THE MEDIATING EFFECT OF RESILIENCE ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERCEIVED ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT AND WORK ENGAGEMENT

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ABSTRACT

Human resource development (HRD) helps organizations to increase the efficiency of an organization, both in work roles and extra-work role performance. Employee engagement is an extra-work role performance that is beneficial to the organization's performance. The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between perceived organizational support and employee engagement. The role of mediation of resilience has been investigated. Data were collected through questionnaires and the structural equation model (SEM) analysis is used to test the hypothesis. The results show that perceived organization support significantly correlates with employee engagement. It reveals that resilience is a mediator of the relationship. The result of the research reveals that the resilience of employees plays an important role in the engagement of those employees. To increase employee engagement, HRD needs to focus on organizational support and how to increase employees' resilience. Implications for future studies are discussed.

Keywords: Human Resource Development, Resilience, Perceived Organizational Support, Work Engagement.

INTRODUCTION

The objective of Human Resource Development (HRD) is to improve employee performance at four levels: individual, workgroup, work progress, and overall organization (Swanson & Holton III, 2001). Swanson & Holton III (2001) illustrate the diversity of performance models in their study. Five key considerations in performance are presented: (a) performance is a multidisciplinary phenomenon, (b) performance models have a disciplinary bias, (c) there is no single view of performance, (d) types and indicators of performance are varied, and (d) subsystems in performance models vary widely. They stress that individual performance is *"the first to develop"*. To support that notion; Moon et al (2020), and Sawasdee et al (2020) propose that intrinsic motivation plays an important role at the individual level where the employee demonstrates extra effort on a day-by-day basis to show their willingness to work.

Research into employee engagement has found that it has a positive impact on employees and organizational performance (Bakker & Albrecht, 2018; Besieux et al., 2018). Scholars have examined the prediction of employee engagement, such as in Besieux et al. (2018) who presented empirical evidence on the positive impact of leadership. In their conceptual research, Byrne et al. (2017) presented a possible influence of corporate politics on employee participation. Organizational Support Theory - OST (Eisenberger et al., 2020) proposes that positive results from employees will increase when they recognize that they are valued and cared for by the organization. The importance of support from the organization has attracted the attention of many researchers (Eisenberger et al., 2020; Sawasdee et al., 2020; Kurtessis et al., 2017).

Organizations are facing both internal and external disruptive change which needs to overcome for their survival. Furthermore, they have to remain focused on organizational performance. As there is a growing interest in identifying perceived organizational support (POS), the claim is that POS enhances employee work engagement. However, several studies have tested the mediating role of resilience (e.g., Ramos-Diaz et al, 2019), and there is a lack of understanding of the mechanism involved in the relationship. The significance of this current study can be described as two-fold; (a) the context of the study expands to the aviation organization, and (b) the mediating testing of resilience in the research model. To extend and confirm the role of resilience, it is necessary to examine the relationship between POS, resilience and employee work engagement in the workplace. Thus, the main objective of this research was to confirm the relationship between POS and employee work engagement by examining whether resilience serves as a mediator in the relationship between POS and work engagement. Additionally, the role of resilience as a mediator which influences workplace outcomes (King et al., 2016) was also considered. Existing research seems to favor resilience as a mediator e.g., Ramos-Diaz et al. (2019), and Sarrionandia et al. (2018).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Previous studies relevant to POS, employee work engagement and resilience, provide some background for this research, presented as three main subtopics: (a) perceived organizational support (POS); (b) employee work engagement; and (c) resilience. Hypotheses will be inserted into the relevant part of the literature review.

