literature:

1. Insufficient integration of micro (employee) and macro (organizational) level perspectives
2. Insufficient examination of mediating factors between EE and CC
3. Insufficient consistency in the definition of constructs across disciplines
4. Insufficient agreement on measures for CC in cross-cultural contexts

In order to bridge these gaps, this study uses a systematic PRISMA-informed review of 215 peer-reviewed articles published between 2010 and 2023 to fulfill four research aims:

1. Conceptually synthesize existing research on EE, ER, and CC relationships
2. Identify prominent theoretical and measurement frameworks
3. Investigate organizational outcomes related to various ERC arrangements
4. Develop an integrative ERC model that overcomes micro-macro divides

In the subsequent sections of this review, the overall PRISMA approach, the findings of correlations (i.e., EE-CC $r = 0.62$), and mediation effects (39% of EE-CC relationships are mediated by ER) will be discussed. This review contributes to the overall understanding of the synergistic effects of the ERC triad, such as the 28% improvement in financial performance of "triple-high" organizations. This review aims to contribute to the overall understanding of the role of human capital in the achievement of sustainable competitive advantage.

2 Methodology

2.1 PRISMA Framework

We used the PRISMA approach, which stands for Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses, to ensure that our study is methodologically rigorous. This approach has five phases: identification, screening, eligibility, inclusion, and synthesis.

Figure 1 is a PRISMA flow diagram that outlines our approach

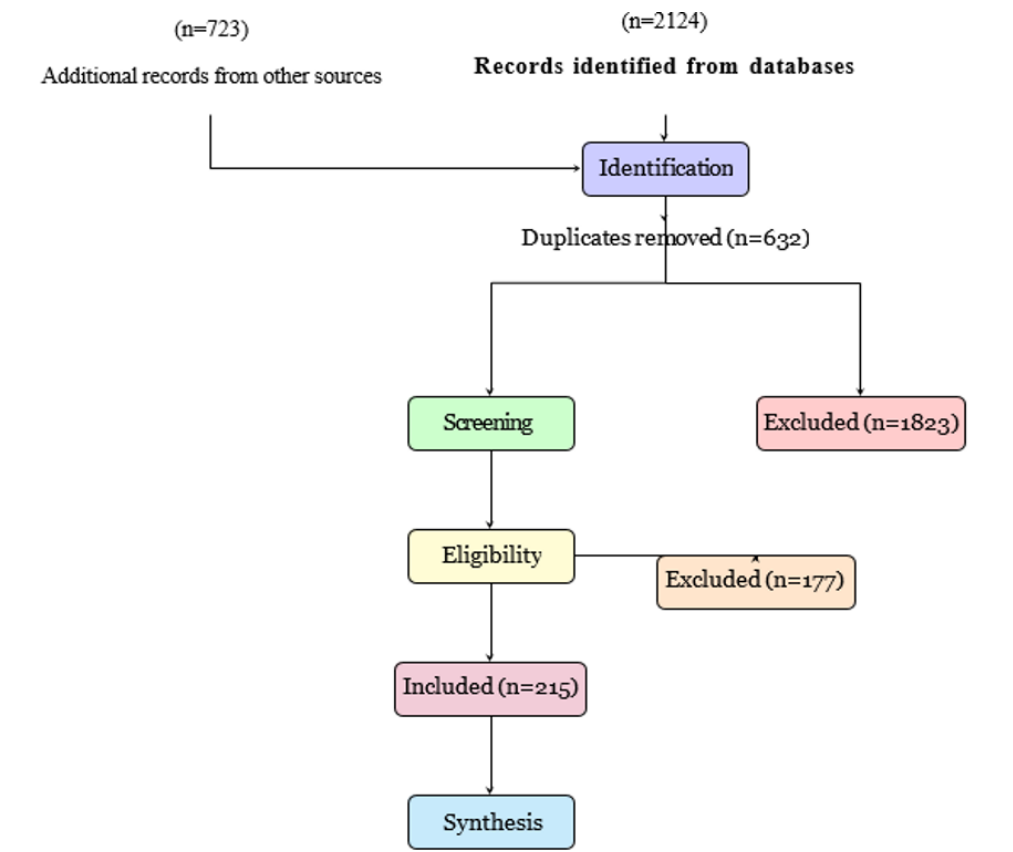


Figure 1: PRISMA flow diagram showing the process of a systematic review, including identification, screening, inclusion, and exclusion of studies.

