UNLOCKING THE POWER OF HR PRACTICES, WORK SELF-EFFICACY, ORGANIZATIONAL SELF-ESTEEM, INTERPERSONAL HARMONY AND GOAL CONGRUENCE TO MITIGATE PANDEMIC THREAT

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Abstract: *This study aims to investigate the factors that mitigate pandemic threat among employees during pandemic crises. The research framework outlined factors such as human resource practices, work self-efficacy and organizational self-esteem, interpersonal harmony and goal congruence to investigate pandemic threat. In addition, the moderating effect of employee well-being is tested between the relationship of pandemic threat and employee engagement in the workplace during crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic. The research model of this study is based on empirical investigation. Data were collected from employees working in Saudi logistics organizations who had been confronted by the pandemic crisis. For data collection, a purposive sampling approach is adopted. Overall, 223 respondents participated in the research survey. The findings of this study indicate that HR practices, work-related self-efficacy, organizational self-esteem, interpersonal harmony, and goal congruence collectively explain substantial variance (R^2 49%) in mitigating pandemic threat among employees. Therefore, prediction power analysis revealed a sizable predictive power Q^2 of 31% to predict mitigating pandemic threat among employees. Concerning f^2 analysis, it is found that interpersonal harmony has a substantial effect size on mitigating pandemic threat among employees. Theoretically, this research has established a crisis-induced integrated model that enriches the human resource literature. Practically, this research has suggested that HR practices could play an important role in mitigating pandemic threat. Similarly, this study has established that work self-efficacy motivates employees to continue work during crisis and hence needs managerial attention. Moving further, organizational self-esteem brings confidence among employees to deal with unpredictable situations. Therefore, policy makers should pay attention to developing crisis-induced HR practices and enhancing employee self-efficacy, organizational self-esteem, interpersonal harmony and goal congruence, which in turn reduce threat among employees during pandemic crises. This research is valuable because it provides a universal view to policy makers in designing and developing crisis-induced policies that are not only limited to pandemic crises but will also help during natural disasters such as floods, earthquicks and tsunamis.*
Keywords: work-related self-efficacy; organizational self-esteem; interpersonal harmony; goal congruence; work engagement; employee well-being; perceived pandemic threat.

1. Introduction. The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic has created a sense of threat among employees, resulting in a negative impact on employee productivity and work engagement. According to Lodorfos et al. (2023), the greatest challenge for organizations is to understand how to mitigate pandemic threat perception and empower employees to deal with future uncertainty and crisis. The fear of the COVID-19 pandemic was remarkably high among workers due to its contagious nature and high mortality ratio (Chen & Eyoun, 2021; Lodorfos et al., 2023). The pandemic has caused unprecedented economic and health catastrophes and eventually created fear of job insecurity, anxiety, reduction in salaries, physical health issues and stress in the workplace (Chen & Eyoun, 2021). There is mutual consensus among researchers that employees are distressed and show less performance in the workplace due to fear of the pandemic (Ahorsu et al., 2020; Mantello & Ho, 2023; Rahi, 2022b; Sasaki et al., 2020). These crises demand that policy makers introduce strategies that reduce employee fear and increase employee work engagement during crises (Sasaki et al., 2020). Consistently, this research strives to investigate the impact of HR practices, work self-efficacy, organizational self-esteem, interpersonal harmony and goal congruence in determining pandemic fear among employees.

COVID-19 has created an exciting situation for organizations, and therefore, understanding factors that reduce pandemic fear is critical (Kloutsiniotis et al., 2022). Authors such as Hamouche et al. (2023) have stated that crisis-induced training programs could enhance employee autonomy and decision-making power, which in turn boost employee performance in the workplace during crises. Similarly, work-related self-efficacy denotes the characteristics that enhance employee emotional attachment and enthusiasm towards work and mitigate pandemic threat (He et al., 2021). The literature has established that the feeling of being worthy among employees has engaged employees in the workplace during crises; therefore, organizational self-esteem must be taken into consideration when developing new policies (Bowling et al., 2010; Kim & Beehr, 2018). Moreover, interpersonal harmony and goal congruence have indicated that employees use energy to continue their work even in hardship situations such as pandemic crises and therefore should be incorporated (Liu et al., 2021; Mani & Mishra, 2020). Moving further well-being is another core factor that could impact employee performance during a pandemic crisis (Andrulli & Gerards, 2023). Therefore, the moderating role of employee well-being is studied between mitigating fear of pandemic threat and employee work engagement. This study is original, as it develops an amalgamated research model that consists of HR practices, work-related self-efficacy, organizational self-esteem, goal congruence and well-being towards mitigating pandemic threat. Additionally, this study provides useful outcomes for policy makers regarding how to reduce future pandemic threats among employees and engage them in the workplace during crises such as COVID-19. The remainder of this research paper is followed by a literature review, research methods, data analysis, discussion, conclusion and research limitations and future directions.

2. Literature review.

2.1 Human resource practices. On the cusp of the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic wave, employee engagement in the workplace has become an emerging issue and needs to be addressed (Chanana, 2021). Although a substantial number of studies have established a strong connection between HR practices and employee performance Ahmed et al. (2023); Rurkkhum (2023); Wongsansukcharoen & Thaweepaiboonwong (2023), the relationship between HR practices and pandemic threat has yet to be addressed. According to Kloutsiniotis et al. (2022), HR practices could motivate employees in the workplace even during pandemic crises such as COVID-19. The human resource literature has suggested that right HR practices and policies are beneficial for both employees and organizations (El-Kassar et al., 2022; Sun & Pan, 2008; Yamin, 2022). Consistently, the focus of current research is to scrutinize how HR practices mitigate pandemic threat among employees and enhance employee productivity. A recent study conducted by El-Kassar et al. (2022) took HR practices as a single factor and investigated employee innovative work behavior. The literature has synthesized that HR practices such as training and development, employee participation in decision making and employee autonomy are core practices that motivate employees and enable them to deal with pandemic threats (Hoang et al., 2023; Kloutsiniotis et al., 2022; Ngo et al., 2023). Thus, following the above arguments and consistent with El-Kassar et al. (2022) and Kloutsiniotis et al. (2022), it is assumed that:

H1: HR practices have a positive impact on mitigating employee-perceived pandemic threat.

