



Extending “Kahn’s model of personal engagement and disengagement at work” with reference to existential attributes

A case study of HR managers in Pakistan

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Abstract

Purpose – This study seeks to explore the existential meaningfulness of HR managers’ work. The purpose of this study is to investigate the influence of four existential attributes that are death, responsibility, alienation and meaningfulness, on the work of HR managers. The study also asserts that the work of HR managers has an existential dimension to it. It also argues that HR managers have human qualities. They react to human predicament and need emotional identification with their work and organization.

Design/methodology/approach – The study is based on the responses of HR managers developed on the basis of an interview guide specifically designed for this purpose. The data have been collected through extensive and in-depth field interactions with HR managers working in diverse organizations. The research approach taken here is to focus on the discrete moments of role performance of HR managers that represent microcosms of the larger complexity. Those moments are windows into the multiplicity of factors that are constantly relevant to person-role dynamics. Focusing on specific moments of work role performance of HR managers is like using the zoom lens of a camera: a distant stationary image is brought close and revealed as a series of innumerable leaps of engagement and falls of disengagement.

Findings – The study brings out the emotional and human dilemmas of HR managers working in public and private sector organizations. While discussing and linking Kahn’s model with Sartrean thoughts can provide unique perspective within the strategic human resource management especially in Pakistani organizations which was missing not only in Kahn’s model but also in management literature.

Originality/value – The study makes a fresh inquiry into the nature of HRM and the existential realities experienced by the HR managers at work place. The study is unique because of its extensive field interactions based on a well-designed interview guide hitherto unapplied in the organization studies.

Keywords Pakistan, Existentialism, HR managers, Kahn’s model

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

It is common practice to present corporate world with the bright outlook and most of the time the real meanings of reality are lost in this attempt and especially the existential human dimension is ignored. This study constructs the subjective meanings of corporate world from the lens of HR managers in Pakistani organizations drawing from the diverse literature of existentialist philosophy along with the Kahn’s insights.



Literature review

The misconception which is very common that existentialism only revolves around Sartre is the result of sheer ignorance because existentialism is an attitude towards life and human action which have very ancient and diverse roots starting from Heraclitus in the West and Zarathustra in the East (Pauchant, 2005). Existential tradition revolves around philosophy, theology, mythology, psychology, psychiatry, psychoanalysis, literature, poetry, novels, plays, and films. A snapshot of existential authors in their respective fields is given in Table I.

In our previous research work titled “The existential face of organization: a literature review” (Abbas *et al.*, 2011), ideas of Pauchant (1995), Reker and Chamberlain (2002), Steger and Oishi (2011), Eaton (1977), Erasmus, Luther, Rousseau, Newton, Decartes, Vico, Goethe, Emerson, and Netizche (Watson, 2005), Sartre (1969, 1987), Bakan (1966), Schwartz (1996), Jaja (1995), Kahn (1995), May (2004), Skakespeare (1983), Kafka (1988), Dostoyevsky (1960), Tolstoy (1886), Ionesco (1958), Beckett (1954), Bergman (1963) and Fromm (1941, 1956) had been discussed in the structure of literature review. The previous study described the idea of Kahn and Sartrean thoughts very briefly. But in fact their thoughts need to be explored in a more comprehensive way, as was felt during the course of study. Therefore, the need of extending the “Kahn’s model of personal engagement and disengagement at work” with reference to existential attributes in the form of case study of HR managers in Pakistani context becomes the focus of our present study. Thus, the study linking Kahn’s model with Sartrean thoughts provides unique insights for HR managers for managing human resources in Pakistani organizations.

Philosophy, theology, mythology	Psychology, psychiatry, psychoanalysis	Literature, poetry, novels, plays, films
Hannah Arendt	Silvano Arieti	Woody Allen
William Barrett	Ernest Becker	Samuel Beckett
Simone de Beauvoir	Menard Boss	Ingmar Bergman
Jacob Boehme	Norman O. Brown	Miguel de Cervantes
Martin Buber	James Bugental	Fyodor Dostoevsky
Joseph Campbell	Leslie Farber	T.S. Eliot
Albert Camus	Paul Feyerabend	Jean Genet
Meister Eckhart	Victor Frankl	Jean Giono
Jose Ortega y Gasset	Erich Fromm	Goethe
Martin Heidegger	Karen Horney	Nikolai Gogol
Karl Jaspers	Heinz Kohut	Ernest Hemingway
Soren Kierkegaard	Lawrence Kohlberg	Hermann Hesse
Arthur Koestler	Elisabeth Kübler-Ross	Franz Kafka
Gabriel Marcel	R.D. Laing	Andre Malraux
Maurice Merleau-Ponty	Rollo May	Thomas Mann
Thomas Merton	Alice Miller	Herman Melville
Friedrich Nietzsche	Clark Moustakas	Arthur Miller
Blaise Pascal	Otto Rank	Henry Miller
Jean-Paul Sartre	Carl Rogers	George Orwell
Friedrich Schelling	Erwin Strauss	Rainer Maria Rilke
Paul Tillich	Harry Stack Sullivan	William Shakespeare
Simone Weil	Irwin Yalom	Leo Tolstoy

Source: Pauchant (2005)

Table I.
Examples of
existential authors

Kahn's study focuses on the idea that people involve their selves, physically, cognitively and emotionally, at various degrees in work role performances and he explores the conditions at work in which people personally engage or express and employ their personal selves, and disengage, or withdraw and defend their personal selves. He identifies three psychological conditions – meaningfulness, safety, and availability – and their individual and contextual sources.

The topic of this study is "Extending Kahn's model of personal engagement and disengagement at work with reference to existential attributes: a case study of HR managers in Pakistan". This study explores the humanistic and existential context of HR managers' work in the organization. Four dimensions of existentialism based on Jean-Paul Sartre's theory of existentialism are analyzed and studied in this paper.

These dimensions are death, responsibility, alienation and meaningfulness. An interview guide based on these four dimensions of existentialism was developed to collect the responses and insights of HR managers of 50 diverse corporate sector organizations of Lahore, Pakistan. Common themes and major findings are then analyzed in the following sections followed by conclusion and bibliography.

Major issues faced by HR managers in the performance of their work in the organizations have been identified, based on their responses to four dimensional existential frame as referred to above.

Main inquiry

How we can change the mechanical/hierarchical mode of organization in the existential/humanistic mode of operations using Kahn's model?

Sub-inquiries

- Does death consciousness help the HR managers in changing the mode of organization from mechanical to existential?
- Does the sense of responsibility help the HR managers in making their work less stressful?
- Does meaningfulness make the work of HR managers more humanistic and less autocratic?
- Does sense of alienation negatively influence the work of HR managers?
- Does overcoming alienation make the work of HR managers rewarding and enriching?
- Does job enrichment help in creating psychological meaningfulness for HR managers?
- Does work role fit help in creating psychological meaningfulness for HR managers?
- Do co-worker relations help in creating psychological meaningfulness for HR managers?
- Do supportive supervisor relations help in creating psychological safety?
- Do rewarding co-worker relations help in creating psychological safety?
- Does adherence to co-worker norms help in creating psychological safety?
- Do resources help in creating HR manager's psychological availability at work?

- Does self-consciousness help creating HR manager’s psychological availability at work?
- Do outside activities help in creating HR manager’s psychological availability at work?
- Does psychological meaningfulness help in creating HR manger’s engagement at work?
- Does psychological safety help in creating HR manager’s engagement at work?
- Does psychological availability help in creating HR manager’s engagement at work?
- Does experienced meaningfulness help in creating HR manager’s engagement at work?
- Does experienced safety help in creating HR manager’s engagement at work?
- Does experience availability help in creating HR manager’s engagement at work?