Perceived Organizational Support (POS)

Organizational support theory – OST (Eisenberger et al., 2020) suggests that an employee develops a positive attitude when they observe that the organization values their contributions and cares for their quality of life (Kurtessis et al., 2017). Perceived organizational support (POS) has been developed within the OST according to which POS has been identified as having three conditions: (a) employee attributions, (b) employee-organization exchange process, and (c) employee self-enhancement. POS clarifies the concept that employees will contribute to the organization based on their perception of favorable or unfavorable treatment from the organization. If that perception is favorable, the employee will increase their effort to help the organization achieve its goals. POS relates to several attitudinal outcomes such as affective organizational commitment (Chordiya et al., 2017), individual outcomes (Harris, & Kacmar, 2018), job satisfaction and employee work engagement (Gupta et al., 2016).

POS focuses on how the organization recognizes the employee's contribution, and how the organization cares about the employee's well-being (Eisenberger et al., 1990). Additionally, Kraimer et al. (2011) propose that an organization shows favorable treatment by emphasizing the employee's career needs, financial needs, and by caring about their employees, including family adjustment during a job transfer. POS outcomes are grouped as an orientation toward the organization and work, subjective well-being, and behavioral outcomes (Kurtessis et al., 2017). The study of Eisenberger et al. (2020) indicates that POS is related to job outcomes as both in-role and extra-role performance. A previous study by Gupta et al. (2016) addresses the mediating role of POS on work-related outcomes and work engagement. However, more empirical evidence is needed to confirm the relationship between POS and its outcomes (Kurtessis et al., 2017). To fill the research gap, the direct effect of POS on work engagement needs to be examined.

Employee Work Engagement

Employee work engagement has been conceptualized into two schools of thought (Bakker, 2011). First, the three pillars of work engagement consist of the motivational component, the emotional component, and the cognitive component. It refers to the intention of the employee to make an effort beyond what is required by the organization. The motivational component presents the employee's behavioral intent to go beyond his or her job description. The emotional component demonstrates the affective attitude of employees towards their job and the organization in general and the cognitive component describes the willingness that an employee displays through his or her behavioral aspects. Another school of thought describes work engagement as *"a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption"* (Besieux et al., 2018). Vigor refers to levels of energy in working and dedication refers to the sense of being involved in his or her work and absorption refers to the level of concentration an employee has in their work (Bakker, 2011).

Numerous studies have explored the antecedents of employee work engagement. Job demands and resources was revealed as an antecedent of employee work engagement in one longitudinal study with job resources being a better predictor than job demands (Sawasdee et al., 2020). Similarly, Borst et al. (2017) studied job demands-resources as a predictor of work engagement in the public administration context. Mekhum & Jermsittiprasert (2019) reveal that supervisor and co-worker support influence work engagement. Additionally, the study of Eisenberger et al. (2020) proposes that organizational support enhances employee behavior outcomes, employee well-being, and orientation toward their organization and work. From the perspective of job resources, organizational support is one of the resources that enhance employee work engagement. However, there is only limited empirical evidence to support the concept. Therefore, in this study, the relationship between organizational support and employee work engagement is developed and hypothesized.

H_1 Perceived organizational support is significantly related to employee work engagement.

The Mediating Effect of Resilience

Resilience is a complex, multidimensional, and dynamic domain. It refers to an individual's positive ability to adapt and overcome adversity after experiencing a stressful situation in the workplace or family (Li & Hasson, 2020; Ramos-Diaz et al., 2019; Sarrionandia et al., 2018; Southwick & Charney, 2012). An individual who exhibits high resilience is special. Scholars have given attention to how an employee can develop resilience (Southwick & Charney, 2012). They question whether resilience is a gift or a capability that can be developed through training. However, it should be noted that building resilience is easier for some than for others. For example, a person who experiences severe depression will sink into deep sadness and have feelings of hopelessness. Such a person will also experience a lack of energy and loss of interest in life. Others, who have not experienced an incidence of severe depression, can live their lives normally. Also, people with traumatic brain injury may have problems with cognitive strategies and/or emotional challenges while others do not experience these problems. Southwick & Charney (2012) observe that individuals with lower resilience need to practice skills related to flexibility to help in specific situations.