2.2 Work self-efficacy. Conservation resource theory postulates that resource draining could be reduced if employees cope with characteristics that enhance their personal values (De Clercq & Pereira, 2022). Employees' personal characteristics, energies, conditions, and emotions are considered core values to achieve organizational goals (Abdalatif & Yamin, 2022; Cook & Gilin, 2023). Nevertheless, in the pandemic context, work self-efficacy is explained as employee values that enhance employees' ability to mitigate external threats and enhance their emotional attachment and enthusiasm towards work (He et al., 2021; Yamin & Alyoubi,

2020). The self-efficacy literature has confirmed that efficacious employees have greater willpower and confidence in dealing with crises (He et al., 2021; Lin & Liu, 2017; Sun et al., 2021). Another study conducted by Karatepe et al. (2019) stated that employees with self-efficacy have greater abilities to manage working activities even in emotionally upsetting situations. Therefore, it is assumed that work self-efficacy among employees will encourage employees to confront unprecedented crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, and mitigate pandemic threats among employees (Joie-La Marle et al., 2021; Yamin, 2021). Thus, work self-efficacy is hypothesized as follows:

H2: Work self-efficacy has a positive impact on mitigating perceived pandemic threat.

2.3 Organizational self-esteem and interpersonal harmony. Although employee work self-efficacy motivates employees to continue work during crises such as pandemics, the importance of organizational self-esteem cannot be ignored in determining employee perceptions of pandemic threats (Lin et al., 2018). Organizational self-esteem is the extent to which employees perceive that an organization considers its employees to be worthy members and to have strong competency to confront unpredictable situations such as the COVID-19 pandemic (Lin et al., 2018). The literature has revealed that employees with satisfactory organizational self-esteem remain motivated, engaged and productive in the workplace during crises (Bowling et al., 2010; Kim & Beehr, 2018). Therefore, the current study has conceptualized that organizational self-esteem will reduce employee fear during pandemics, life-threatening situations and disasters (Toth et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2020). Another factor that could reduce pandemic threat is interpersonal harmony among coworkers. In a harmonious relationship, employees acknowledge others' concerns without being ridiculed and take their advice to deal with life-threatening crises (Liu et al., 2021). Prior studies have confirmed that employees stay confident through interpersonal harmony and use energy to continue their work even in hardship situations such as pandemic crises (Liu et al., 2021; Mani & Mishra, 2020). Therefore, the following hypotheses are conceptualized:

H3: Organizational self-esteem has a positive impact on mitigating perceived pandemic threat.

H4: Interpersonal harmony has a positive impact on mitigating perceived pandemic threat.

2.4 Goal congruence. Goal congruence denotes the consistency between employee and organizational goals and is an essential condition that motivates employees to develop positive attitudes and behaviors towards organizational strategies (Arefin et al., 2022). Employee goal congruence is essential in achieving organizational strategic goals. Similarly, during crisis time periods, goal congruence characteristics encourage employees to stay confident and continue work for mutual interest (Alyoubi & Yamin, 2021; Arefin et al., 2022). The literature has indicated that common goals create an emotional sense of solidarity among employees that they do not alone result in decreased fear intensity (Li et al., 2021; Wu & Lee, 2016). According to Yuan et al. (2021), the strategy of being in the same boat creates positive energy among employees, which eventually motivates employees to continue their work even in challenging or life-threatening situations. Therefore, this study has conceptualized that goal congruence factors will encourage employees to work together during crises and mitigate pandemic threats. Moving further well-being is another core factor that could impact employee performance during a pandemic crisis (Andrulli & Gerards, 2023). Prior literature has indicated that employee well-being enhances employee work engagement and mitigates external threats Karani et al., 2021). Therefore, well-being is conceptualized as a moderating factor between the relationship between mitigating pandemic threat and employee work engagement. Thus, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H5: Goal congruence has a positive impact on mitigating perceived pandemic threat.

H6: Mitigating pandemic threat has a positive impact on employee work engagement.

H7: Employee well-being positively moderates the relationship between pandemic threat and employee work engagement.
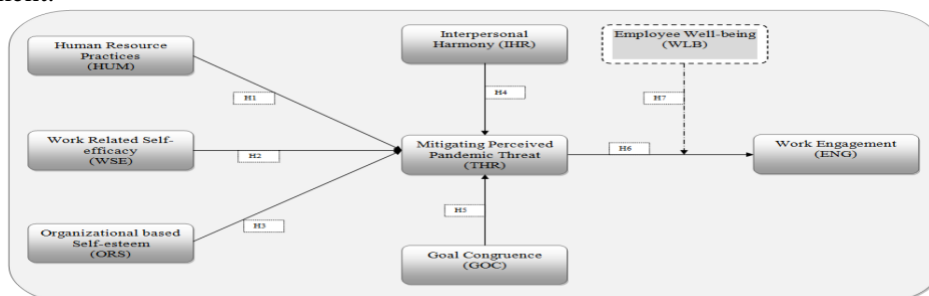

Figure 1. Research framework
Sources: developed by the author.

3. Methodology and research methods.

3.1 Scale development. Scale items were selected from prior literature based on human resource practices, employee well-being and work engagement. Scale items for the measure HR practices were adapted from El-Kassar et al. (2022) and Kloutsiniotis et al. (2022). Therefore, work-related self-efficacy items were selected from Luthans et al. (2007). Next to this scale, items for the organizational-based self-esteem construct were adopted from Milliman et al. (2003). Moving further interpersonal harmony was measured with scale items adopted from Pooja et al. (2016). Scale items for goal congruence were adopted from De Clercq & Pereira (2022). Likewise, well-being scale items were adopted from Rahi (2022b). The mitigating perceived pandemic threat factor was measured with scale items adopted from De Clercq & Pereira (2022). Scale items for the factor work engagement were adopted from Yoo (2016) and Rahi (2022b). Scale items were enumerated on a 7-point Likert scale, where 1 stands for strongly disagree and 7 stands for strongly agree.

