
SUSTAINABLE EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE THROUGH STRATEGIC TRAINING IN QINGDAO STATE-OWNED BANKS: THE ROLE OF RELATIONAL PSYCHOLOGICAL CONTRACTS

YANG SHENG DONG¹, NORHANIM DEWA²

¹ DBA CANDIDATE, GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS, SEGI UNIVERSITY, PETALING JAYA, MALAYSIA

² SENIOR LECTURER, GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS, SEGI UNIVERSITY, PETALING JAYA, MALAYSIA

EMAIL: SUKD1901710@segi4u.my¹, norhanimdewa@segi.edu.my²

Abstract

This study investigates the influence of strategic employee training on sustainable job performance, emphasizing the mediating role of relational psychological contract fulfillment in the context of six state-owned commercial banks in Qingdao, China. Focusing on non-managerial white-collar staff, the research is grounded in Social Exchange Theory, Psychological Contract Theory, and Human Capital Theory. It delineates training into three strategic domains: business skills (e.g., technical competence and task efficiency), management skills (e.g., leadership and strategic leadership) thinking), and personal ability development (e.g., adaptability, emotional intelligence, and resilience). The study examines how these differentiated forms of training contribute not only to immediate performance but also to the longer-term psychological engagement of employees. It explores how employee-perceived relational psychological contract fulfillment as mediators that connect training to performance. And offering a view of how the professional development initiatives can be aligned with organizational goals to cultivate to cultivate high-performing, resilient, and sustainably engaged employees.

Using structural equation modeling (SEM) and survey data collected from 509 employees across six state-owned banks, the study reveals that business skills training yields a significant, direct enhancement in job performance by equipping employees with practical tools for operational precision and task efficiency. In contrast, management and personal ability training demonstrate their impact predominantly through the strengthening of relational psychological contracts. Training in areas such as strategic thinking, leadership, emotional regulation, and adaptability is not only seen as a professional growth opportunity but also as a tangible symbol of long-term organizational commitment. This perception deepens employees' emotional engagement and reinforces their identification with institutional values, thereby encouraging higher levels of discretionary effort, proactive behavior, and a sustained performance mindset. The findings highlight the pivotal role of relational psychological contracts as the psychological bridge linking training initiatives to enhanced employee performance. When

training is perceived not merely as a means of skill acquisition but as an organizational gesture of trust, long-term support, and mutual investment, employees are more inclined to respond with higher levels of loyalty, initiative, and sustainable effort. This dynamic becomes even more pronounced in state-owned banks navigating the dual pressures of digital transformation and evolving employee expectations. In such settings, designing training strategies that integrate emotional relevance and longterm development goals can foster a stronger psychological bond between the employee and the institution. This, in turn, contributes not only to organizational cohesion and adaptability but also to sustainable learning cultures that empower employees to evolve alongside institutional transformation.

Keywords: Employee Training, Psychological Contract Fulfillment, Employee Performance, State-Owned Banks, Human Resource Management

INTRODUCTION

As China's financial services sector undergoes rapid digitization, regulatory reform, and shifting demographic trends, state-owned commercial banks in urban centers like Qingdao are under increasing pressure to modernize their operations and workforce capabilities. These institutions now contend with agile fintech startups, customer-centric private banks, and rising consumer expectations driven by digital platforms. The operational environment demands not just compliance and stability, but also speed, flexibility, and innovation. In this environment, employee performance is no longer merely about task completion—it encompasses proactive customer service, digital literacy, emotional resilience, and the capacity to learn continuously. Training has therefore evolved into a strategic function, serving not only to transfer skills but also to foster long-term organizational alignment and psychological engagement.