Research methodology

Research model

Linking Kahn’s model with Sartrean thought. The study is based on the responses of HR managers developed on the bases of an interview guide specifically designed for this purpose. The data have been collected through extensive and in-depth field interactions with HR managers working in diverse organizations (Figure 1).

Participants

The data have been collected through extensive and in-depth field interactions with 50 HR directors and managers (see Appendix 2) and employees (draftsmen, HR trainees, sales representatives, teachers/trainers, and architects) from the departments of their respective organizations. The respondents were selected from diverse organizations ranging in age from 35 to 70 years.

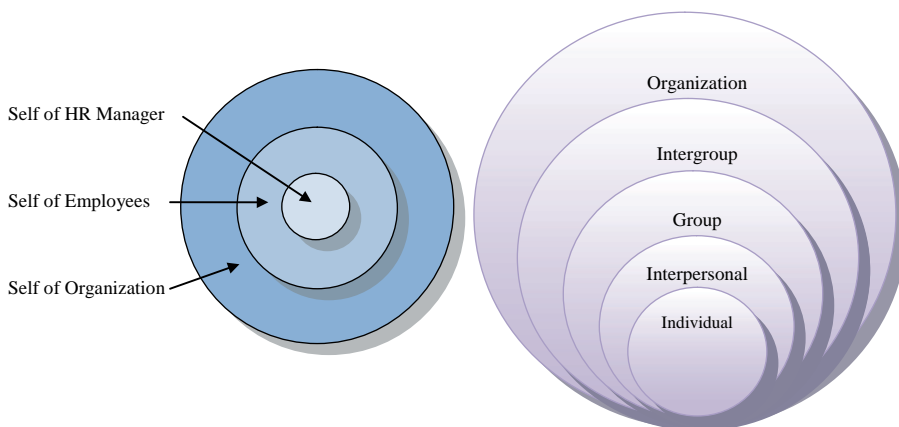


Figure 1.
Levels of influences

Data collection

Data was collected using an assortment of qualitative methods: observation, self-reflection, and in-depth interviewing. The data collection was structured around in-depth interviews after warm questions about an individual's job and work history and the firm. Participants were asked to recall four different situations in which they had felt:

- (1) attentive, absorbed or involved in their work;
- (2) uninvolved, detached or distracted from their work;
- (3) differences between how they responded to a work situation and how they would have responded if they had not been at work; and
- (4) no differences from non-work behavior in how they reacted to a work-related situation.

Interviews were recorded and lasted between 90 and 140 minutes.

In order to minimize the researchers' biased judgments, the respondents were approached to review the transcripts of their interview recordings. They were provided sufficient time for review, comments, and correction in case they find any mistake, discrepancy, or misstatement. The resultant changes were incorporated in the data before performing the analysis.

The questionnaire method has been deliberately avoided due to the qualitative nature of study, which is based upon observation, self-reflection, in-depth interviewing, and finally incorporating feedback from the respondents in order to minimize the researchers' biased judgments to the last extent.

Data analysis and discussion

Kahn's (1990) existential framework has been used in the context of Pakistani organizations for analyzing data, which is given below in Table II.

First, the interviews are transcribed and closely read interviews to identify what intuitively seemed to be moments in which people personally engaged or disengaged at work. Second, the experiences are selected from the rest of the interviews as long quotations and analyzed them through an inductive process in which the characteristics are articulated that defined them as moments of personal engagement or disengagement. Third, each experience is being analyzed to provoke the psychological and contextual reasons why the HR managers had personally engaged or disengaged. Set of categories of data and initial concepts were filtered to explain those data.

The continuous movement between data and concepts ended when enough categories had been defined to explain what was recorded (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). In completing this cycle, a collection of personal engagement and disengagement experiences was generated. The examples were extended descriptions of moments in which people personally engaged or disengaged, pulled from the interviews and typed in their raw form on index cards.

Personal engagement

Personal engagement means the involvement of the person from the inner most circle of his self to the work situation around and connecting with other people in the

Dimensions	Meaningfulness	Safety	Availability
Definition	Sense of return on investments of self in role performance	Sense of being able to show and employ self without fear of negative consequences to self-image, status, or career	Sense of possessing the physical, emotional, and psychological resources necessary for investing self in role performances
Experimental components	Feel worthwhile, valued, valuable; feel able to give to and receive from work and others in course of work	Feel situations are trustworthy, secure, predictable, and clear in terms of behavioral consequences	Feel capable of driving physical, intellectual, and emotional energies into role performance
Types of influence	Work elements that create incentives or disincentives for investment of self	Elements of social systems that create situations that are more or less predictable, consistent, and nonthreatening	Individual distractions that are more or less preoccupying in role performance situations
Influences	Tasks: jobs involving more or less challenge, variety, creativity, autonomy, and clear delineation of procedures and goals	Interpersonal relationships: ongoing relationships that offer more or less support, trust, openness, flexibility, and lack of threat	Physical energies: existing levels of physical resources available for investment into role performances
	Roles: formal positions that offer more or less attractive identities, through fit with a preferred self-image, and status and influence	Group and intergroup dynamics: informal, often unconscious roles that leave more or less room to safely express various parts of self; shaped by dynamics within and between groups in organizations	Emotional energies: existing levels of emotional resources available for investment into role performances
	Work interactions: interpersonal interactions with more or less promotion of dignity, self-appreciation, sense of value, and the inclusion of personal as well as professional elements	Management style and process: leader behaviors that show more or less support, resilience, consistency, trust, and competence	Insecurity: levels of confidence in own abilities and status, self-consciousness, and ambivalence about fit with social systems that leave more or less room for investments of self in role performances
		Organizational norms: shared system expectations about member behaviors and emotions that leave more or less room for investments of self during role performances	Outside life: issues in people's outside lives that leave them more or less available for investments of self during role performances

Table II.
Dimensions of
psychological conditions

work place. The basic assumption underlying this existential context is that if a person is provided with appropriate conditions, he will employ his self to the end and express his role performances in the work place. Such self-employment underlies (is the same line of thinking as) what researchers have referred to as effort (Hackman and Oldham, 1980), involvement (Lawler and Hall, 1970), flow (Csikszentmihayi, 1982), mindfulness (Langer, 1989), and intrinsic motivation (Deci, 1975). To express preferred dimensions is to display real identity, thoughts, and feelings. Self-expression underlies what researchers refer to as creativity (Perkins, 1981), the use of personal voice (Hirschman, 1970), emotional ex-pression (Rafaeli and Sutton, 1987), authenticity (Baxter, 1982), nondefensive communication (Gibb, 1961), playfulness (Kahn, 1989), and ethical behavior (Toffler, 1986).

For example, an HR manager taught a special class to HR trainees. She spent a great deal of time with the trainees, both in and out of class. In doing so she experienced moments of pure personal engagement.

In the art and design section of a manufacturing company, a senior designer was involved in an important project during which such moments of personal engagement occurred. In one such moment she employed herself physically (“I was just flying around the office”), cognitively (in working out the design construction interfaces), and emotionally (she refused to give criticism publically, empathesizing with other people’s feelings) and when she expressed herself she speaks her asthetic sense as well as her constructive criticism.