3.2 Methods, sampling and data collection. This study strives to investigate factors that mitigate pandemic threat among employees and engage them in the workplace during crises such as COVID-19. Therefore, the research design of this study is based on a quantitative research approach. The quantitative type of research collects fresh data from respondents and empirically tests assumptions. Nevertheless, for data collection, it is essential to determine the research population. The population of this study was employees working in Saudi organizations. The sample size of this study was 220, consistent with prior studies (Rahi, 2023; Yamin, 2021). According to Rahi (2017a), a sample of 200 responses is adequate for factor analysis. Consequently, the researcher targeted the collection of 20 extra responses to avoid any uncertainty during factor analysis. Concerning the sampling approach, data were collected through a purposive sampling approach (Rahi, 2017a; Yamin & Sweiss, 2020). Researchers believe that employees who have worked during the COVID-19 pandemic will answer more accurately than fresh recruits with no work experience during the pandemic. Consistently, those employees who worked during COVID-19 were requested to complete the questionnaire by recalling their past experience at their job place during the COVID-19 crisis. Overall, 239 respondents were approached and requested to complete the questionnaire. In return, 223 respondents had participated in the research survey and returned the questionnaires, with a response rate of 93%. These responses were further analysed with a structural equation modelling approach.

4. Data analysis.

4.1 Common method bias. The current study is cross-sectional, and therefore, there is a potential threat of common method bias. Authors such as Rahi (2022a) have stated that survey-based research could be affected by common method variance bias (CMB); therefore, testing for CMB is needed. In this study, common method variance bias is tested through procedural and statistical remedies. Following procedural remedies, the researcher used simple and concise language in the survey questionnaire. Furthermore, questionnaires were jumbled up to obtain more attention and accurate answers from the respondents (Rahi, 2017a; Rahi et al., 2022a). Moving towards statistical remedies, Harman's single factor solution test is used. The results of Harman's single-factor solution revealed that the maximum variance explained by the first factor was only 21%, which is substantially less than the threshold value of 40%. These findings have established that CMB is not a potential threat in this study and that the data are valid for inferential analysis.

4.2 Structural equation modelling approach. The structural equation modelling approach (SEM) is taken for data analysis. There are two types of SEM, namely, variance-based structural equation modelling and covariance-based structural equation modelling. The objective of this study is to develop a new model instead of testing an existing model; therefore, VB-SEM is the most appropriate approach to consider. In addition, VB-SEM has substantial support from prior studies (Rahi, 2023; Rahi, et al., 2021b; Yamin, 2020). For SEM computation, Smart-PLS software v.3.3.3 is used (Rahi, 2017b; Rahi et al., 2018).

4.2.1 Factor reliability and convergent validity. The first step of inferential analysis is to determine factor reliability, indicator reliability and convergent validity. Therefore, Cronbach's alpha values were taken to establish factor reliability. The results indicate that Cronbach's alpha values were higher than the conservative threshold of >.70 and hence confirmed factor reliability (Rahi, 2022a). Similarly, indicator reliability was tested with indicator loading, whereby the results indicate that indicator loading values were larger than the threshold >.60, hence establishing indicator reliability (Rahi, 2017a; Rahi, 2022b). The convergent validity of the factors was established with average variance extracted following a threshold value >.50 (Rahi, 2017a). Table 1 exhibits satisfactory results of the factor reliability, indicator reliability and convergent validity.

Table 1. Factor reliability and convergent validity

Scale	Loadings >0.60	(α) >0.70	CR ≥.70	AVE ≥ 0.50
ENG1: At workplace employee feels strong and vigorous.	0.841	0.814	0.888	0.726
ENG2: At workplace employees do their work enthusiastically.	0.863			
ENG3: At workplace employee feels proud regarding the work they do.	0.852			
GOC1: My work objectives are is fully aligned with my colleagues.	0.879	0.863	0.916	0.785
GOC2: Employees are fully aware with higher management decisions.	0.891			
GOC3: Employees have same vision regarding organizational future.	0.888			
HUM1: Employees in my organization have necessary training to complete quality work.	0.943	0.814	0.877	0.706
HUM2: Employees works in front-line get extensive training every year.	0.842			
HUM3: Employees get training to deal with unprecedented situation like pandemic.	0.721			
IHR1: At work place I have capability to deal with colleagues amicably.	0.889	0.868	0.919	0.792
IHR2: I rarely feel that there is conflict between my colleagues and myself.	0.881			
IHR3: My colleagues and I amicably resolve issues if conflict arises.	0.899			
ORS1: Employee feels worthy in this organization.	0.880	0.806	0.886	0.723
ORS2: Employee feels that they are important resource in the organization.	0.885			
ORS3: Employee feels that organization has faith on them.	0.782			
THR1: I believe I can deal with threats like COVID-19.	0.719	0.749	0.858	0.670
THR2: At work place I have ability to keep threats out of my mind.	0.872			
THR3: I believe I will not dwell into pandemic threat.	0.855			
WLB1: In this organization attention is given on employee well-being.	0.865	0.818	0.891	0.732
WLB2: This organization has stress free environment.	0.840			
WLB3: Employees are psychological satisfied with their job.	0.862			
WSE1: Employees feel confident to analyse and solve organizational problems.	0.858	0.787	0.876	0.702
WSE2: Employee feels confident to participate in organizational strategic discussion.	0.799			
WSE3: Employee feels confident to discuss their expertise with management	0.855			

Sources: developed by the author.

4.2.2 Discriminative validity of the factors. Although the results have confirmed satisfactory factor reliability, it is mandatory to test the discriminant validity of the factors (Podsakoff et al., 2003; Rahi et al., 2018). Discriminant validity demonstrates that factors are discriminant and measure distinct concepts (Rahi et al., 2018). To ensure discriminant validity of the factors, the Fornell and Larcker method is used (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Rahi et al., 2018). According to Fornell and Larcker, values of the average variance extracted must be greater than corresponding factor values (Fornell, 1992). Table 2 depicts that the square root of the AVE of each construct is higher than the corresponding factor correlation values, hence establishing the discriminant validity of the factors.

Table 2. Fornell and Larcker method

Factors	ENG	GOC	HUM	IHR	ORS	THR	WLB	WSE
ENG	0.852							
GOC	0.361	0.886						
HUM	0.153	0.080	0.840					
IHR	0.379	0.293	0.149	0.890				
ORS	0.366	0.350	0.079	0.391	0.850			
THR	0.530	0.371	0.231	0.594	0.470	0.818		
WLB	0.389	0.321	0.168	0.487	0.341	0.534	0.856	
WSE	0.334	0.299	0.144	0.358	0.373	0.466	0.407	0.838

Sources: developed by the author.

The discriminant validity of the factors was confirmed with indicator cross-loading values (Rahi et al., 2018). Cross-loading values were estimated through the PLS algorithm. The results of the cross-loading calculation revealed that the loadings of the indictors were higher than the corresponding factor loadings. Findings of the cross-loading analysis are shown in Table 3, wherein indicator loadings were satisfactory when comparing corresponding factor loadings.