The first phase of a study on resilience must focus on individual, social and environmental factors. This concept of resilience was developed based on the identification of risk factors that lead to mental dysfunctions (King et al., 2016). Later, the concept of resilience was further developed in such as Connor & Davidson (2003) who defined

resilience as a standard of thought and tolerance of personal ability. A resilient person will develop confidence in their instincts, tolerate the negative effects and strengthen the positive effects of stress. Also, they develop a positive acceptance of change and determine their spiritual influence. Among the measurements of resilience are the Resilience Scale (RS-14) (Wagnild & Young, 2009), and the Multi-dimension scale (Wang et al., 2014). The resilience measurement of Connor & Davidson (2003) has been most cited and used in top journal publications e.g., Depression Anxiety, Journal of Happiness Studies, Journal of Human Resource Management and Frontier in Psychology.

Eisenberger et al. (2020) proposed that individual psychological factors such as gratitude, anger, felt obligation, the fulfilment of socioemotional needs, and performance-reward expectancies can play the role of mediator in the relationship between POS and employee behavioral outcomes. In current study, the resilience domain is inserted to confirm Eisenberger's concept. Theoretically, resilience has been proposed as a mediator and moderator (King et al., 2016). However, under crisis management in the organization, as conducted in current study, the mediating effect of resilience will be primarily examined.

H_2 *Resilience mediates the relationship between perceived organizational support and work engagement.*

In view of the preceding discussion on perceived organizational support, and resilience and employee work engagement, the hypothesized model is presented in Figure 1.
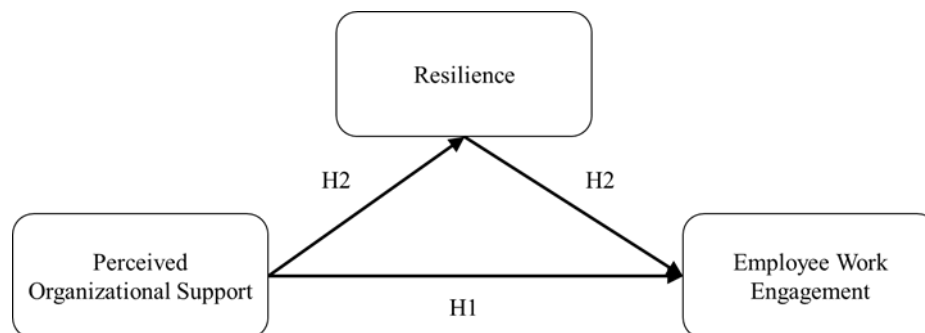

FIGURE 1
THE CONCEPTUAL MODEL
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Sampling and Procedure

This current study, a quantitative approach was applied for investigating the structural relationship between the latent variables. Hair et al. (2010) recommend that the sample size needs to be addressed in SEM data analysis. The recommendation is that 100-500 cases be included in the sample (Hair et al., 2010). Thus, for current study distributed 700 questionnaires to employees in four aviation organizations in Thailand, 592 were returned.

The demographics of the 592 participants were as follows: By gender, 297 females (50.2%) and 295 males (49.8%); by average age, 41.3% of participants were 30-45 years old, 37.7% between 25-30 years old, and 21% were in other age range groups. In terms of length of employment for their respective organizations at the time of data collection, 32.3% had been working for 10-20 years, 29.4% for 5-9 years, and 25% for between 2 - 4 years. In terms of their employment function, 83.4% were in operations, 11.5% were in administration, and 5.1% were performing other functions. Participants were strictly anonymous and voluntary, and none of the participants refused to participate in the research project.

Measurement

Perceived organizational support (POS) is a 10-item scale measuring perceived organizational support developed from Kraimer & Wayne (2004). Cronbach's alphas were

.90, .92, and .76 for the three distinct dimensions of the POS; financial support, career support and adjustment support. Sample statements are *"My organization has taken care of me financially"*, *"Financial incentives and allowances provided to me by my organization are good"*, and *"I feel that my organization cares about my career development"*. Responses were according to a 1-6 point Likert scale.