Personal disengagement

Personal disengagement, conversely, means withdrawal and defense of a person’s preferred self in behaviors that promote a lack of connections, physical, cognitive, and emotional absence, and passive, incomplete role performances. To withdraw preferred dimensions is to remove personal, internal energies from physical, cognitive, and emotional labors. Such unemployment of the self underlies (is the same line of thinking as) task behaviors researchers have called automatic or robotic (Hochschild, 1983), burned out (Maslach, 1982), apathetic or detached (Goffman, 1961), or effortless (Hackman and Oldham, 1980). To defend the self is to hide true identity, thoughts, and feelings during role performances. Such self-defense underlies what researchers have referred to as defensive (Argyris, 1982), impersonal or emotionally unexpressive (Hochschild, 1983; Rafaeli and Sutton, 1987), bureaucratic (Shorris, 1981), self-estranged (Seeman, 1972), and closed (Gibb, 1961) behaviors.

During moments of training and development class an HR manager reported withdrawing herself physically (“making them busy with assignments only”), cognitively (“not telling them much or helping them out much”), and emotionally (“I was more bland, superficial, talking in flat, unemotional tones”). At that moment, she displayed little of who she preferred to be by not letting herself connect with and get close to the trainees. As she noted:

I was really shut down, not letting loose or being funny or letting them get close to me by talking more about myself. I just didn’t let them in, I guess.

Her personal disengagement meant withdrawing and defending herself from the types of interpersonal connections that defined who she typically preferred to be in her trainer role.

Psychological conditions

Kahn's research declares three dimensions of psychological conditions:

- (A) psychological meaningfulness;
- (B) psychological safety; and
- (C) psychological availability.

(A) *Psychological meaningfulness*. Data indicated that three factors generally influence psychological meaningfulness:

- (a) task characteristics;
- (b) role characteristics; and
- (c) work interactions.

(a) Task characteristics. When organizational members are doing something that is challenging, clear, creative, and autonomous, they experience psychological meaningfulness. There were few examples of meaningfulness and few of meaninglessness, as far as task characteristics is concerned.

As one HR manager said:

The project I am working on includes policy making, employee selection and managing people from diverse backgrounds. There is a lot of complexity and difficulties as far as projects go. Its also the one that gets me excited about coming into the office.

Another HR manager said:

That class of HR trainees was one of the most difficult and rewarding I had ever taught and trained here. I had to consider their diverse backgrounds, their understanding levels, and matching the needs of HR training course with their competence levels. It was tough but it felt great when it was over.

Meaningfulness also comes from autonomy, where you are master of your work and not controlled by others. It was observed that in some organizations goals were not clear. For example, in Packages design department one interviewee mentioned that:

There is no systematic way of doing things. Suddenly our head will appear and suggest entirely new design sketches and leave behind uncertainty than clarity.

(b) Role characteristics. Formal positions that offer more or less attractive identities, through fit with a preferred self-image, and status and influence. It was observed some organization members liked and some disliked these identities. As one powerless HR manager illustrated the unattractiveness of his work role:

I am sitting here in my office smiling and being friendly with just zero power. It is all nonsense. I am no where and there is no satisfaction of any kind. I am, in fact, more than that. These long hours are just damaging and waste of my life.

According to Lasch (1984), people search for ways to feel important and special particularly when they feel powerless in the world as a whole. As an HR manager of a renowned organization proudly said:

I am not boasting but really we provide our best services to humanity and provide best paper for the needs of nation.

Another HR manager said:

It is amazing for me to see my HR trainees in different firms, that is my achievement. They held a high opinion about me. I think I have an impact.

Another HR manager spoke her gratification:

I have a lot of trainees who ask for me as their trainer. They tell me that they don't like other trainers and want to be with me. This gives me feelings of gratification.

One employee who was standing in front of stantier printing machine remarked:

We are treated worse than animals working from 8:00 am to 11:00 pm in shifts, in high temperature printing house. There is no concept of work life balance. We are on overtime even on Eid day, because you know our homes are headoffice of poverty.

Another HR specialist from a public sector organization said:

I don't have my special place. I am just not special here. Don't interview me.

This is height of alienation an HR specialist speaking with the height of his ironic tones. HR manager of a non-government organization said:

We shape special children (deaf and dumb) into human capital. They would be no more dependent on others and this is a good sign of socio-economic change.

(c) Work interactions. Meaningful interaction promote dignity, self-appreciation, and sense of worthwhileness as one HR manager spoke up his mind:

I would like to say that my involvement comes from my friends. I always feel comfortable while working with like-minded people. If I don't have that connection of the same frequency, it is very tough for me to get going working with them. Such connections are invaluable source of meaning in my life, because they meet my relatedness needs.

By such connections people feel known and appreciated. They feel as if they are sharing their existential journeys with others as HR manager of a manufacturing organization said:

My meaningfulness will diminish when my seniors communicate a lack of care, respect, or appreciation for my work. Dignity and self-esteem is very important, you know. I always put the energy where it is appreciated.

Interactions with others were sources of both gratification and frustration.

(B) *Psychological safety*. It was experienced as feeling able to show and employ one's self without fear of negative consequences to self-image, status, or career. People felt safe in situation in which they trusted that they would not suffer for their personal engagement. No body will engage himself in an unclear, unpredictable, or threatening situations, because it is too risky and unsafe to engage in such situations.

The data indicated that four factors generally influence psychological safety:

- (a) interpersonal relationships;
- (b) group and intergroup dynamics;
- (c) management style and process; and
- (d) organizational norms.

(a) Interpersonal relationships. Interpersonal relationships always promote psychological safety when they are supportive and trusting. Such relationships offer

support, trust, openness, flexibility, and lack of threat. As one HR trainee of a commercial organization said about his boss:

Its great to work with my boss. If I make a mistake he will not be harsh with me. Rather without saying that you made a mistake, he makes me correct by saying that "Look! it could be done another way". We learn from each other without clashing.

Another HR manager shared his experience in this way:

My boss is very moody and keeps me at distance. It is very tough to do job under a horrible boss. I also try to stay away from him, but the problem is we have to interact but I always keep it short. Don't joke or anything. I did once and he went nuts so I get very monotonic and idiotic with him. Stupid!

(b) Group and intergroup dynamics. In the words of Bion and Slater, group dynamics were defined according to the uncscious plays that characterise the more conscious working of the organizations.

In a non-government organization as well as a commercial organization, for example, a group dynamic cast their chairman and president as fatherly figures, in their respective organizations. Participating in the play that the image implied, other members took supporting roles whose status, power, and safety varied according to their proximity to the father.

The data revealed, for example, a "favored son's" character in his own and others' eyes, which created spaces in which they could safely and personally engage.

An HR manager spoke up her mind when she felt unsafe for her to personally engage because of what she experienced as men's undermining her role performance:

But we are not dolls without any will and mind of our own. We are conscious beings.

Similar dynamics characterized relations between organizational subgroups. At a commercial organization, for example, people experienced differences along the dimension of tenure at the firm. New and old members tended to define situations involving members of the other category as less safe, as the remarks of one old member illustrated:

We old employees are only a few in number and the rest are brand new quite big in number. We know each other so well so we can be silly with one another. I am less candid with the new people as I am with the older ones.

There was a split between top level and the lowest level. Some were perceived status symbol, for example directors, HR managers; and some were perceived at the lowest level. When a department head of a non-government organization interrupted and publically corrected one of his sub-ordinates, the employee shared his feelings in this way:

I felt shocked in front of everyone and angry at him for doing that. I was still right but I back down assuming that he knew more, because he was foreign qualified and specialist, and all that.