Table 3. Cross loadings method

Indicators	ENG	GOC	HUM	IHR	ORS	THR	WLB	WSE
ENG1	0.841	0.260	0.155	0.257	0.305	0.363	0.248	0.246
ENG2	0.863	0.376	0.098	0.353	0.350	0.503	0.367	0.311
ENG3	0.852	0.271	0.148	0.343	0.277	0.466	0.361	0.289
GOC1	0.285	0.879	0.014	0.285	0.337	0.344	0.322	0.288
GOC2	0.321	0.891	0.085	0.236	0.317	0.335	0.261	0.258
GOC3	0.358	0.888	0.122	0.256	0.271	0.304	0.268	0.248
HUM1	0.169	0.092	0.943	0.201	0.119	0.273	0.234	0.169
HUM2	0.136	0.039	0.842	0.045	0.011	0.133	0.031	0.054
HUM3	0.025	0.051	0.721	0.041	0.000	0.088	0.054	0.105
IHR1	0.292	0.221	0.102	0.889	0.352	0.532	0.427	0.301
IHR2	0.329	0.246	0.141	0.881	0.332	0.520	0.412	0.301
IHR3	0.391	0.314	0.156	0.899	0.361	0.534	0.461	0.354
ORS1	0.326	0.269	0.091	0.372	0.880	0.416	0.339	0.352
ORS2	0.322	0.221	0.063	0.381	0.885	0.407	0.269	0.319
ORS3	0.284	0.412	0.045	0.238	0.782	0.376	0.258	0.278
THR1	0.339	0.373	0.117	0.420	0.518	0.719	0.410	0.405
THR2	0.477	0.285	0.218	0.521	0.319	0.872	0.440	0.358
THR3	0.475	0.259	0.224	0.512	0.332	0.855	0.460	0.385
WLB1	0.349	0.299	0.122	0.474	0.355	0.487	0.865	0.349
WLB2	0.291	0.245	0.149	0.380	0.251	0.437	0.840	0.356
WLB3	0.354	0.276	0.161	0.392	0.264	0.446	0.862	0.342
WSE1	0.242	0.266	0.156	0.319	0.314	0.391	0.290	0.858
WSE2	0.369	0.226	0.131	0.203	0.331	0.393	0.390	0.799
WSE3	0.227	0.261	0.074	0.380	0.293	0.386	0.342	0.855

Sources: developed by the author.

Assessing the discriminant validity of the factors is critical and cannot be evaluated with a single method. Therefore, it is recommended to cross-verify the discriminant validity of the factors through the heterotrait monotrait ratio method (HTMT) (Gold et al., 2001; Rahi et al., 2018). According to Rahi et al. (2018), the HTMT method suggests that values of the HTMT ratios must be less than 0.85 or 0.90, representing that factors are discriminant and measure distinct concepts. Therefore, the results confirmed that HTMT ratios were less than the conservative threshold of 0.90, hence establishing satisfactory discriminant validity of the factors. Table 4 exhibits the results of the HTMT ratios.

Table 4. Heterotrait-monotrait ratios method

Factors	ENG	GOC	HUM	IHR	ORS	THR	WLB	WSE
ENG								
GOC	0.424							
HUM	0.170	0.103						
IHR	0.443	0.337	0.134					
ORS	0.449	0.422	0.090	0.465				
THR	0.664	0.465	0.244	0.736	0.615			
WLB	0.463	0.379	0.153	0.575	0.416	0.683		
WSE	0.412	0.362	0.166	0.434	0.467	0.611	.508	

Sources: developed by the author.

4.2.3 Testing lateral multicollinearity. The lateral multicollinearity issue could inflate or deflate empirical findings and therefore should be addressed in data analysis (Rahi et al., 2018). According to Rahi et al. (2018), the lateral multicollinearity issue could be evaluated with variance inflation factor analysis (VIF). The VIF method suggests that values of VIF must be less than 3.3 (Rahi et al., 2018). Nevertheless, the results have established that VIF values were less than 3.3 and hence confirmed that this study is free from multicollinearity issues and valid for structural model assessment. Table 5 depicts the values of the VIF analysis.

4.2.4 Evaluating structural model. The structural model tests hypotheses relationship with multiple statistics including values of path coefficient, t-statistics and p values. Nevertheless, these values were generated through the bootstrapping method (Rahi et al., 2021b). The bootstrapping method is the degree to which the original data are multiplied by dummy data to produce more accurate and robust results (Rahi,

2018; Rahi et al., 2021a). Moreover, the bootstrapping method is also reliable for mitigating data normality issues and is therefore strongly recommended (Rahi, 2018; Rahi et al., 2018).

Table 5. Variance inflation factor analysis

Factors	Work engagement	Mitigating perceived pandemic threat
Goal congruence		1.208
HR practices		1.033
Interpersonal harmony		1.296
Organizational based self-esteem		1.340
Mitigating perceived pandemic threat	1.400	
Employee well-being	1.400	
Work related self-efficacy		1.281

Sources: developed by the author.

Table 6 depicts the results of the hypothesis analysis, including beta values, standard errors, path significance and t-statistics.

Table 6. Hypothesis testing

Hypotheses	Relationship	Path coefficient	STDEV	t-statistics	Significance
H1	HUM -> THR	0.118	0.038	3.077	0.001
H2	WSE -> THR	0.201	0.051	3.909	0.000
H3	ORS -> THR	0.190	0.055	3.432	0.000
H4	IHR -> THR	0.395	0.069	5.699	0.000
H5	GOC -> THR	0.119	0.048	2.459	0.007
H6	THR -> ENG	0.450	0.071	6.350	0.000
Predictive relevance Q^2 and Coefficient of determination R^2					
Q^2 Work engagement				0.211	
Q^2 Mitigating perceived pandemic threat				0.315	
R^2 Work engagement				0.316	
R^2 Mitigating perceived pandemic threat				0.489	

Sources: developed by the author.