Work engagement is a 9-item scale measuring work engagement based on the Utrecht work engagement scale developed from UWES (Schaufeli et al, 2006). Cronbach's alphas were .79, .87, and .76 for the three instinct dimensions of the Work Engagement scale; vigor, dedication, and absorption. Sample statements are *"At my work, I feel bursting with energy"*, *"I am proud of the work that I do"*, and *"I get carried away when I'm working"*. Responses were according to a 1-6 point Likert scale.

Resilience is a 25-item scale measuring of resilience developed from Connor & Davidson (2003). Cronbach's alphas were 0.92, 0.77, 0.85, 0.60, and 0.71 for five instinct dimensions of the Resilience scale being; tenacity, tolerance to negative effect, positive acceptance to change, control, and spiritual. Sample statements are *"I can adapt when changes occur"*, *"I can deal with whatever comes my way"*, and *"I try to see the humorous side of things when I am faced with problems"*. Responses were according to a 1-6 point Likert scale.

The measurement tools were originally in English, so they were translated into Thai by a committee of Thai professors who are excellent in English (with IBT-TOEFL scores higher than 100). An index of item-objective congruence (IOC) was then developed by three professors who specialize in human resource and organizational development (HROD). This evaluation process helped in refining the initial items (Pérez-Rojo et al., 2019).

Data Analysis

To examine the hypotheses, partial least square (PLS) techniques are recommended for the data analysis (Hair et al., 2010; Kline, 2011). This technique provides a useful way of quickly exploring many variables that can predict some outcome variables. Additionally, PLS does not *"face the issues of model complexity"* (Hair et al., 2010). After data collection, a preliminary analysis was performed before data analysis through PLS-SEM. Missing values, outliners, and normality of data were examined, as illustrated in Table 1.

	No.	Missing	Mean	Median	Min	Max	SD	Excess Kurtosis	Skewness
Table 1 **PRELIMINARY DATA ANALYSIS**									
pos1	1	0	3.291	3	1	6	1.18	-0.295	-0.108
pos2	2	0	3.236	3	1	6	1.239	-0.444	-0.04
pos3	3	0	3.233	3	1	6	1.269	-0.554	-0.047
pos4	4	0	3.564	4	1	6	1.137	-0.415	0.104
pos5	5	0	3.473	3	1	6	1.036	0.685	0.356
pos6	6	0	3.571	3	1	6	1.08	-0.137	0.183
pos7	7	0	3.65	4	1	6	1.079	-0.304	0.033
pos8	8	0	3.654	4	1	6	1.121	-0.287	0.106
pos9	9	0	3.353	3	1	6	1.182	-0.375	0.04
pos10	10	0	3.745	4	1	6	1.112	-0.057	-0.082
eng1	11	0	4.056	4	1	6	1.034	0.058	-0.167
eng2	12	0	4.422	4	1	6	0.962	0.08	-0.269
eng3	13	0	4.503	5	1	6	0.983	-0.134	-0.298
eng4	14	0	4.417	4	1	6	1.033	0.004	-0.349
eng5	15	0	4.174	4	1	6	1.068	-0.177	-0.218
eng6	16	0	4.297	4	1	6	1.025	0.023	-0.327
eng7	17	0	4.595	4	1	6	1.039	0.494	-0.589
eng8	18	0	3.527	4	1	6	1.136	-0.371	-0.005
eng9	19	0	3.498	4	1	6	1.142	-0.357	0.025
re1	20	0	4.24	4	1	6	0.979	-0.441	-0.04
re2	21	0	4.231	4	1	6	0.972	-0.137	-0.156