The lack of psychological safety in such situations and the resulting suppression of individuals' voices reflects the distribution of authority and power among groups in organizations (Alderfer, 1985).

(c) Management style and process. Supportive, resilient, and clarifying management always heighten psychological safety. Good leaders translate system demands and shape members' behaviors in such manners that create environment of supportiveness and openness. People feel safer when they have some control over their work. When management has tight control over employees, it sent a message that their employees were not to be trusted and should fear overstepping their boundaries. That fear was compounded when managers were unpredictable, inconsistent, or hypocritical. An example of such inconsistency was observed in the comments of an HR manager of a multinational corporation as follows:

At one time our executive tell us to do one thing and we will take care of it, and then suddenly he will change it even while we have completed our assignment. It is not only crazy but heartbreaking and frustrating for us.

It was hard to feel safe enough to invest themselves at work in any one direction. Another example reflected employees discomfort with the tones of management. At a manufacturing organization, the phenomena was observed that how management dealt with firm members during office meetings:

Our president says we can ask a question as long as it is not threatening or it is a simple technical question, but then he says impertinent questions will not be tolerated. Even though he says we can ask anything.

This ambivalence with which firm's management simultaneously welcomed and avoided openness sent mixed and disinterested message to firm members.

(d) Organizational norms. Norms are shared expectations about the general behaviors of system members (Hackman, 1986). People that stayed within generally appropriate ways of working and behaving felt safer than those who strayed outside those protective boundaries. In this regard, safety meant not calling into question habitual patterns of thought and behavior that ensured predictability; questioning such patterns meant being treated as a deviant behavior (Shorris, 1981). In a non-government organization an extremely inhuman example of a senior teacher was observed as her application for maternal leave was rejected and so she continued taking classes even at the day of delivery. This act of inhumanity is the worst sin in the history of organizational life. In contrast to this situation we observed the depth of feelings in the remarks of the director of a non-government organization when he said:

Incompetency is a curse, so I always focus on my staff development for making them human capital. I try to select right person for right job at right time. This is just like supply of oxygenated blood for healthy body. We try to eliminate knowing-doing gap in our organization as much as possible.

Again in sharp contrast to this situation we observed at a public sector organization, norms of promotional channel are really disturbing and soul-stultifying when one Assistant Director was in the same 17th grade after spending his 17 years of service. Norms regulate emotional as well as physical labor.

(C) *Psychological availability*. Psychological availability is the sense of having the physical, emotional, or psychological resources to personally engage at a particular moment. It measures how ready people are to engage, given the distractions they experience as members of social systems. Data indicated that four factors generally influence psychological availability:

- (a) depletion of physical energy;
- (b) depletion of emotional energy;
- (c) insecurity; and
- (d) outside life.

(a) Physical energy. Personal engagement demanded levels of physical energy, strength, and readiness that personal disengagement did not, as Goffman (1961) suggested in his studies of nonverbal role performances. This requirement was clear in moments of personal disengagement in which people were simply depleted. We observed examples of sales/marketing representatives of the most famous commercial banks, whose roles were physically demanding given the strength of the sun outside and representatives' unbound energy. They have to go outside for their sale in the scorching daylight of June-July. That is really daunting and not a child's play with the reality that they are overworked and underpaid, managing their work life balance.

Physical energy was less common in the architecture firm but it did occur after long hours at a drafting table. A draftsperson described such incapacity:

Doing my tasks involve sitting down for eight hours. I am sitting down doing my precise drawings. My back is bent over, I am staring. My eyes sores and I feel physically awful and mentally exhausted, and all I think about is going home.

At such times people were simply worn out and unavailable to engage.

(b) Emotional energy. Emotional ability to personally engage also influenced psychological availability. The premise is that employing and expressing the self in tasks requiring emotional labor takes a certain level of emotionality that personally disengaging does not (Hochschild, 1983). In the context of a non-government organization, the emotionally drained senior special education teachers said:

Teaching deaf and dumb students just take it out of you and you have given them every thing you have emotionally. It is quite uphill task to handle them and at the end of the day you are drained fully, tired and worn out; and try to think and feel nothing. At some point you simple have nothing left to give and withdrew.

At such moments people needed emotional resources to meet the demands of personal engagement.

(c) Insecurity. Psychological availability also corresponded to how secure people felt about their work and their status. For individuals to express their selves in social systems, they must feel relatively secure about those selves (Gustafson and Cooper, 1985). Insecurity distracted members from bringing their selves into their work; it generated anxiety that occupied energies that would have otherwise been translated into personal engagements. One dimension of insecurity was lack of self-confidence, a particular issue for new, low-status members of both organizations. One HR manager at a multinational corporation voiced the sense of insecurity when she was a trainee:

I have to retrace my footsteps in the time tunnel to recall my insecurity. I was somewhat anxious about how the speed and quality of my work was comparing to other people at my level in the office. Was I doing it fast enough, was I doing it right enough? I think about that, being here only three months. Are they going to keep me, or throw me back because I'm too small? So at times I tend to worry more about how my work is going to be received than about the work itself.

A second dimension of insecurity was heightened self-consciousness. When employees focus on how others perceive them, they were too distracted to personally engage. They would focus on external rather than internal cues. In the context of work at a non-government organization, one HR trainee voiced that pre-occupation:

I always have to appear busy to work so that people cannot get wrong impression. During my communication I focus on how I should respond to certain situations, who can I joke with and to what extent; and who should not I joke with.

Then the third dimension is people ambivalence with their organization and their own purpose. In dealing with such issues, people were already engaged in internal debates that spared little room for external engagements.

(d) Outside life. People's outside lives also influenced psychological availability. Members from all organizations were affected by these distractions. Examples are many but events of doing job with pregnancy or abortion, unemployment of father and large size of family, sudden death of any family member, divorce from husband and being single mother, rebellion of youngsters, failure in love, dissolution and family crisis, fear of suicide-bomber's attack, sexual harrasment, litigations, major accidents and illnesses are name a few that are observed and research on work family boundries has attested to such distractions.

People's outside lives could increase their availability. Referring to the words of the HR manager at a commerical bank:

I feel amazing amounts of energy to spend with my family.

The HR director of a commerical organization shared his feelings by saying:

I feel emotional height of feelings in the company of my *murshad* (spiritual mentor) on Sunday mornings.

The HR manager of a service organization said:

I feel comfortable while talking to my only son. You know, I am single parent.

An HR manager of a commercial organizatoin said:

I spend my whole Sunday and evenings with my children. Those moments give me ecstasy and joy of life.

A corporate head reflected his feelings as:

Sleep has a tonic effect on me. After spending two holidays at home, I am fresh, ready and active to share the activities of my professional life once again.

An HR manager of a multinational bank said:

I left America in order to live with my parents in Pakistan, because those are the real cause of my life and make my life meaningful.

Findings

(1) Categories of organizations

In this study we found some organizations were dramatic, suspicious, detached, depressive, and compulsive. In dramatic organization we found they were too primitive for its many products and broad market. Over-centralization obstructs their

development of effective information systems and second tier executives retain too little influence in policy making. In suspicious organization, there was elaborate information processing, abundant analysis of external trends, and centralization of powers. In detached organization, we observed internal focus, insufficient scanning of external environment, and self imposed barriers to free flow of information. Depressive organizations were ritualistic, bureaucratic, inflexible, hierarchical, poor internal communication, resistant to change, and impersonal. In compulsive organizations, there were rigid formal codes, elaborate information systems, ritualized evaluation procedures, thoroughness, exactness, and hierarchical positions.