The research framework of this study has outlined that HR practices are positively related to mitigating pandemic threat among employees and supported by the β = 0.118 path, significance p 0.001, and t-statistics 3.077; therefore, H1 is confirmed. Next, work-related self-efficacy has shown a positive impact on mitigating pandemic threat among employees and assisted by the β = 0.201 path, significance p 0.000, t-statistics 3.909; consequently, H2 is accepted. Moving further organizational-based self-esteem has revealed a positive impact on mitigating pandemic threat and is statistically supported by the β =.190 path, significance p 0.000, and t-statistics 3.432; hence, H3 is accepted. Interpersonal harmony has a positive impact on mitigating pandemic threat and is reinforced by the β = 0.395 path, significance p 0.000, and t-statistics 5.699; hence, H4 is established. The relationship between goal congruence and mitigating pandemic threat is found to be significant and statistically confirmed by H5: β = 0.119 path, significance p 0.007, t-statistics 2.459. Similarly, pandemic threat has a positive impact on employee work engagement during the pandemic crisis and is supported by the β = 0.450 path, significance p 0.000, and t-statistics 6.350; therefore, H6 is established. Figure 2 depicts the results of the hypotheses with supporting statistics.

Aside from a significant relationship, exogenous factors have shown substantial predicative power and variance towards endogenous factors. The blindfolding method revealed that the newly developed research model has sizable predictive power Q^2 31% to predict mitigating pandemic threats among employees during pandemics. Similarly, work engagement is predicted by employee well-being and mitigating pandemic threat and unveiled large predictive power Q^2 21% to predict employee work engagement. The pandemic threat is determined by HR practices, work-related self-efficacy, organizational-based self-esteem, interpersonal harmony and goal congruence and explained large variance R^2 49% in mitigating pandemic threat among employees. Likewise, work engagement is determined by mitigating pandemic threat and employee well-being during the pandemic and revealed a large variance R^2 31% in employee work engagement in the workplace during the pandemic crisis.
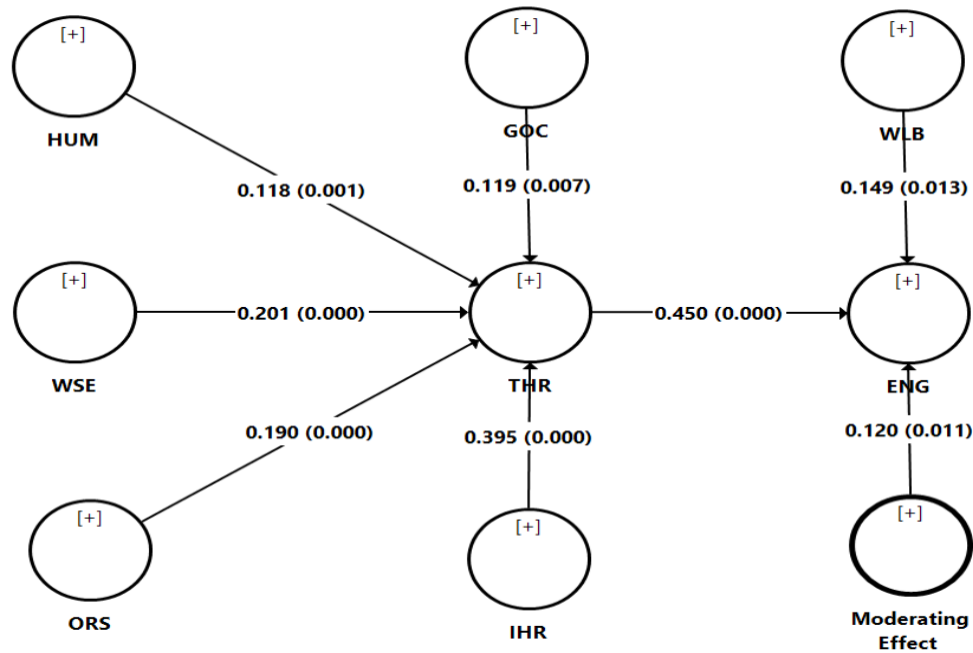
Figure 2. Path and significance level of the constructs
Sources: developed by the author.

4.2.5 Factor effect sizes. The process of structural assessment includes estimation of the effect size f^2 that reveals the actual impact of the factors. According to Rahi & Abd. Ghani (2019), effect size f^2 assists managers in understanding the importance of the factors, which in turn helps them achieve maximum performance with minimum resources. Therefore, effect size analysis is incorporated in this study following the criterion wherein.02 demonstrates a small impact,.15 shows a medium impact and.35 indicates a large impact (Rahi & Abd. Ghani, 2019; Rahi et al., 2019). The results of the effect size analysis have demonstrated that interpersonal harmony has a medium impact in determining perceived pandemic threat. Nevertheless, all other factors have shown a small impact on perceived pandemic threat. On the other hand, mitigating pandemic threat has shown a medium impact in measuring employee work engagement during pandemic crises. Nevertheless, the impact of employee well-being is found to be small towards employee work engagement. The values of the effect sizes f^2 are given in Table 7.

Table 7. Effect size analysis

Factors	f^2
Mitigate perceived pandemic threat	
Goal congruence	0.023
HR practices	0.026
Interpersonal harmony	0.236
Organizational based self-esteem	0.053
Work related self-efficacy	0.062
Work engagement	
Mitigating Perceived Pandemic Threat	0.212
Employee well-being	0.023

Sources: developed by the author.

4.2.6 Importance performance analysis. Another dimension of structural model assessment is to test the importance and performance of the factors with IPMA analysis (Rahi, et al., 2021b). The IPMA analysis produces results by rescaling data from 0 to 100 (Rahi, et al., 2021b). The first requirement of the IPMA analysis is to select the outcome factor. In the first stage, mitigating pandemic threat is taken as an outcome factor. The results indicate that interpersonal harmony has great importance in mitigating pandemic threat. Therefore, factors such as organizational-based self-esteem, goal congruence and work-related self-efficacy have shown a medium level of importance in determining pandemic threat among employees. Table 8 depicts the importance and performance of the factors.

Table 8. Factor importance and performance

Perceived pandemic threat as an outcome factor		
Factors	Factors total effect	Factors performance
Goal congruence	0.101	67.115
HR practices	0.075	59.077
Interpersonal harmony	0.348	71.440
Organizational based self-esteem	0.158	68.796
Work related self-efficacy	0.184	69.764

Sources: developed by the author.