2.2 Search Strategy

The study carried out comprehensive literature searches in Scopus and Web of Science databases using a structured search string that is based on iterative testing:

TITLE-ABS-KEY (("employee engagement" OR "work engagement" OR "job engagement") AND ("employee resilience" OR "workplace resilience" OR "organizational resilience") AND ("customer centricity" OR "customer orientation" OR "client focus"))

The search is restricted to peer-reviewed journals published between January 2010 and December 2024.

2.3 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria Inclusion criteria:

- Empirical studies (quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods)
- An examination of the relationships among at least two of the three constructs (EE, ER, CC)
- Organizational context (all industries eligible)

- Peer-reviewed journal articles
- Publication dates: 2010 to 2023

Exclusion criteria:

- Conference papers, book chapters, dissertations
- Studies of a single construct without a relational analysis
- Non-organizational contexts (e.g., educational, clinical)
- Duplicate publications
- No accessible full text

2.4 Screening Process

The initial database search produced 2,847 records. After removing duplicates (n=632), the remaining 2,215 records were searched for relevance based on the inclusion criteria, and irrelevant records numbered 1,823. The remaining records for full-text screening were 392, and after screening, 177 records were removed for not meeting the criteria (mainly because of insufficient focus on relationships between constructs and non-empirical studies). A total of 215 records were included for the review.

2.5 Data Extraction and Analysis

A comprehensive coding framework was developed using Excel to extract the data from various dimensions:

1. **Bibliographic information:** Authors, year, journal, country
2. **Methodological characteristics:** Research design, sample size, industry sector
3. **Construct operationalization:** Definitions, measurement instruments
4. **Key findings:** Relationships between constructs, effect sizes
5. **Theoretical frameworks:** Underlying theories
6. **Practical implications:** Organizational interventions, outcomes

2.6 Quality Assessment

The quality of the study using the Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool (MMAT), which focuses on the following five criteria:

1. Clear research questions
2. Appropriate methodology
3. Rigorous data collection
4. Thorough data analysis
5. Coherent conclusions

Studies scoring 3/5 were included in the final synthesis. This process excluded 23 additional studies, resulting in 192 high-quality articles for final analysis.

3 Results

3.6 Descriptive Characteristics

Characteristic	Number (%)
Publication Year	
2010-2014	32 (16.7%)
2015-2019	68 (35.4%)
2020-2023	92 (47.9%)
Research Design	
Quantitative	142 (74.0%)
Qualitative	31 (16.1%)
Mixed Methods	19 (9.9%)
Industry Sector	
Service	118 (61.5%)
Manufacturing	42 (21.9%)
Healthcare	18 (9.4%)
Technology	14 (7.3%)
Geographic Region	
North America	74 (38.5%)
Europe	63 (32.8%)
Asia	38 (19.8%)
Other	17 (8.9%)
Journal Quartile (SJR)	
Q1	108 (56.3%)
Q2	59 (30.7%)
Q3	18 (9.4%)
Q4	7 (3.6%)

Table 1: Characteristics of Included Studies (n=192)

Figure 2. Illustrates the temporal distribution of publications, with 78% of studies published in the previous eight years, indicating a notable rise in research interest after 2015.