re3	22	0	3.326	4	1	6	1.44	-0.961	-0.066
re4	23	0	4.439	4	1	6	0.876	-0.033	-0.086
re5	24	0	4.333	4	1	6	0.977	-0.015	-0.118
re6	25	0	3.936	4	1	6	1.192	-0.556	-0.164
re7	26	0	4.481	4	1	6	0.933	0.34	-0.358
re8	27	0	4.174	4	1	6	1.047	-0.47	-0.025
re9	28	0	3.439	4	1	6	1.44	-0.96	-0.046
re10	29	0	4.562	5	1	6	0.941	0.06	-0.285
re11	30	0	4.569	5	1	6	0.896	0.545	-0.357
re12	31	0	4.674	5	1	6	0.964	0.097	-0.432
re13	32	0	4.225	4	1	6	1.009	0.82	-0.491
re14	33	0	4.581	5	1	6	0.893	0.715	-0.545
re15	34	0	4.275	4	1	6	1.037	0.661	-0.552
re16	35	0	4.557	5	1	6	0.969	0.432	-0.503
re17	36	0	4.625	5	1	6	0.94	0.483	-0.414
re18	37	0	4.416	4	1	6	0.921	0.127	-0.265
re19	38	0	4.488	4	1	6	0.93	0.384	-0.281
re20	39	0	3.128	3	1	6	1.369	-0.845	0.119
re21	40	0	4.438	4	1	6	0.972	-0.293	-0.105
re22	41	0	3.863	4	1	6	1.107	-0.175	-0.184
re23	42	0	4.534	5	1	6	0.937	0.503	-0.395
re24	43	0	4.784	5	1	6	0.912	-0.094	-0.43
re25	44	0	4.905	5	1	6	0.978	-0.07	-0.58

Factor analysis was performed as illustrated in Table 2 and Figure 2. As recommended by Hair et al. (2010), factor loadings equal to or greater than 0.50 are considered significant. Therefore, items with factor loadings less than 0.50 were deleted. As a result, item re3, re9, and re20 (with factor loadings 0.26, 0.38, 0.25) were deleted.

Table 2 FACTOR LOADINGS			
	Pos	Work_Engage	Resilience
pos1	0.79		
pos2	0.86		
pos3	0.85		
pos4	0.86		
pos5	0.86		
pos6	0.84		
pos7	0.79		
pos8	0.83		
pos9	0.82		
pos10	0.78		
eng1		0.76	
eng2		0.76	
eng3		0.77	
eng4		0.79	
eng5		0.84	
eng6		0.83	
eng7		0.77	
eng8		0.66	
eng9		0.65	
re1			0.68
re2			0.67
re3			0.26[a]
re4			0.73
re5			0.73
re6			0.64
re7			0.74
re8			0.74
re9			0.38[a]

re10			0.72
re11			0.72
re12			0.66
re13			0.59
re14			0.67
re15			0.54
re16			0.64
re17			0.69
re18			0.7
re19			0.71
re20			0.25[a]
re21			0.65
re22			52
re23			0.64
re24			0.69
re25			0.72