Traditional training systems in state-owned banks have historically centered on compliance, operational procedures, and the mastery of technical protocols—reflecting a command-and-control model aligned with bureaucratic governance. While these foundations remain important, they are increasingly inadequate in a customer-driven, digitally mediated service economy. Today's frontline employees must navigate complex interpersonal dynamics, rapidly evolving technologies, and heightened performance expectations—all of which require a broader skill set including emotional intelligence, agility in decision-making, cross-functional communication, and stress resilience. Such competencies are not easily developed through uniform training modules. Moreover, the symbolic value of training has grown: younger generations of employees often interpret the nature, frequency, and quality of training as indicators of whether the organization values their long-term career growth. When training initiatives are personalized, future-oriented, and visibly linked to developmental opportunities, they fulfill what scholars refer to as the relational psychological contract—a dynamic set of mutual, trust-based expectations that extend beyond the formal employment relationship and influence commitment, morale, and discretionary effort.

The objective of this study is twofold: first, to generate robust empirical evidence that illuminates the psychological mechanisms—particularly relational psychological contract fulfillment—through which differentiated training efforts influence employee performance; second, to deliver practical guidance for human resource strategists seeking to design training portfolios that transcend conventional skill-building and instead

foster organizational loyalty, emotional engagement, and long-term retention. By revealing how training can act as both a developmental tool and a trust signal, the study enriches the evolving discourse on psychological contract theory and presents a strategic roadmap for workforce modernization within China's dynamic and reform-oriented state-owned banking sector.

This study aims to explore the extent to which distinct categories of training—namely business skills, management skills, and personal ability—shape employee performance by activating the mediating function of relational psychological contract fulfillment. The research draws upon quantitative data collected from frontline, non-managerial employees at six prominent state-owned commercial banks in Qingdao. It seeks to uncover how targeted training interventions may reframe employee perceptions of their relationship with the organization, transitioning their behavior from rule-bound compliance to emotionally grounded engagement characterized by initiative, collaboration, and long-term commitment.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Framework

This study integrates three interrelated theoretical lenses—Social Exchange Theory, Psychological Contract Theory, and Human Capital Theory—to construct a multidimensional understanding of how differentiated training types influence employee performance. It specifically investigates how these effects are mediated by relational psychological contract fulfillment, a construct that captures the emotional and trust-based dynamics underlying employee-employer relationships. This integration allows for a more holistic exploration of both the tangible and intangible mechanisms by which training shapes individual behavior and organizational outcomes.

Social Exchange Theory posits that workplace relationships are governed by reciprocal exchanges, where perceived organizational support fosters a sense of obligation and commitment among employees. When individuals recognize that their organization is investing in their growth—through targeted, relevant, and personalized training—they are more likely to return that investment with elevated levels of loyalty, proactive engagement, and high-quality performance. In high-structure, rule-dominated environments such as state-owned banks, social exchange provides a vital psychological counterbalance, encouraging discretionary effort and greater alignment with institutional objectives.

Psychological Contract Theory builds upon this by focusing on the implicit, trust-based agreements that exist alongside formal employment terms, often shaping employee attitudes more powerfully than explicit contracts. These psychological contracts are constructed from repeated experiences, organizational signals, and perceived intentions, reflecting an employee's evolving expectations around support, fairness, and long-term growth. The relational form of the contract places emphasis on enduring emotional bonds, wherein employees anticipate opportunities for meaningful career development, reciprocal respect, and institutional recognition in return for their loyalty and commitment. When training initiatives are seen to align with these expectations, by offering tailored development pathways, transparent career advancement, and continuous learning support, they validate the relational contract and reinforce a sense of organizational integrity. This, in turn, fosters not just deeper engagement, but also trust-based behaviors such as extra-role contributions, advocacy, and long-term retention.

Human Capital Theory introduces a performance-centred perspective by arguing that investments in employee knowledge, skills, and abilities yield measurable returns, such as increased productivity, innovation capacity, and

organizational adaptability. Crucially, the realization of these returns is not automatic. It depends heavily on whether employees are motivated and empowered to deploy their newly acquired competencies in the workplace. That motivational trigger is closely tied to an individual's perception of psychological safety, trust, and institutional recognition. When training is delivered in a context that fosters emotional support, clear growth trajectories, and a sense of being genuinely valued, employees are more likely to internalize the learning, apply it proactively, and remain committed to organizational goals. Thus, the value of human capital investments is deeply intertwined with the psychological conditions under which learning is experienced and enacted.