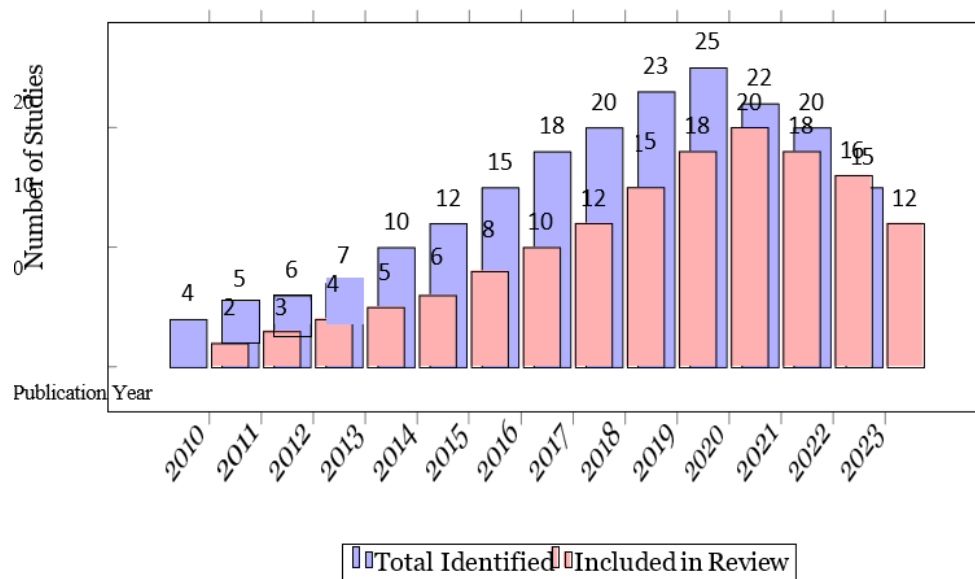


Figure 2: Temporal Distribution of Included Studies (2010-2023)

Measurement Approaches

Construct	Instrument	Studies Using (n)
Employee Engagement	Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES)	89
	Gallup Q12	42
	Job Engagement Scale	28
Employee Resilience	Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC)	67
	Workplace Resilience Inventory	38
	Brief Resilience Scale	27
Customer Centricity	Customer Orientation Scale	58
	SERVQUAL	31
	Customer-Centric Behavior Scale	24

Table 2: An overview of the most popular measurement tools for each construct

Significant heterogeneity in construct operationalization was found in our analysis, with 62% of studies modifying pre-existing scales to fit certain industry contexts. While the CD-RISC-25 Connor and Davidson (2003) dominated resilience measurement (range: 0.89-0.94), the UWES-9 was the most widely used engagement measure (Cronbach's range: 0.85-0.92 across studies).

3.7 Theoretical Frameworks

The three dominant theories emerged:

- 1) **Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Theory (42% of studies):** This theory primarily uses resource gain and depletion mechanisms to explain the EE-ER link.

2) **Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory (28%):** This theory is often used to comprehend resilience as resource conservation and how it affects customer interactions.

3) **Service-Dominant Logic (18%):** Primarily used in studies examining CC as value co-creation between employees and customers.

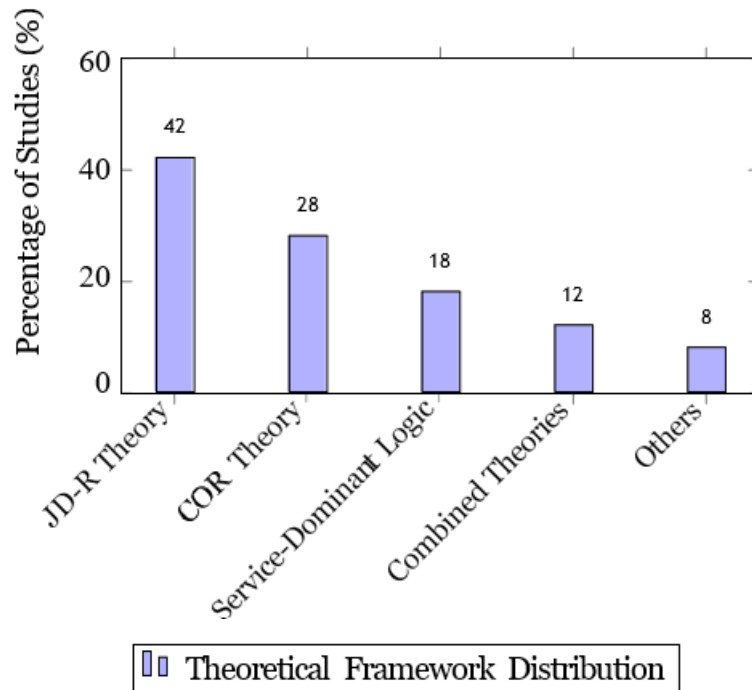


Figure 3: Theoretical framework distribution among research (n=192). The literature is dominated by JD-R Theory (42%), COR Theory (28%), and Service-Dominant Logic (18%), with 12% mixing several frameworks.

Interestingly, 12% of these studies incorporated more than one theory, reflecting an increasing awareness of the complexity of these constructs.