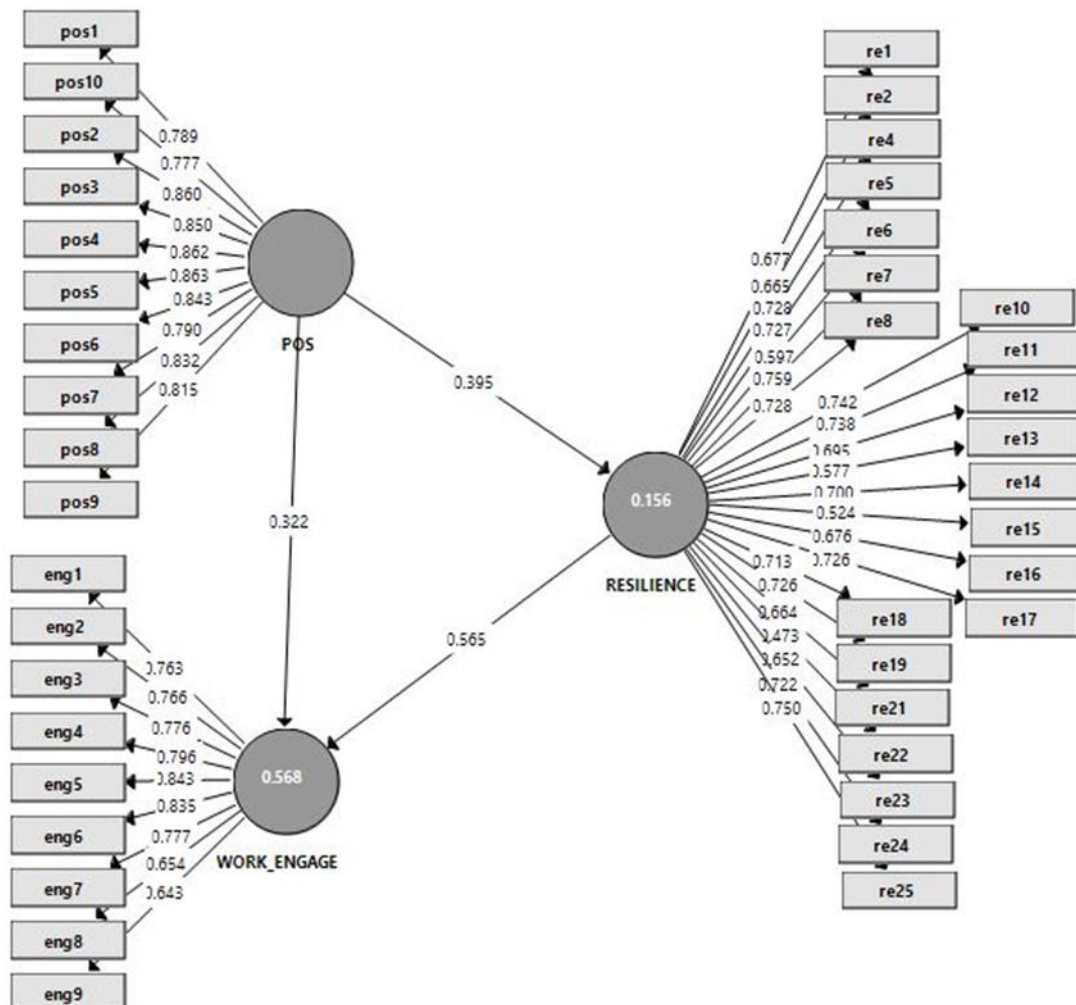Note: pos = Perceived organization support; eng = work engagement; re = resilience; a = item deleted

FIGURE 2
CONFIRMATORY FACTOR ANALYSIS

Factor loadings that value equal or above 0.5 show the internal item reliability as displayed in Table 3.

Table 3
RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

|	α	rho_A	CR	AVE
Pos	0.95	0.95	0.96	0.69
Resilience	0.94	0.95	0.95	0.5
Work_Engage	0.91	0.91	0.93	0.58

RESEARCH RESULTS

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing is conducted as presented in Figure 3. The results show that the t-value is above 1.96 for all relationships. Thus, the hypotheses are accepted. Table 4 describes the results for the direct effects which support hypothesis H1 as the t-value is 7.08 (p < .05). To test hypothesis H2, the indirect effects between POS to WORK-ENGAGE were tested with results shown in Table 5. The results reveal a significant relationship that explains the mediating effect of resilience. As the relationship between POS and WORK_ENGAGE is significant, this demonstrates that resilience is a partial mediator.