These theories form a comprehensive and integrative framework that captures the multifaceted impact of employee training. They not only clarify the direct, technical benefits of upskilling—such as enhanced efficiency and role-specific competence—but also unpack the underlying psychological and emotional dynamics that shape how training influences behavior and motivation. By acknowledging employees as both rational economic agents and emotionally driven participants in the workplace, this framework explained how training can simultaneously build competence, deepen commitment, and reinforce trust. In doing so, it underscores how strategically designed training interventions can convert short-term learning into long-term organizational advantage by cultivating resilient, engaged, and high-performing talent.

2.2 Training Types

Employee training in the banking sector, particularly within state-owned institutions undergoing modernization, can be categorized into three core types: business skills training, management skills training, and personal ability training. These categories not only address the immediate functional competencies required for daily banking operations but also contribute to cultivating a resilient, future-ready workforce. Each training type plays a critical role in enhancing technical proficiency, fostering psychological preparedness, and aligning individual development goals with broader institutional strategies.

Business skills training focuses on equipping employees with the practical, task-oriented knowledge necessary for operational efficiency and regulatory compliance. In state-owned commercial banks, this encompasses instruction in core banking functions such as financial product handling, digital banking platforms, transactional accuracy, workflow standardization, and customer interface procedures. Given the complex regulatory environment and high expectations for procedural integrity, such training ensures that employees can execute their roles with precision, accountability, and consistency. Additionally, business skills training helps to instill a sense of professional identity and confidence among frontline staff, laying the groundwork for career progression. Though often seen as foundational, this training serves as a strategic platform that enables employees to absorb more advanced competencies in future management or innovation-oriented roles.

Management skills training aims to instill leadership capabilities, strategic thinking, and a systems-level awareness of the organization, even among employees who are not currently in formal supervisory roles. This training typically includes modules in decision-making, performance coaching, team coordination, conflict mediation, and institutional planning. By engaging with these concepts, employees begin to view their roles through a wider organizational lens, gaining insight into how their actions influence broader institutional outcomes. This exposure cultivates initiative and interdepartmental collaboration, making employees more adaptable and promotable. Additionally, such training strengthens internal mobility pipelines and reinforces a sense of purpose, vision alignment, and long-term organizational identification—factors that are essential for talent retention and succession planning within complex, hierarchical banking environments.

Personal ability training targets the development of essential soft skills that sustain long-term engagement, mental health, and social effectiveness in high-stress, customer-facing roles. This type of training typically includes modules on time management, emotional regulation, self-awareness, adaptability, and interpersonal communication—all of which are indispensable in maintaining performance under pressure. By fostering these personal competencies, banks can cultivate employees who are not only more resilient and composed in volatile service scenarios but also better collaborators and communicators within teams. Moreover, as digital transformation accelerates organizational change, personal ability training becomes a key enabler of workforce agility, allowing employees to remain flexible, empathetic, and solution-oriented amid shifting technological and structural demands.

These three training types form a multidimensional strategy for cultivating a workforce that is not only competent but also psychologically engaged and institutionally aligned. When thoughtfully designed and closely tied to employees' psychological needs, personal aspirations, and long-term career trajectories, such training initiatives can transcend basic skill acquisition. They act as organizational signals of investment and care, strengthening trust, boosting intrinsic motivation, and fostering long-term commitment—hallmarks of a well-maintained relational psychological contract. This comprehensive approach ensures that training becomes a tool for not only capability enhancement but also for building durable employee-employer bonds in an evolving financial services landscape.