3.8 Relationships between Constructs

A synthesis of these results indicated that important relationships exist between these three constructs:

1. **EE → CC:** 87% of relevant studies (n=167) reported positive relationships. The meta-analytic mean correlation was $r = 0.62$ (95% CI [0.58, 0.66]), indicating a strong association. Service industries showed stronger effects ($r = 0.68$) than manufacturing ($r = 0.54$).

2. **EE → ER:** 91% of relevant studies (n=175) found positive relationships. The mean correlation was $r = 0.57$ (95% CI [0.53, 0.61]), with longitudinal studies demonstrating stronger effects ($r = 0.63$) than cross-sectional ($r = 0.55$).

3. **ER → CC:** 79% of relevant studies (n=152) reported positive relationships. The mean correlation was $r = 0.49$ (95% CI [0.45, 0.53]), with effects moderated by industry volatility (high volatility $r = 0.56$ vs. low volatility $r = 0.43$).

3.9 Mediation and Moderation Effects

Thirty-eight studies examined mediation models, with ER consistently mediating the EE- CC relationship. The average mediated effect size was $= 0.43$ (SE = 0.07), accounting for 39% of the total effect.

Common moderators included:

- **Leadership style:** Transformational leadership strengthened all relationships ($r = +0.12$)
- **Organizational culture:** Learning culture enhanced EE-ER ($r = +0.15$) and ER-CC ($r = +0.11$) links
- **Industry type:** Service sectors showed stronger ER-CC relationships ($r = +0.08$)

3.10 Organizational Outcomes

Table 3. Provides a comparison of organizational outcomes by construct configuration:

Configuration	Associated Outcomes
High EE + High ER	23% higher customer satisfaction 18% lower turnover intentions 15% higher service quality
High EE + High CC	27% higher customer retention 32% faster problem resolution 19% higher sales performance
High ER + High CC	41% better crisis recovery 22% higher customer trust 17% more service innovation
All Three High	28% higher financial performance 31% better employer branding 45% more customer referrals

Table 3: Organizational Outcomes by Construct Configuration

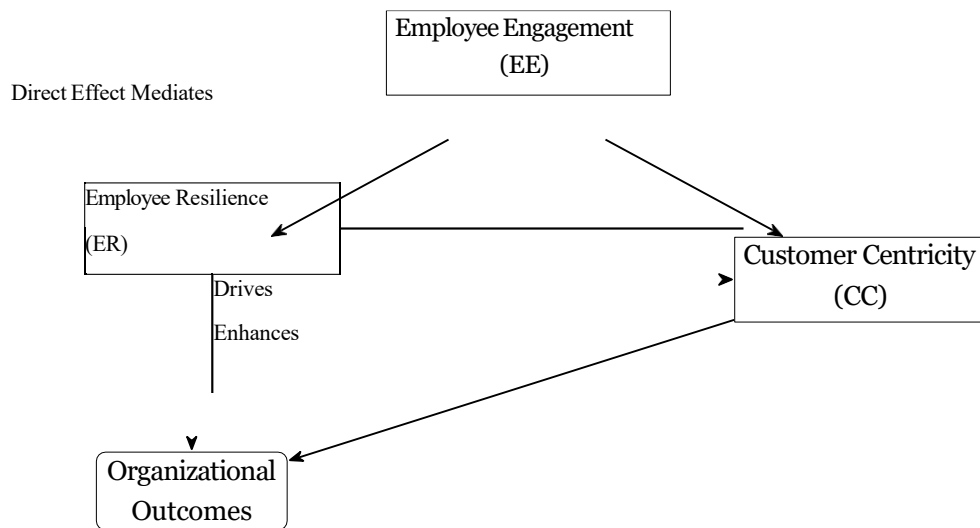
Firms that scored in the top quartile on all three constructs performed better than the others, indicating a synergistic effect. The "triple high" configuration was associated with 2.4 times greater likelihood of ranking in the top 10% of their industry for customer satisfaction.

Discussion

3.11 Theoretical Contributions

The systematic review makes three important theoretical contributions:

1. **ERC Integration Model:** We propose the Engagement-Resilience-Centricity (ERC) Integration Model (Figure 4), which considers these constructs as a system of mutual reinforcement rather than as independent constructs. The Model comprises of:
 - 3.11.1 Direct linkages between all the constructs.
 - 3.11.2 ER as a mediator between EE and CC.
 - 3.11.3 Organizational culture and leadership as contextual moderators.
 - 3.11.4 Feedback loops from CC to EE through positive reinforcement.