(2) HR manager types

Only one HR manager was death conscious, mostly were not death conscious but they were alienated, dramatic, suspicious, detached, depressive, and compulsive type of characters. Death conscious HR manager was at the age of 70 and it seems that his death consciousness was due to his old age, while other HR managers were between age of 35 to 70. Dramatic HR managers had a sense of entitlement and they were in need of attention, excitement activity, and stimulations and had a tendency towards extremes. It may be due to his young age, because in youth even impossible things look possible and everything seems rosy. Suspicious HR managers were hypersensitive, cold, and lacked emotional expression. They were vigilantly prepared to counter any attack and personal threats. They were distrustful and insist on loyalty, over-involved in rules and details to secure complete control. Detached HR managers, were withdrawn and not involved, they lacked interest in present or future, and sometimes indifferent to praise or criticism. Depressive HR managers lacked self-confidence, self-esteem, or initiatives. They feared success and tolerated mediocrity or failure. They wholly depended upon their messiahs. Compulsive HR managers were tended to dominate organization from top to bottom and insisted that others confirm to tightly prescribed procedures and rules. They were dogmatic or obstinate personality. They were obsessed with detail, routines, rituals, efficiency and lockstep organization. They were perfectionists.

(3) Strategy types

We observed in dramatic organization, strategies were hyperactive, impulsive, and venturesome. Diversification and growth were rarely consistent or integrated. There were actions for action-sake, and non-participative decision making. In suspicious organization, we observed the types of strategies were reactive, conservative, overly analytical, diversified and secretive. In detached organization, strategy was vacillating, indecisive, inconsistent, with parochial perspective. In depressive organization, there was decidiphobia, attention focused inward, lack of vigilance over changing market conditions. There was drifting with no sense of direction and confinement to antiquated mature markets. Lastly, in compulsive organizations, there was tightly calculated and focused and exhausted evaluation with slow unadoptive reliance on a narrow established theme. There was an obsession with single aspect of strategy, for example, cost cutting or quality, the exclusion of other factors.

(4) Culture types

Regarding culture of dramatic organization we observed dependency as a major factor. While in suspicious organization there was a fear of attack, intimidation, lack of trust

and uniformity. In detached organization there was lack of warmth or emotions, lot of conflicts, and insecurity. While in depressive organization there was lack of initiative, negativity, lack of motivation, ignorance of markets, and leadership vacuum. Lastly in compulsive organization we observed that there was rigid, inward directed, insular, and subordinates were submissive, insecure, and uncreative.

(5) *Insights of two models observed during research*
See Table III.

Machine/hierarchical/bureaucratic model	Existential/humanistic model
1. Ethics of deterministic utility (Emilie Durkheim): creates dependence, alienation and neuroticism, consequential utilitarian ethics	1. Ethics of humanism: human centered, emotions, feelings, non-consequentialist ethics
2. Values: profit, domination and control mechanism, targets and competition	2. Values: human centered values and feelings
3. Control and domination mechanism creates dependence, frustration and alienation	3. Freedom of choice: free choice produce sense of responsibility and self-awareness
4. Hard measures	4. Soft measures
5. Things focused	5. People focused
6. Time factor	6. Human factor
7. Efficiency	7. Motivation
8. Systems	8. Leadership
9. Quantification	9. Communication
10. The metaphor of “organon” “machine”, “cybernetic systems”, “iron-cage of bureaucracy” and, “egocentrism” best describe this model (Gareth Morgan)	10. The metaphor of “brain” and “holographic systems” best describe this model
11. Principles of control and domination	11. Principles of equality and egalitarian values
12. Promotion of elitism	12. Lack of elitism coupled with stress on consultative decision making discourage the development of managerialist approach in this model
13. Mechanical and rigid hierarchical control mechanisms	13. Organizations are allowed to operate as highly fluid and organic entities with minimal centralization and quest to control
14. The core elements of organizational culture entail individualism, objectivism, autonomy and rationality	14. The core elements of organizational culture entail collectivity, subjectivity and harmony
15. Management style: control and domination	15. Management style: people orientation
16. Reductionism	16. Seeks of wholeness of knowledge
17. Ontology of this model is realism. It does not encourage dualism between body and spirit, or matter and thought. It fuses work with worship and creates distinctive ontological states which mirror the macro and micro cosmic cosmological structure of the universe	17. This model is based on realist ontology. The Cartesian/Newtonian dualism tends to strengthen hierarchical, mechanical, objectively ordered, emotion and value free ontological organizations
18. Cultural orientation: individualism, ethics of utility, hedonism, materialism and consumerism	18. Cultural orientation: collectivism, respect for elders, women, and invalid members
19. Task centeredness	19. People centeredness
20. Emotion free rationality in decision making	20. Consultative and participatory decision making

Table III.

(6) Complex of influences, resulting framework and core focus with key dimensions

This study cuts across a number of different existing conceptual frameworks to articulate the complex of influences on people's personal engagements and disengagements, particularly HR managers, in particular moments of role performances. Besides its concern with specific moments of role performances, the resulting framework has a core focus different from others currently used to explain person-role relationships. This core has a number of key dimensions: a simultaneous concern with people's emotional reactions to conscious and unconscious phenomena and the objective properties of jobs, roles, and work contexts; the primacy of people's experiences of themselves and their contexts as the mediator of the depths to which they employ and express or withdraw and defend themselves during role performances; and the self-in-role as the unit of analysis, a focus on how both person and role are enlivened or deadened during role performances. The research described here articulated and defined these dimensions in the service of moving toward a theory of people's psychological presence and absence at work.

Directions for future research

In future, an immediate research agenda involves three arena:

- (a) the interplay of three psychological conditions;
- (b) individual differences; and
- (c) the connection of personal engagement and disengagement to the concepts, currently used to explore person-role relationships.

Interplay of psychological conditions

A primary aim of future research might be to develop a dynamic process model explaining how the variables documented above combine to produce moments of personal engagement and disengagement. Here, are the suggestions for developing a dynamic process model as follows:

Process model

CHOICE and RESPONSIBILITY in the world are interlinked. Choice is not enough. There must be the opportunity to exercise it, for good or ill; and without this opportunity the very idea of personal responsibility is drained of meaning. DEATH CONSCIOUSNESS will create (i) DEEP SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY, and (ii) DEEP SENSE OF BELONGING AND ENGAGEMENT and wipe out the sense of ALIENATION or DISENGAGEMENT. Man will change his priorities and start living MEANINGFUL LIFE or he will get MEANINGFULNESS, SAFETY and AVAILABILITY (i.e. COGNITIVE, PHYSICAL, EMOTIONAL). In this process 11 INFLUENCES will act like 11 FACTORS which influence both positively and negatively, i.e. their presence will create meaningfulness, safety and availability while their absence will create meaninglessness, insecurity, and non-availability.

Questions remained unanswered

- How do the three conditions combine in particular situations to promote personal engagement or disengagement?
- How these conditions co-act to let people reach thresholds separating the levels of the three conditions that, taken together, promote personal engagement rather than disengagement?
- Is co-action additive or compensatory, or both?

Such questions, answered both qualitatively and quantitatively in future research, will offer a richer portrait of the processes by which personal engagements and disengagements are created.