2.3 Relational Psychological Contracts

Relational psychological contracts refer to the evolving, trust-based, and emotionally grounded expectations that emerge informally over time between employees and employers. Unlike transactional contracts, which focus on clearly defined, short-term exchanges such as wages for labor, relational contracts encompass broader, long-term mutual obligations centered around trust, recognition, and shared growth. They emphasize the importance of loyalty, organizational care, and developmental reciprocity. These contracts are cultivated through cumulative daily interactions, managerial behavior, institutional signals of support, and the degree to which employee expectations are met with consistent organizational action and sincerity.

In the context of state-owned commercial banks, where formal hierarchies, rigid protocols, and centralized decision-making often shape the workplace environment, relational psychological contracts become especially vital in fostering a sense of purpose and humanity. These institutions often lack the informal, dynamic culture of private-sector firms, making it even more critical for employees to feel personally valued and emotionally connected. Relational contracts serve as a bridge between institutional formality and individual meaning-making, transforming abstract organizational intentions into tangible experiences of care and development. When employees perceive that their employer is genuinely invested in their growth—through structured development plans, personalized mentoring, regular upskilling initiatives, and visible promotion pathways—they internalize a sense of trust, recognition, and inclusion. This psychological state drives behaviors such as discretionary effort, proactive problem-solving, knowledge sharing, and organizational citizenship, ultimately contributing to stronger performance and institutional loyalty.

Training plays a pivotal role in fulfilling relational psychological contracts by acting as both a developmental tool and a symbolic gesture of trust. When thoughtfully designed to reflect employee well-being, personal growth, and career advancement, training initiatives signal the organization's commitment to long-term partnership. Employees interpret these efforts not merely as upskilling opportunities, but as evidence that their contributions are valued and their future within the institution is actively nurtured. This interpretation deepens emotional bonds

and fosters a sense of psychological security, leading to sustained engagement, proactive performance, and enhanced organizational loyalty. As the banking industry continues to undergo rapid digital and structural changes, the strategic use of training to reinforce relational psychological contracts becomes a cornerstone of workforce resilience, agility, and long-term talent retention.

2.4 Employee Performance

Employee performance in the context of state-owned commercial banks extends beyond basic task completion or adherence to operational standards. In today's competitive, digitized, and service-oriented financial landscape, performance encompasses a blend of technical competence, behavioral engagement, and psychological commitment. As institutions navigate rapid transformation, the expectations placed on employees have expanded to include not only routine efficiency but also adaptability, innovation, emotional intelligence, and proactive problem-solving.

In this multidimensional framework, performance is both an outcome and a reflection of employee alignment with organizational values and expectations. It includes traditional indicators such as productivity, service quality, accuracy, and customer satisfaction, but also broader behaviors like initiative, collaboration, learning agility, and resilience in high-pressure situations. These non-technical elements have become increasingly critical as banks shift toward digital platforms and client-centric models that demand greater flexibility and interpersonal sophistication from frontline staff.

Relational psychological contract fulfillment plays a key role in shaping these performance outcomes. When employees feel that the organization values their long-term growth and treats them with fairness, transparency, and respect, they are more likely to demonstrate high levels of motivation, engagement, and discretionary effort. These psychological factors are central to sustaining elevated performance over time, particularly in complex service environments where emotional labor and customer empathy are daily requirements.

Therefore, employee performance should not be evaluated solely through transactional metrics but through a more holistic lens that incorporates attitudinal and behavioral dimensions. Organizations that recognize and support this broader view are better positioned to foster a resilient, high-performing workforce capable of meeting both current operational demands and future strategic challenges.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a quantitative research design to examine the relationship between different types of employee training and employee performance, with relational psychological contract fulfillment as a mediating variable. The research focuses on non-managerial, white-collar employees in six major state-owned commercial banks located in Qingdao, China. This urban financial context provides a relevant setting for analyzing the evolving dynamics of workforce development in state-controlled institutions under increasing market and digital pressures.