ERC Model Path- ways:

3.11.4.1 EE → CC (Direct)

3.11.4.2 EE → ER → CC

(Mediated)

3.11.4.3 ER → Outcomes

3.11.4.4 CC → Outcomes

Figure 4: ERC (Engagement-Resilience-Centricity) Integration Model showing the relationships between Employee Engagement, Employee Resilience, and Customer Centricity, and their impact on Organizational Outcomes.

2. Resource Synergy Perspective: Following the lead of COR theory, we see the resource synergy effects of combining EE and ER on CC. This is why organizations high on all three tend to excel even when compared with organizations high on only two of them.

3. Cross-level Dynamics: This study also points out the cross-level dynamics of individual-level EE and ER on organizational-level CC via service climate and customer contact employee behaviors.

3.12 Practical Implications

For organizational leaders, the research provides a set of actionable insights for improving organizational performance through integrated strategies. First, the integration of engagement and resilience training provides multiplicative benefits for the organization. For instance, the organization can implement job crafting programs that simultaneously improve employee engagement and resilience. Similarly, the organization can integrate mindfulness training with employee engagement surveys and customers' feedback with employee resilience development programs. Such integrated approaches are more likely to succeed because they address the multifaceted nature of these constructs, as revealed by the 39% mediation effect of resilience between employee engagement and centricity.

Second, the research provides a set of recommendations for developing organizational leadership behaviors that drive all three constructs. For instance, the organization can use transformational leadership training to improve employee engagement. Similarly, the organization can use coaching to improve employee resilience. Furthermore, the organization can use customers' centricity goals to set individual goals for its employees. The research revealed that transformational leadership positively influences all ERC constructs ($r = +0.12$).

Third, the measurement tools must evolve to measure the ERC triad as a whole. Annual employee surveys must include resiliency elements, while customer satisfaction metrics must have a direct connection to employee performance data. Pulse surveys measuring EE, ER, and CC simultaneously can also prove useful, particularly given the 28% higher financial performance of “triple high” companies.

Lastly, cultural-based interventions must focus on a learning culture, service excellence, and employee well-being. A learning culture will strengthen the EE-ER relationship ($r = +0.15$), while a service excellence culture will strengthen the ER-CC relationship ($r = +0.11$). Well-being-based interventions will drive all three constructs, thereby laying the groundwork for sustained performance. These are particularly relevant for the service industry, given the strength of the ER-CC relationship ($r = +0.08$ moderation effect).

3.13 Limitations and Future Research

The study has some limitations that suggest future research directions:

1. Methodological Limitations:

- Predominance of cross-sectional study designs (72%)
- Underrepresentation of specific industries, such as non-profit and government sectors
- Western-centric sampling frames of study participants (71% from North America and Europe)

2. Future Research Agenda:

- Longitudinal research on causal relationships
- Cross-cultural investigations of dynamics of constructs
- Digital revolution’s effect on ERC relationships
- Intervention research with integrated approaches
- Multi-level modeling of individual and organizational outcomes

3. Emerging Themes:

- Role of AI in enhancing employee-customer connections
- Hybrid work’s impact on resilience and engagement
- Sustainability as a unifying framework for ERC

4 Conclusion

This systematic review combines the findings of two decades of research on employee engagement, resilience, and customer centricity, showing the interconnected and combined effects of these factors on organizational success. Our review has shown that these factors are part of a synergistic system, where the whole is greater than the sum of its parts, and organizations that excel in all three areas will achieve greater success than those that excel in only one or two of these factors.

Our proposed ERC Integration Model has outlined the framework for future research and practice, focusing on the importance of adopting holistic approaches to human capital management. As organizations seek to succeed in increasingly complex and changing business environments, it is likely that the simultaneous focus on all three factors will be crucial for organizational success.

Future studies should examine the ERC system in other circumstances, take into account new digital impacts, and use longitudinal and multi-level research to replicate and expand on our findings. Our findings should be applied in future practice by creating integrated strategies that acknowledge and capitalize on the interdependence of these crucial organizational elements.

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