The findings of the IPMA analysis are given in the IPMA map in Fig 3. The IPMA map for pandemic threat has shown that interpersonal harmony has the highest importance and performance in mitigating pandemic threat. Nevertheless, the HR practices factor has been shown to be less important than organizational-based self-esteem, goal congruence and work-related self-efficacy. These findings establish that policy makers should pay attention to improving interpersonal harmony, organization-based self-esteem, goal congruence and work-related self-efficacy, resulting in less pandemic threat among employees.
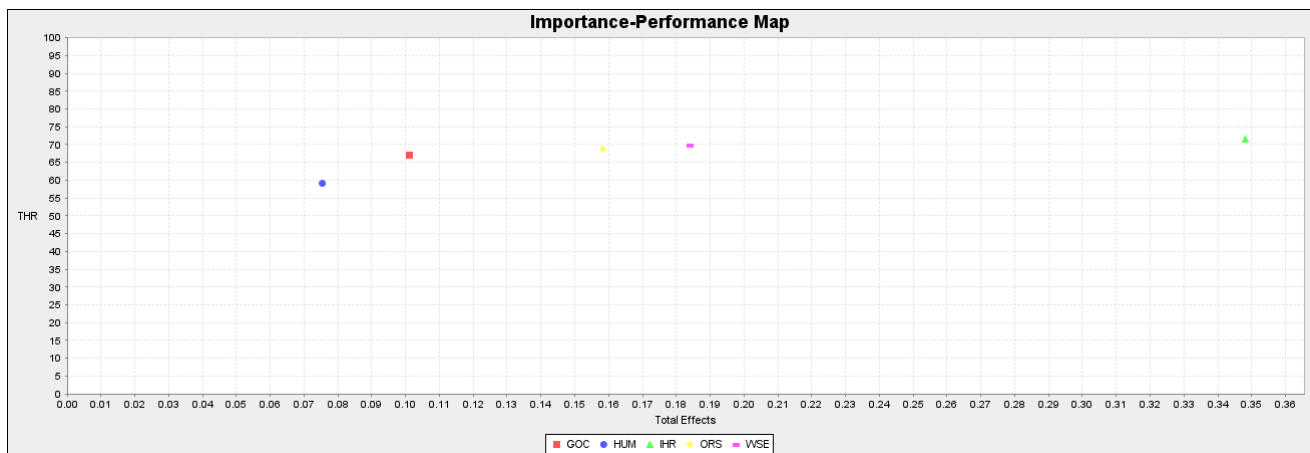

Figure 3. IPMA map for pandemic threat
Sources: developed by the author.

In the second stage of IPMA analysis, work engagement is taken as the outcome factor. The results indicate that factors such as mitigating perceived pandemic threat have shown the highest importance in measuring employee work engagement during pandemic crises. Therefore, factors such as interpersonal harmony and employee well-being have shown medium-level importance in measuring employee work engagement behaviour. The importance and performance values against work engagement are given in Table 9.

Table 9. Factor importance and performance

Work engagement as an outcome factor		
Factors	Factors total effect	Factors performance
Goal congruence	0.048	67.115
HR practices	0.036	59.077
Interpersonal harmony	0.166	71.440
Organizational based self-esteem	0.076	68.796
Mitigating perceived pandemic threat	0.477	68.554
Employee well-being	0.144	66.399
Work related self-efficacy	0.088	69.764

Sources: developed by the author.

Similarly, the importance of the factors was observed through the IPMA map, as shown in Fig 4. The IPMA map shows that the importance of goal congruence, HR practices, organization-based self-esteem and work-related self-efficacy was comparatively less than that of interpersonal harmony, employee well-being and mitigating perceived pandemic threat. These findings should direct policy makers to pay attention to

improving employee well-being, mitigating perceived pandemic threat and interpersonal harmony, resulting in better employee work engagement in the workplace, even during crises such as COVID-19.
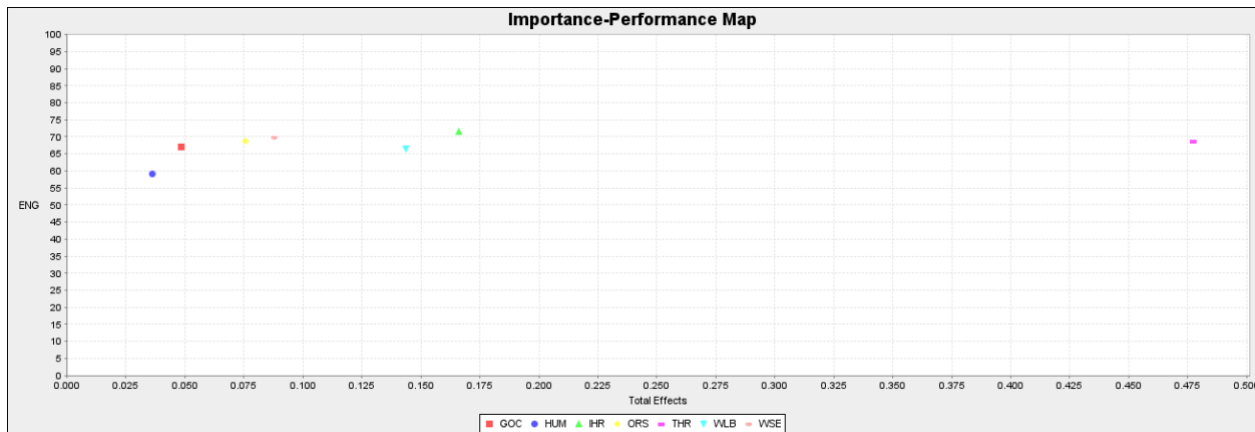

Figure 4. IPMA map for work engagement
Sources: developed by the author.