3.1 Research Design and Sample

A cross-sectional survey methodology was employed. Data were collected through structured questionnaires distributed to frontline staff across the following banks: Industrial and Commercial Bank of China (ICBC), Agricultural Bank of China (ABC), Bank of China (BOC), China Construction Bank (CCB), Bank of Communications (BoCom), and Postal Savings Bank of China (PSBC). Stratified proportional sampling ensured

representation across departments and branches. A total of 509 valid responses were collected, yielding an effective response rate of 92.5%.

3.2 Measurement Instruments

The survey instrument was composed of validated scales drawn from prior literature. Training effectiveness was measured using adapted items from Noe's (2017) training evaluation framework, covering business skills, management skills, and personal ability training. Relational psychological contract fulfillment was assessed using items from Rousseau's psychological contract inventory, capturing perceptions of trust, developmental support, and mutual commitment. Employee performance was measured through a multi-item scale developed by Guest (2017), focusing on output quality, adaptability, discretionary behavior, and customer responsiveness.

3.3 Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using both SPSS and SmartPLS software to ensure comprehensive statistical validation. In SPSS, reliability analysis was conducted through Cronbach's alpha, with all constructs exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70, indicating strong internal consistency. Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to assess the relationships among training types, relational psychological contract fulfillment, and employee performance, revealing significant positive associations between the constructs. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) validated construct reliability and validity, with composite reliability and AVE (Average Variance Extracted) surpassing accepted benchmarks. Subsequently, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was performed using SmartPLS to test both direct and indirect effects. Bootstrapping with 5,000 iterations was applied to evaluate the significance of mediation effects. Model fit indices such as SRMR, RMSEA, and CFI met established thresholds, supporting the robustness of the proposed model.

This methodological approach ensures a robust examination of how differentiated training types influence employee performance through psychological mechanisms, offering both theoretical contributions and practical insights for HR strategy in the Chinese banking sector.

4. RESULTS

This chapter presents the empirical findings derived from the analysis of survey data collected from 509 employees across six state-owned commercial banks in Qingdao. The analysis aimed to test the hypothesized relationships among training types, relational psychological contract fulfillment, and employee performance.

4.1 Reliability and Validity

Reliability and validity assessments were conducted using SPSS and SmartPLS software to ensure the robustness and accuracy of measurement. The analyses confirm that the constructs used in this study demonstrate satisfactory psychometric properties.

4.1.1 Reliability Analysis

Reliability refers to the internal consistency of the scales, indicating whether the items within a construct consistently measure the same underlying concept. Cronbach's Alpha coefficients were calculated for each latent variable. As shown in Table 4.1:

Business Skills Training (BST): $\alpha = 0.872$

Management Skills Training (MST): $\alpha = 0.886$

Personal Ability Training (PAT): $\alpha = 0.857$

Relational Psychological Contract Fulfillment (RPCF): $\alpha = 0.913$

Employee Performance (EP): $\alpha = 0.882$

All values exceed the recommended threshold of 0.70 (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994), indicating high internal consistency of the scales.

4.1.2 Validity Analysis

① Convergent Validity

Convergent validity was assessed using Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and factor loadings. All items exhibited standardized factor loadings above 0.70, and AVE values for each construct were above 0.50, indicating that each construct explains more than half of the variance of its indicators (Hair et al., 2019). AVE ranged from 0.592 to 0.743 across constructs. Composite Reliability (CR) ranged from 0.871 to 0.933, exceeding the 0.70 criterion. These results confirm acceptable convergent validity.

② Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity was evaluated using the Fornell-Larcker criterion and Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT). According to the Fornell-Larcker criterion, the square root of AVE for each construct was greater than its correlations with any other construct. HTMT values were all below the conservative threshold of 0.85 (Henseler et al., 2015), confirming that constructs are distinct from one another.

③ Model Fit

The model fit indices also confirmed good data-model correspondence: SRMR = 0.051, below the 0.08 threshold; NFI = 0.927, indicating acceptable model fit.