Individual differences

Individual differences influence how people personally engage or disengage, given their experiences of psychological meaningfulness, safety, and availability in specific situations. Although certain dispositional factors may lead someone to perceive a situation as unsafe, it is intriguing to think about the individual differences that shape what people do when they feel unsafe. Consider, for example, people who experience particular situations as unsafe, as in the case of Hazrat Imam Hussain (R.A) at Karbla in spite of adverse circumstances, he stood against Yazid and took a firm stand against all oppositions. Future research will focus on the courage that enables people to take the risk of employing and expressing their personal selves when it feels threatening to do so. Charting the role of courage is another dimension of developing a process model of personal engagement and disengagement.

This courage has been exemplified by individuals such as Hannah Arendt (German Jewish political theorist), Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah (lawyer, politician, statesman, founder of Pakistan, and father of nation), Mohandas Ghandhi (political and spiritual leader of India), Martin Luther King Jr (American clergyman activist and prominent leader in the African American civil rights movement), Aung San Suu Kyi (Burmese opposition political leader and prime minister), Nelson Mandela (President of South Africa), Rosa Parks (African American civil rights activist), Sherron Watkins (Vice President of Corporate Development and whistleblower of Enron Scandal), Justice Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry (Chief Justice of Pakistan), and George Orwell (revolutionary English, anti-totalitarianism author and journalist) all of whom confronted profound issues of their times and affected social change.

Conceptual connections

Future research will focus on examining both quantitatively and qualitatively the connections between the relatively static levels of people's involvement and commitment and the constant fluctuations of self-in-role according to their level of vision, justice, modesty, and courage as we see the dominant dispositional factor in Hazrat Abu Bakr Siddiq (R.A), Hazrat Umer Bin Khatab (R.A), Hazrat Usman Ghanni (R.A.) and Hazrat Ali Murtaza (R.A).

The conceptual model developed in this research has a number of components, some better developed than others. A wide range of factors were deliberately included in the model, taking seriously the multiple levels of influences-individual, interpersonal, group, intergroup, and organizational-that shape people's personal engagements and disengagements. It is at the swirling intersection of those influences that individuals make choices, at different levels of awareness (consciousness), to employ and express or withdraw and defend themselves during role performances.

In order to have the feel of the height of consciousness and for touching the zenithal point of human existence, in conceptual connections, all existential scholars, literary figures and organizational thinkers can seek advice from the message of Muhammad – the ideal prophet. The Prophet had bidden his followers, on the day of the Farewell Pilgrimage:

Know that every Muslim is a brother unto another Muslim, and that all the Muslims are brethren unto one another.

This brother hood still transcends all the man-made barriers of countries and nations. The blacks and the whites, the Iranians and the Arabs, the Turks and the Mongols, the Negroids and the Europeans submerge their differences in the brotherhood of faith. This is a great blessing from the Lord Most High. All become equals in the kingdom of God; none is an untouchable or a noble; there are no sudras, no brahmins; the distinctions of wealth and vocations fall down to the ground. All can read the *Quraan*, anybody can lead the prayers; all are equals in the matter of acquiring and diffusing knowledge. All are equals in the eyes of the Law also – a life for life – becomes the governing principle whether one be a sovereign or serf.

There are many more aspects of Islamic canons of equity and equality; the rights it has conferred on women and slaves, to name only two, can convince any fair-minded person that the present-day Europe with all its claims to light and learning and liberalism, still lags behind Islam. The world can still learn a lot from Islam but the limited time at my disposal would not permit me to shed further light on this question.

The dichotomy of human affairs into spiritual and temporal has been the greatest mischief played with the world by what we know as modernism. This is the division fostered allegedly by a saying attributed to Jesus Christ – render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's. This has been the greatest trap into which the world has been drawn in but Islam smashes this snare. It tells the world that every worldly affair undertaken with sincerity and in accordance with the code of morals is meritorious in the sight of God. Everything temporal is, to put it the other way, virtuous if it is backed by morality and faith. It is wrong to think that religion demands withdrawal from the world for remembrance of God or that the earning of one's livelihood, or looking after one's children, relations or countrymen falls in the sphere of mundane affairs. Islam does not accept this view of life; it tells that performance of one's duty with sincerity and fear of God is the highest religion.

Faith in God and good deeds are, thus, the two means of salvation according to Islam. Faith consists of belief in God, His prophets, His angels, His scriptures and retribution in the hereafter. For sincerity and truthfulness depend on faith, no good deed is possible unless it is informed by a heartfelt realization of God and acceptance of His commands. Action, in its turn, is divided into three parts. The first is the worship or glorification of God. Next come the dealings with fellow beings which cover all the individual and social transactions and on these depend the continuance of an orderly society as well as social and economic justice. Morals comprise the third category of human actions which cover all those obligations which, although not legally binding, must be discharged faithfully in order to develop spiritually and to raise the level of society. These four: faith, worship, dealings and morals constitute the pathway to salvation and success according to Islam.

It also needs to be made clear that quiescence or inaction has no place in Islam which enjoins action and enterprise. Islam is not death, but life, for it declares:

And that man hath only that for which he maketh effort.

And, also:

Every soul is a pledge for its own deeds.

Islam teaches exertion and struggle, not merely in the recesses of one's heart, but also in the field of action. The life of the holy Prophet as well as the lives of his caliphs and companions is too well-known to all of us. They have shown the way of attaining salvation and success and advancement in this world and world beyond. Muhammad's message differs from that of Buddha inasmuch as the former teaches not the annihilation of desires but the disciplining of desires. It is also different from the teachings of Christ. Muhammad does not scorn wealth and power; he teaches how to make a proper use of the both.

Thus, faith and virtuous action constitute the matrix of faith in Islam. It commends action, not inaction; exertion, not indolence; acceptance of responsibility and doing one's duty instead of shrinking selfishly from these. The examples set by the Prophet of Islam and his successors show the way of correct behavior:

Muhammad is the messenger of Allah. And those with him are hard against the disbelievers and merciful among themselves. Thou seest them bowing down and falling prostrate (in worship), seeking bounty from Allah and (His) acceptance.

We find these noblest specimens of humanity, the companions of Muhammad, waging war at times; at others engaged in social service and doing good to their friends and companions; bowing down before God; praising Him very often and seeking their sustenance by hard labor on other occasions; yet, never unmindful of their Lord or His commandments. The Quran portrays their lives in these words:

Men whom neither merchandise nor sales beguileth from remembrance of Allah.

They carry on their trades and professions as well as seek the pleasure of God. They do not give up one for the other, but apply themselves to both in the same breath. Here is an instance preserved by history which illustrates how they spent their lives. At a time when hostilities are going on between the Muslims and the Byzantines, a few enemy spies enter the Muslim camp to find out the morale of Muslim soldiers. They go back and report to their Commander that Muslim battlers are "anchorites by the night and veterans by the day." This is the ideal way of life taught by Islam and the world needs to learn it afresh.

Conclusion

Existentialism is a response towards bureaucratic hierarchical control of individuals and their freedom. The mechanical/hierarchical model creates stress, alienation, dependency and deterministic utility in the individual (Bentham, 1789). This seriously affects the performance of HR managers' work in the organization. This research is conducted regarding the HR managers of Pakistan, which is still an under researched area in the literature and this study addresses the timely need and tries to fulfill this gap, which may be a stepping stone for influencing the public attitude and affecting the quality of life specifically HR executives. On the other hand, an effort had been made to explore an alternative model of measuring and accessing the performance of HR managers. This model is based on Kahn's existential framework and analyzes the psychological and existential conditions of HR managers in terms of four dimensions. These dimensions are sense of responsibility, death consciousness, alienation, and meaningfulness. On the basis of field work conducted on fifty HR managers of diverse corporate sector organizations, these dimensions have been analyzed. The core themes

and issues of existential and emotional context of HR managers' work in their respective organizations have also been discussed.