Table 4 DIRECT EFFECT					
	β	M	STDEV	T Statistics	P Values
Pos to Resilience	0.4	0.4	0.04	8.89	0
Pos to Work Engage	0.32	0.32	0.05	7.09	0
Resilience to Work Engage	0.57	0.57	0.04	13.66	0

Table 5 INDIRECT EFFECT					
	β	M	STDEV	T Statistics	P Values
Pos to Resilience to Work Engage	0.22	0.23	0.03	8.24	0
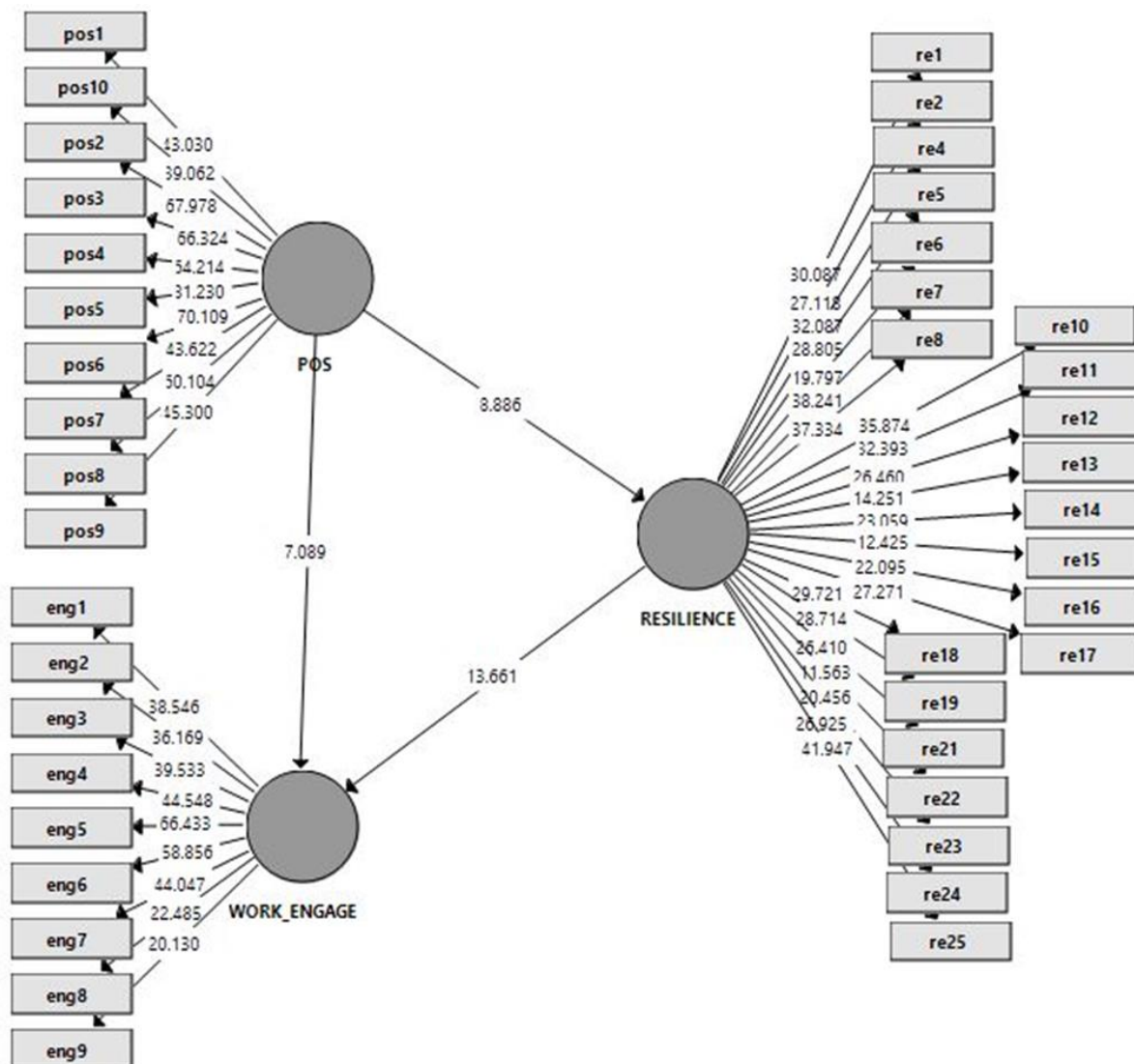
FIGURE 3
STRUCTURAL MODEL
DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Employee value organizational support from organizational contributions and the way that the organization cares about employee well-being. POS is a consequence of the reciprocity process between the organization and its employee (Eisenberger et al., 2020). The result of this current study confirms that employee develops a perception to which organization values and care for them. POS influences employees' extra-role behavior including work engagement, as the result showed. This current research consistency found that POS can explain the relationship with employee work engagement. HR focuses on organizational performance no matter what the situation is. The support from the organization enhances the level of employee engagement, an observation which is in line with Eisenberger et al. (2020). Employees' behavioral outcomes, including work engagement, are the consequences of POS. The current study reveals that generous treatment from the organization helps the employee to maintain their membership in the society and encourage them to increase a positive bond with the organization. This current result support and fill in