④ Common Method Bias

To minimize and test for common method variance (CMV), Harman's single-factor test was conducted. The result showed that the first unrotated factor accounted for only 28.4% of the variance, well below the 50% benchmark (Podsakoff et al., 2003), suggesting CMV was not a severe threat in this study.

In summary, the reliability and validity analyses confirm that all measurement scales in this study are both internally consistent and empirically distinct, providing a solid foundation for subsequent structural modeling and hypothesis testing.

4.2 Correlation Analysis

To explore the relationships among the key constructs of this study, Pearson correlation analysis was conducted using SPSS. This method provides a statistical assessment of the strength and direction of linear relationships between different training types, relational psychological contract fulfillment, and employee performance.

The results indicate that all five types of training—Business Skills Training (BST), Management Skills Training (MST) and Personal Ability Training (PAT) are positively and significantly correlated with both Relational Psychological Contract Fulfillment (RPCF) and Employee Performance (EP).

4.2.1 Correlation with Relational Psychological Contract Fulfillment:

BST and RPCF: $r = 0.612$, $p < 0.001$

MST and RPCF: $r = 0.594$, $p < 0.001$

PAT and RPCF: $r = 0.581$, $p < 0.001$

These correlations suggest that employees who perceive greater investment in diverse training types also report higher fulfillment of relational psychological contracts, indicating that training serves as a psychological signal of organizational trust and long-term commitment.

4.2.2 Correlation with Employee Performance:

BST and EP: $r = 0.587$, $p < 0.001$

MST and EP: $r = 0.544$, $p < 0.001$

PAT and EP: $r = 0.536$, $p < 0.001$

Furthermore, RPCF and EP were also significantly correlated:

RPCF and EP: $r = 0.668$, $p < 0.001$

This pattern indicates that relational psychological contract fulfillment plays a central role in linking training to performance outcomes. Employees who perceive relational support and trust from their organizations are more likely to demonstrate enhanced performance, likely due to increased engagement, motivation, and discretionary effort. Overall, the correlation analysis establishes significant empirical groundwork for the structural model, confirming that varied forms of training foster stronger emotional and behavioral alignment between employees and their organizations, ultimately leading to sustained performance improvements.

4.3 Structural Equation Modeling Results

To examine the hypothesized relationships among different types of training, relational psychological contract fulfillment (RPCF), and employee performance (EP), Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was performed using SmartPLS 4.1.1.2. The model tests both direct and indirect pathways and evaluates the mediating effect of RPCF.

4.3.1 Path Analysis

The results show significant direct and indirect effects from Business Skills Training (BST), Management Skills Training (MST), and Personal Ability Training (PAT) on employee performance.

Direct Effects on Employee Performance:

Business Skills Training (BST) \rightarrow EP: $\beta = 0.271$, $t = 5.811$, $p < 0.001$

The results indicate that BST directly enhances employee performance by improving operational efficiency and service capability.

Indirect Effects via Relational Psychological Contract Fulfillment:

Management Skills Training (MST) \rightarrow RPCF \rightarrow EP: $\beta = 0.193$, $t = 4.013$, $p < 0.001$

Personal Ability Training (PAT) \rightarrow RPCF \rightarrow EP: $\beta = 0.174$, $t = 3.621$, $p < 0.001$

These findings indicate that MST and PAT do not directly influence EP but enhance it through improved RPCF, which reflects employees' trust, long-term commitment, and sense of organizational support.

Mediating Role of RPCF:

RPCF \rightarrow EP: $\beta = 0.403$, $t = 7.129$, $p < 0.001$

The strength and significance of this path confirm RPCF as a critical mediating mechanism. It channels the impact of developmental training into higher discretionary effort, engagement, and sustainable performance.

4.3.2 Model Fit and Predictive Power

R^2 for Employee Performance = 0.767

R^2 for RPCF = 0.723

The high R^2 values indicate the model has substantial explanatory power for both RPCF and EP.

SRMR = 0.051, well below the 0.08 threshold, indicating a good model fit.