As discussed in the sections, core themes and issues one can conjure of that existential paradigm of measuring and accessing the HR managers' work can be conveniently employed by the top management to improve the organizational climate and culture as well as performance indicators of their employees. Policy makers can also learn from the findings provided in study. These are:

- Organizational policy makers can humanize the work life balance/relations of their employees.
- They can improve the performance and productivity of work force by addressing and responding to their cognitive, emotional and psychological needs.
- Resultantly sense of responsibility will create meaningfulness and alienation will disappear from the behavioral matrix of HR managers because according to Durkheim (1897), "anomie" is created due to lack of social integration with the environment of a person. Therefore, when the communication and solidarity is restored between top management and employees, distress and alienation and lack of interest in the organizational culture will disappear and neurotic organizations will turn into humanistic organizations/existential organizations. It will reduce the lack of recognition, lack of meaningfulness, lack of cognitive engagement, lack of emotional engagement, lack of physical engagement, lack of physical safety, lack of psychological availability, lack of job enrichment, lack of work role fit, lack of rewarding co-worker relations, lack of work life balance, lack of supportive superior relations, lack of co-worker non-adherence, lack of self-consciousness and lack of work place spirituality.

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Appendix 1. Interview guide

Warm-up

1. What is your job here?
2. How long have you worked here? What did you do before this job?
3. Who supervises you, and whom do you supervise?
4. What do you like most about working here?
5. What do you like least about your working here?
6. Why did you choose to become a HR manager?
7. Are you comfortable here, and with the people?
8. What do you like most about being a HR manager here, and why?

9. What aspects of being a HR manager here are personally and emotionally involving for you? What really grabs you, involves more of you than other roles you have held?
10. How would an observer like me be able to see your personal involvement? What does it look like?
11. What do you dislike most about being a HR manager here, and why?
12. How would an observer like me be able to see that uninvolvement? What does it look like?
13. How do you find the demands of the HR manager role?
14. How much control and autonomy do you have here?
15. How challenging do you find your role and its demands?
16. When can you coast through the work? When do you have to really stretch?
17. How do you like the way that your role is designed?
18. For what behaviors are you rewarded here, and what are those rewards?
19. How free are you to perform the role as you wish, at your own pace and style?
20. Where are you in the hierarchy? Do you feel in the center here?
21. How do you find working within your particular activity?
22. What emotional support systems do you have here at office?
23. How much do you want to be personally and emotionally engaged here?
24. How is that involvement influenced by your physical and emotional energy?

Situation 1

I would like you to think about a time when you have been attentive and interested in what you are doing, felt absorbed and involved. A time when you did not think about how you'd rather be doing something else, and you did not feel bored. One example of this, outside of the work- place, is when we go to movies and get involved with them to the extent that we almost forget that we are just watching a movie: we do not think about ourselves, and the other things that we could be doing. This also happens when we are working, that we get so wrapped up in what we are doing that we forget about other things. This can be when we are doing something by ourselves, like writing or drafting, or when we are working with other people. Can you describe a particular time when you have felt like that here at work?

Situation 2

Now I would like you to think about a time when you have felt uninvolved in what you were doing, a time when you were, say, bored, distracted, or feeling detached. We can use the movie example again; where we go to movies that just do not engage us and we are aware that it is just a movie or that we would rather be elsewhere. This too happens when we are at work, when we are doing something or working with someone, and we are not particularly involved in it for some reason or another. Can you describe a situation where this fits you?

Situation 3

Now I would like you to think about a time when you did experience a difference between your response at work and the way in which you would have responded had you not been at work. This would be a time when you had to leave out more of who you are because you were at work. It is a time when you felt the difference between how you think you would have acted or reacted, based on your own personal experiences and feelings, and how you actually did act or react within the work situation. Can you describe a particular time when you have felt this?

Situation 4

Now I would like you to think about a time when you felt like there was not much difference between your response at work and the way in which you would have responded had you not been at work. This would be a time at work when you left out less of who you are outside of work. It is a time when you did not feel much difference between how you think you would have acted or reacted on the basis of your own personal experiences and feelings, and how you actually did act or react at work. Can you describe a particular time when you have felt this?

Meaningful self or not

25. What is humanity's place in the cosmos?
26. Why should you get up in the morning?
27. Is your life significant?
28. What are choices? What are goals?
29. Where do goals usually come from?
30. What is the meaning of Life?
31. Which political party is right?
32. What will happen to the human race?
33. Is not "happiness" the meaning of life?
34. How can you become a better person?
35. How can you change the world?
36. Is there a conflict between science and religion?
37. Is your religion correct?
38. What was the purpose of which the universe was created?
39. Is there a God?
40. Do you have free will?
41. Is there life after death?

Alienation/alienated self or not

42. Do you vote in national elections?
43. Do you enjoy TV?
44. What do you think of the new model American automobiles?
45. Do you read Dawn?
46. Were you interested in the recent national elections?
47. Do you think children are generally a nuisance to their parents?
48. Are you interested in having children? (Or would you be at the right age?)
49. Do you like to participate in religious activities?
50. Do national spectator-sports (cricket, hockey) interest you?
51. Do you think most married people lead trapped (frustrated) lives?
52. Do you think you could just as easily live in another society – past or present?
53. Do you think most politicians are sincerely interest in the public's welfare, or are they more interested in themselves?
54. Do you think religion is mostly myth or mostly truth?

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55. "Life, as most men live it, is meaningless." Do you agree or disagree?
 56. For yourself, assuming you could carry out your decision or do things over again; do you think a single life or married life would be the more satisfactory?
 57. Do you believe human life is an expression of a divine purpose, or is it only the result of chance and evolution?
 58. "Most people live lives of quiet desperation." Do you agree or disagree?

Death-conscious self or not

59. How do you feel when talking about death and dying?
60. How do you feel when you hear of someone's death?
61. How do you feel about death and dying?
62. How do you feel about the death of your parents/child?
63. How do you feel about your eventual death?
64. Do you think managing work life balance is the core responsibility of HR manager?
65. What do you think about powerlessness, meaninglessness and normlessness?
66. What are your views about social isolation and self estrangement?

The meaning in life

67. Do you understand your life's meaning?
68. Are you looking for something that makes your life meaningful?
69. Are you always looking to find your life's purpose?
70. Do you think that your life has clear sense of purpose?
71. Do you think that you have a good sense of what makes your life meaningful?
72. Do you think that you have discovered a satisfying life purpose?
73. Are you always searching for something that makes your life feel significant?
74. Are you seeking a purpose or mission for your life?
75. Is your life has no clear purpose?
76. Are you searching for meaning in your life?

Responsibility/responsible self

77. What is responsibility? Do you think the concept of death influences your decision making as a professional?
78. Why is responsibility important and how are our responsibilities changing over time?
79. What is your responsibility to the future?
80. Do you think managing work life balance is the core responsibility of HR manager?
81. "You are given a chance of business trip to Singapore and your lonely sick mother/father at the age of 72 waiting for you at home", what would be your preference?

Self and others

82. Do you believe in developing and becoming self aware?
83. Do you believe in personal growth?
84. Do you believe in maintaining integrity and serving others?
85. Do you believe in unity with others?