the research gap of the significance of POS in an organizational context (Kurtessis et al., 2017). Although individual resource may influence work engagement such as self-efficacy, or self-autonomy (Bashawir et al., 2019), this current result empirically clarified that POS plays an importance role to work engagement.

There are a limited number of studies identifying a mediating role of resilience e.g., Ramos-Diaz et al. (2020), and Cooke et al. (2020). They exhibit a mediating role of resilience and link it with different variables such as perceived emotional intelligence and life satisfaction (Ramon-Diaz et al., 2020), high-performance work systems, and engagement (Cooke et al, 2020). This current study fills an important research gap by examining whether resilience serves as a mediator in the relationship between perceived organizational support and employee work engagement. As result, resilience has been shown to play a partial mediator role in the relationship between the two variables which is inconsistent with the previous studies of Cooke et al. (2020), and Ramos-Diaz et al. (2020). This empirical confirmation of this theoretical model sheds more light on the association between POS, resilience, and employee work engagement.

The results make many related contributions. First, it extends the knowledge of the field of human resource and organization development (HROD) by demonstrating that the need to enhance organizational factors that support employees. Further, HR intervention may lead to the enhancement of employee resilience and work engagement. As well, these results add further information to the previous study of Cooke et al. (2020), revealing that resilience exerts a strong direct effect on employee work engagement. This implies that employees with a higher level of resilience are more engaged in the workplace although they perceive the support from their organization. However, the current study indicates strong support for the use of POS as an organizational resource and resilience as an individual resource.

In conclusion, these findings further inform the understanding of the association between perceived organizational support, resilience, and employee work engagement. Employee work engagement can be positively developed by POS and resilience. To increase employee work engagement, this study suggests that collaboration between organizational and individual resources is critically required.

Implications of the Study

There are two distinct sets of research implications for this study. The first addresses the novel findings and theoretical implications of the study. The second addresses the practical implications of research in organization (specifically in relation to organizational support).

Theoretically, this research had contributed to the theoretical understanding of OST and their contribution to employee work engagement. It also had a theoretical implication about the use of resilience as individual factor that contribute to employee work engagement. To confirm OST, perceived organizational support does contribute to employee work engagement. The study showed that there was a moderate effect of perceived organizational support on outcomes like employee work engagement. The fact that this effect confirmed the previous studies on perceived organizational support. Additionally, researchers should work to the mediating effects. In this current finding, resilience adds on the literature in favor of individual factor, which as noted above has been preferred as a mediator.

In addition to the theoretical implications, there are some practical implications for the organizational practice and policymaking in organization, especially for the HR function. At the organizational level, the results validated the use of combined policies, practices incorporating both organizational support and individual focusing. This study showed that although it may have a direct effect on employee work engagement. Resilience can make a significant mediating to employee work engagement. Thus, the HR should consider the

collaboration of policies and practices and should carefully consider how and when to modify such policies and practices to achieve results. Given high investment in individual development program, this could be part of the preferred practices promoted through these training programs, which could transfer the concept of resilience widely.

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