4.3 Moderating effect of employee well-being. The research model theorized a moderating effect of wellbeing between mitigating pandemic threat and employee work engagement. Therefore, for statistical confirmation, the product indicator approach is taken as recommended by Rahi (2022a) with an interaction effect. The results of the moderating analysis revealed significant moderation of well-being between mitigating pandemic threat and employee work engagement and were confirmed by β =.120, which was significant at p <.01, with a t-statistic of 2.292; hence, H7 is established. Figure 5 exhibits statistics of moderating the analysis.
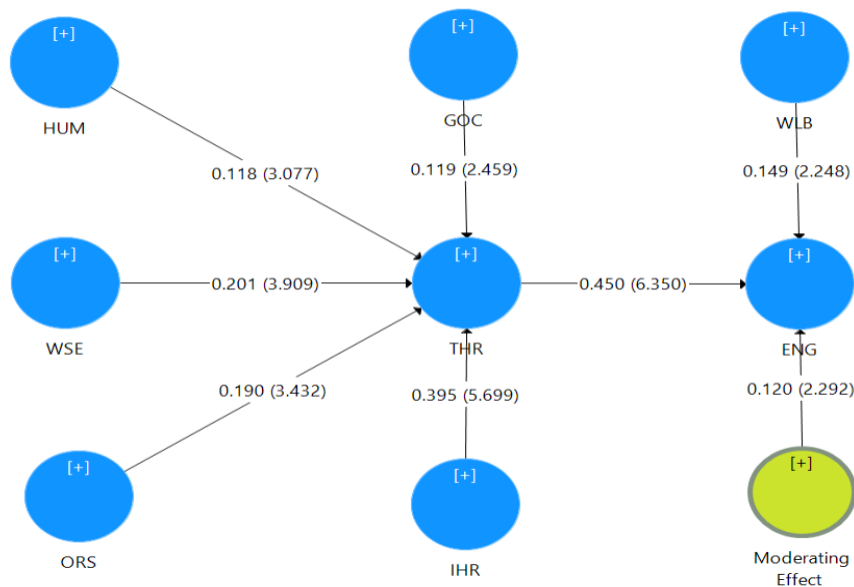

Figure 5. Outcome of moderating analysis
Sources: developed by the author.

The impact of moderation is assessed through simple slope analysis. Although well-being has shown positive moderation between mitigating pandemic threat and work engagement, the strength of the moderation has yet to be tested with a simple slope graph. A simple slope graph, as exhibited in Fig 6, revealed a trend of the moderating effect wherein the gradient demonstrates a moderating effect trend through +1 SD and -1 SD gradients. Nevertheless, the simple slope graph depicts that well-being shows an inclining trend at +1 SD when compared with well-being at -1 SD. These findings illustrate that higher well-being strengthens the relationship between mitigating pandemic threat and work engagement during crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic.
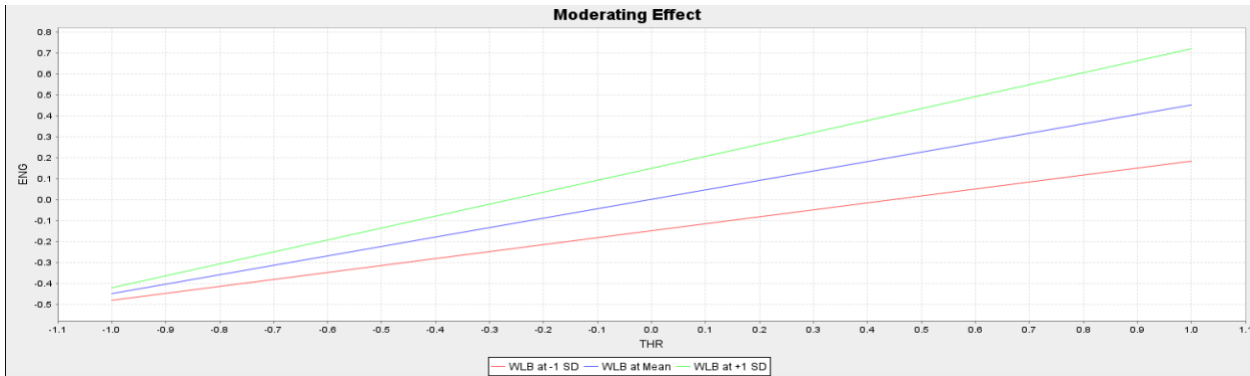
Figure 6. Simple slope graph
Sources: developed by the author.

5. Discussion. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a destructive impact on employee well-being, resulting in poor performance in the workplace. In this essence, the greatest challenge for policy makers is to identify factors that mitigate pandemic threat among employees during a pandemic crisis and boost work engagement in the workplace. To address this issue, the current research has developed an integrated research framework with the help of HR practices, work-related self-efficacy, organizational-based self-esteem, interpersonal harmony and goal congruence. The results indicate that HR practices have a positive impact on reducing pandemic threat among employees, consistent with a prior study (Kloutsiniotis et al., 2022). Similarly, work self-efficacy has proven to be an essential factor in mitigating pandemic threat among employees, and these findings are in line with prior research work (Joie-La Marle et al., 2021). Factors such as organizational-based self-esteem and interpersonal harmony have shown a significant impact in reducing pandemic threat, consistent with prior researchers' findings (Liu et al., 2021; Mani & Mishra, 2020). Next, goal congruence has a positive impact on mitigating pandemic threat, and consistent arguments have been developed by (Arefin et al., 2022). This study has also confirmed that employees with low pandemic threat will perform better in the workplace. These findings suggest that policy makers should pay attention to mitigating employee threat, which in turn boosts employee engagement in the workplace.

Another important dimension of this research is to confirm the moderating impact of employee well-being between the relationship of mitigating pandemic threat and work engagement. The findings of the moderating analysis have revealed that a high level of employee well-being is essential to increase employee work engagement and mitigate pandemic threat among employees. The overall research model has shown substantial variance R^2 49% in mitigating pandemic threat among employees. Likewise, pandemic threat and employee well-being during the pandemic have revealed large variance R^2 31% in employee work engagement in the workplace during pandemic crises. These findings confirmed that the research framework has the potential to investigate employee behavior towards pandemic threat and work engagement. The statistical validity of the model was also tested with predictive power. The prediction analysis revealed that the newly developed research model has sizable predictive power Q^2 31% to predict mitigating pandemic threat among employees during the pandemic. In addition, work engagement is predicted by employee well-being and mitigating pandemic threat and unveiled large predictive power Q^2 21% to predict employee work engagement. The following section illustrates the implications of this research for theory, method and practice.

This research makes numerous contributions to theory and methods. For instance, this study is the first to integrate factors such as HR practices, organizational self-esteem, work-related self-efficacy, goal congruence and interpersonal harmony in measuring pandemic fear among employees. Integration of these factors enriches the human resource literature in the context of pandemic fear and employee engagement in the workplace. Another strong contribution of this study is to test the moderating impact of well-being between the relationship of mitigating perceived pandemic threat and work engagement and hence add a new dimension to the human resource literature. Concerning methodological approaches, this study has followed a positivist research paradigm and empirically investigates employee behavior towards work engagement during crises such as pandemics. In addition, the data were analysed with a structural equation modelling approach, which in turn enhances the statistical power of the results. Finally, the latest statistical analyses, such as prediction power analysis Q^2 and IPMA analysis, enrich the statistical findings and substantially contribute to the methods.