86. Do you want to be involved in building a community and experience trust, compassion, honoring and caring?

87. Do you see your role to liberate others to get on with what their hearts cry out to do?

Cognitive engagement

88. Do you think that performing your job is so absorbing that you forget about everything else?

89. Do you often think about other things when performing your job?

90. Are you rarely distracted when performing your job?

91. Does your time pass quickly when you perform your job?

Emotional engagement

92. Do you really put your heart into your job?

93. Do you get excited when you perform well on your job?

94. Do you often feel emotionally detached from your job?

95. Are your own feelings affected by how well you perform your job?

Physical engagement

96. Do you exert a lot of energy performing your job?

97. Do you stay until the job is done?

98. Do you avoid working overtime whenever possible?

99. Do you take work home to do?

100. Do you avoid working too hard?

Meaningfulness

101. "The work you do on this job is very important to you", what is your point of view?

102. Do your job activities are personally meaningful to you?

103. "The work you do on this job is worthwhile", what is your point of view?

104. Are your job activities significant to you?

105. Do you think the work you do on this job is meaningful to you?

106. Do you feel that the work you do on your job is valuable?

Psychological safety

107. Are you not afraid to be yourself at work?

108. Are you afraid to express your opinions at work?

109. Is there a threatening environment at work?

Psychological availability

110. Are you confident in your ability to handle competing demands at work?

111. Are you confident in your ability to deal with problems that come up at work?

112. Are you confident in your ability to think clearly at work?

113. Are you confident in your ability to display the appropriate emotions at work?

114. Are you confident that you can handle the physical demands at work?

Work role fit

- 115. Do you feel that your job “fits”, how you see yourself?
- 116. Do you like the identity your job gives you?
- 117. The work you do on this job helps you satisfy who you are?
- 118. Does your job “fits” how you see yourself in the future?

Rewarding co-worker relations

- 119. Are your interactions with your co-workers rewarding?
- 120. Do your co-workers value your input?
- 121. Do your co-workers listen to what you have to say?
- 122. Do your co-workers really know who you are?
- 123. Do you believe that your co-workers appreciate who you are?
- 124. Do you sense a real connection with your co-workers?
- 125. Are your co-workers and you having mutual respect for one another?
- 126. Do you feel a real kinship with co-workers?
- 127. Do you feel worthwhile when you are around your co-workers?
- 128. Do you trust your co-workers?

Supportive superior relations

- 129. Does your supervisor help you solve work related problems?
- 130. Does your supervisor encourage you to develop new skills?
- 131. Does your supervisor keep informed about how employees think and feel about things?
- 132. Does your supervisor encourage employees to participate in important decision?
- 133. Does your supervisor praise good work?
- 134. Does your supervisor encourage employees to speak up when they disagree with a decision?
- 135. Are employees treated fairly by your supervisor?
- 136. Is your supervisor committed to protecting your interest?
- 137. Does your supervisor do what he says? Is there a clash between his words and actions?
- 138. Do you trust your supervisor?

Co-workers' norm adherence

- 139. Do you go along with the norms in your group of co-workers?
- 140. Do you do what is expected of you by your co-workers?

Resources

- 141. Do you feel mentally sharp at the end of the work day?
- 142. Cannot think straight by the end of your work day?
- 143. Do you feel overwhelmed by the things going on at work?
- 144. Do you feel emotionally healthy at the end of the work day?
- 145. Do you feel emotionally drained from your work?
- 146. Do you feel tired your work day is over?

147. Do you feel physically used up at the end of the work day?

Self-consciousness

148. Are you worried about how others perceive you at work?

149. Are you afraid your failings will be noticed by others?

150. Do not you worry about being judged by others at work?

Closing

151. Is there anything that you want to add or stress that might help me understand the influences on when you do and do not feel involved or uninvolved here?

152. How you rate me as an interviewer?

Appendix 2

The four dimensions of existential framework probed during this study include death, responsibility, alienation, and meaningfulness, from the HR manager, directors, CEOs, and other top ranked executives of the organizations are shown in Table AI.

Appendix 3. Punch line inventory

I want to get attention from and impress the people who count in my life (Dramatic).

Some menacing force is out to get me; I had better be on my guard. I cannot really trust anybody (Suspicious).

Sr. no.	Organizations
1	Intech Process Automation and KSB Pumps
2	Wi-tribe
3	Bank Alfalah Ltd
4	Board of Revenue, Govt. of the Punjab
5	Packages
6	Dawlance
7	ICI Pakistan
8	MIA Corporation
9	Hamza Foundation Academy for the Deaf
10	Allied Bank
11	Rafi Group Builders and Developers
12	Pakistan Education Foundation
13	Geological Survey of Pakistan
14	USAID, Pakistan
15	The Pakistan Credit Rating Agency Ltd
16	Leading Edge
17	Samba Bank, Pakistan
18	Haier Group of Industries, Pakistan
19	Chaudhry Dairies (Pvt) Ltd
20	IUR & Associates
21	Thermosole Industries (Pvt) Ltd

Table AI.
(continued) Responses/punch lines

Sr. no.	Organizations
22	Nizamuddin Faridulhaq (Pvt) Ltd
23	Sadiq Poutry (Pvt) Ltd
24	K.M. Ashraf & Sons (Pvt) Ltd
25	Cosmopolitan Enterprises
26	Nizampur Cement
27	Gourmet Foods (Pvt) Ltd
28	Stallions (Pvt) Ltd
29	TCS Express, Pakistan
30	NS Shoes (Pvt) Ltd
31	Leather Shine Industries (Pvt) Ltd
32	Max Tech Office Automation
33	Metallix Equipment (Pvt) Ltd
34	Acson International, Pakistan
35	Socio-Economic Legal Forum (SELF), Pakistan
36	VIP Plastics
37	Image Garments, LLC, Pakistan
38	Masood Textile Mills Limited
39	Azgard 9 Ltd, Pakistan
40	Ali Murtaza Associates (Pvt) Ltd
41	Meyer & Co.
42	Complex Group of Industries, Pakistan
43	Dawood Spinning Mills (Pvt) Ltd
44	Askari Bank Ltd
45	DeLaval Pakistan
46	Tetra Pak Pakistan Ltd
47	SMEDA, Govt. of Pakistan
48	TUSDEC, Govt. of Pakistan
49	PHDEB, Govt. of Pakistan
50	ABB Pakistan

Table AI.

Reality does not offer satisfaction; interactions with others will fail, it is safer to remain distant (Detached).

It is hopeless to change the course of events; I am just not good enough (Depressive).

I don't want to be at the mercy of events, I have to master and control all the things affecting me (Compulsive).

I handle my responsibilities as HR manager in a highly intelligent and caring fashion.

I want a decent death which serves some purpose than a meaningless death.

I will fight to the death for my child.

Seeing my father on deathbed; changed my whole life.

I started programs to help employees balance work and family responsibilities.

I am responsible to my board of directors.

Being HR manager is a responsible position, I suppose, but not very exciting.

I would have loved to have a better paying job with more responsibility.

Sometime I feel alienated from my peers.

Sometime I feel alienated from political process.

It is the challenge that gives meaning to life.

I always asked people to tell me about a meaningful event or period in their lives.

Serving deaf and dumb children is quite meaningful for me.

Serving my parents at their old age is the meaningful.

Widespread political and economic disarray threatens to make the constitution meaningless.

Paying fines and heavy taxes are just meaningless for me.

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