Practically, current research has disclosed that factors such as HR practices and work-related self-efficacy mitigate pandemic threat among employees; therefore, these factors need managerial attention. Similarly, managers should pay attention to organizational self-esteem, goal congruence and interpersonal harmony, which in turn reduce pandemic fear among employees. As there are multiple factors in this research model, the researcher has taken help from IPMA analysis. IPMA analysis indicates that policy makers should focus on mitigating pandemic threat, as it has the highest importance when compared to other corresponding factors. This fact demonstrates that if employees feel secure in the workplace, they will show more productivity, which in turn boosts individual and organizational performance. Nevertheless, within the integrated model, IPMA analysis has also suggested that interpersonal harmony and employee well-being are essential factors that enhance employee engagement in the workplace during crises. Aside from pandemics, this study has suggested that organizations may face natural disasters. Nevertheless, appropriate HR practices, work self-efficacy, goal congruence, and interpersonal harmony are the key factors that motivate employees to work even in life-threatening situations. Overall, this research has concluded that introducing crisis-induced HR practices and developing organizational self-esteem, self-efficacy and interpersonal harmony among employees could mitigate pandemic fear among employees. In addition, improving employee well-being will enhance employee attitudes towards work, which in turn makes organizations more resilient and productive during crises.

6. Conclusion. This study has identified essential factors that influence employee behavior to mitigate pandemic threat and enhance their engagement in the workplace. The research framework outlined factors such as human resource practices, work self-efficacy and organizational self-esteem, interpersonal harmony and goal congruence to investigate pandemic threat. The results revealed that HR practices, work-related self-efficacy, organizational self-esteem, interpersonal harmony, and goal congruence collectively explained substantial variance R^2 49% in mitigating pandemic threat among employees. Therefore, work engagement is determined by pandemic threat and employee well-being and revealed a large variance R^2 31% in employee work engagement. Similarly, prediction power analysis revealed that the newly developed research model has sizable predictive power Q^2 31% to predict pandemic threat among employees during the pandemic. With accession to this work, engagement is predicted by employee well-being and mitigating pandemic threat and unveiled large predictive power Q^2 21% to predict employee work engagement. The results of the IPMA analysis indicate that factors such as mitigating perceived pandemic threat have shown the highest importance in measuring employee work engagement during pandemic crises. Therefore, factors such as interpersonal harmony and employee well-being have shown medium-level importance in measuring employee work engagement behavior. Theoretically, this study is the first to integrate factors such as HR practices, organizational self-esteem, work-related self-efficacy, goal congruence and interpersonal harmony and determine pandemic fear among employees. Therefore, practically, this study indicates that policy makers should pay attention to improving employee well-being, mitigating perceived pandemic threat and interpersonal harmony, which in turn boost employee engagement in the workplace during crises. Moreover, this study provides a universal view to policy makers in designing crisis-induced policies not limited to pandemics but also for other natural disasters, such as floods, earthquicks and tsunamis.

Although this study largely contributes to theory and methods, it has some limitations that should be acknowledged. For instance, the research framework of this study comprises unique factors that mitigate pandemic threat among employees; however, it does not guarantee the inclusion of all human psychological factors that influence employee behavior and attitude to continue work during crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Similarly, this research is limited to employee work engagement. Nevertheless, future researchers can extend the current research framework with other outcome variables, such as organizational productivity and organizational performance. Another limitation of this study is linked with the respondent profile. For instance, this study collected data from employees working in Saudi organizations in general. Nevertheless, it is expected that front-line employees could be greatly affected by the pandemic. Therefore, future researchers are suggested to collect data specifically from service personnel, including salespersons working in retail stores. Regarding methodology, this study is cross-sectional and collects data at one point in time. Therefore, future researchers are suggested to conduct research in longitudinal settings that could reveal different findings. Finally, researchers are suggested to test the current research framework in other regions, excluding Saudi Arabia, to enhance the generalizability of the research model.

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Управління людськими ресурсами в умовах пандемії: самоефективність на роботі, організаційна самооцінка, міжособистісна гармонія та відповідності цілям працівників.

Метою цього дослідження є вивчення факторів, які впливають на добробут персоналу організацій в умовах пандемії. Систематизація літературних джерел та підходів до розв'язання проблеми підвищення рівня добробут працівників засвідчила, що практики управління людськими ресурсами, самоефективність на роботі, самооцінка організації, міжособистісна гармонія та відповідність цілям можуть суттєво вплинути на рівень емоційної та психологічної стабільності працівників. Вибірка дослідження становила 223 респонденти. До вибірки включалися особи, які працюють в логістичних організаціях Саудівської Аравії і стикалися з кризою пандемії COVID-19. За результатами цього дослідження встановлено, що практики управління людськими ресурсами, самоефективність на роботі, самооцінка організації, міжособистісна гармонія та відповідність цілям пояснюють значну частку варіації даних (R^2= 49%) добробут персоналу організацій в умовах пандемії. Рівень прогнозування моделі складає Q^2=31%. Результати аналізу вказують, що міжособистісна гармонія має значний розмір ефекту для пом'якшення загрози негативного впливу пандемії на рівень добробут працівників. Результати емпіричного аналізу засвідчили, що практики управління людськими ресурсами можуть відігравати важливу роль у пом'якшенні загрози негативного впливу пандемії на рівень емоційної та психологічної стабільності працівників. Крім того, самоефективність на роботі мотивує працівників продовжувати працювати під час кризи та, отже, потребує уваги керівництва при зміні практики управління людськими ресурсами. Самооцінка організації надає впевненість працівникам у вирішенні непередбачуваних ситуацій. Дослідження емпірично підтверджує та теоретично доводить, що розвиток практик у сфері людських ресурсів, підвищення самоефективності працівників, самооцінки організації, міжособистісної гармонії та відповідності цілям зменшують негативний вплив пандемії на рівень добробут персоналу організацій. Результати проведеного дослідження можуть бути корисними для керівників компаній при здійсненні управління людськими ресурсами, ідентифікувати наявні небезпеки, розробляти програми заходів щодо мінімізації їх настання, не лише під час кризи пандемії, а також природних катастроф, таких як повінь, землетрус і цунамі.

Ключові слова: самоефективність на роботі; самооцінка організації; міжособистісна гармонія; відповідність цілям; залученість на роботі; благополуччя працівників; сприйнята загрози пандемії.