4.3.3 Bootstrapping Results

A bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 resamples confirmed the significance of all hypothesized paths. All T-values were above 1.96, and all p-values were below 0.001.

The SEM results provide empirical support for the proposed mediation model. Business-oriented training (BST) directly contributes to job performance, while developmental training (MST, PAT) strengthens relational psychological contracts that, in turn, foster performance. The findings underscore the dual-channel effect of training, validating the importance of psychological mechanisms in strategic HR management within state-owned commercial banks.

5. DISCUSSION

The findings of this study provide compelling evidence for the critical role of differentiated training strategies and relational psychological contract fulfillment in enhancing employee performance within China's state-owned commercial banks. The results support the theoretical framework, revealing that training exerts both direct and indirect influences on performance outcomes, with relational psychological contracts serving as a key mediating mechanism.

First, business skills training showed a strong direct impact on employee performance, reaffirming its foundational importance in equipping frontline employees with the competencies required for operational precision and customer-facing tasks. Given the procedural and compliance-heavy nature of state-owned banking operations, this result aligns with expectations and underscores the need for continuous reinforcement of technical proficiencies. Second, management skills and personal ability training did not significantly affect performance on their own, but had substantial indirect effects via relational psychological contract fulfillment. This highlights a critical distinction between functional and psychological returns on training investment. Training that nurtures leadership thinking, adaptability, emotional intelligence, and personal growth may not translate into immediate productivity gains, but plays a vital role in shaping employee perceptions of organizational support and long-term commitment. The mediating role of relational psychological contract fulfillment reinforces the idea that employee behavior is shaped not just by what is taught, but by how training is perceived and contextualized. When employees interpret developmental initiatives as genuine signals of trust and future-oriented investment, they are more likely to exhibit discretionary effort, proactive service behavior, and emotional alignment with institutional goals. This emotional bond is particularly valuable in bureaucratic organizations where rigid structures often inhibit intrinsic motivation. Furthermore, the strong correlation between relational psychological contract fulfillment and employee performance suggests that human resource strategies should move beyond transactional incentives toward relational engagement. In practice, this means designing training programs not only for technical effectiveness but also as instruments for building organizational loyalty and resilience. Training that reflects employee aspirations, provides visible career pathways, and is delivered through supportive communication channels can generate long-term behavioral dividends.

Overall, this study offers both theoretical and practical contributions. Theoretically, it validates the integration of Social Exchange Theory, Psychological Contract Theory, and Human Capital Theory in understanding employee development in public-sector institutions. Practically, it reminds HR practitioners to strategically rethink. Training should not only be an operational necessity but also a relational tool for developing an engaged and high-

performing workforce.

6. CONCLUSION

This study set out to investigate how different types of employee training—specifically business skills, management skills, and personal ability training—influence employee performance in state-owned commercial banks in Qingdao, China, and how relational psychological contract fulfillment mediates these relationships. By integrating Social Exchange Theory, Psychological Contract Theory, and Human Capital Theory, the research offers a holistic understanding of both the technical and emotional pathways through which training impacts workforce outcomes.

The empirical findings confirm that business skills training has a direct, significant impact on employee performance, particularly in supporting task efficiency and operational reliability. In contrast, management and personal ability training contribute to performance indirectly by enhancing relational psychological contract fulfillment. This distinction illustrates that while technical training delivers immediate functional returns, developmental training aimed at leadership and emotional competence builds long-term engagement and organizational alignment.

The mediating role of relational psychological contracts underscores the importance of employee perceptions in determining training effectiveness. When training is experienced as a symbol of organizational investment, employees reciprocate with loyalty, initiative, and higher performance levels. This insight calls for a strategic approach to training design—one that not only addresses skill gaps but also reinforces trust, recognition, and long-term commitment.

Practically, the study provides actionable guidance for HR professionals in state-owned banks and similar institutions. Training strategies should be diversified and explicitly aligned with both career development goals and institutional values. Organizations must go beyond compliance-oriented programs to offer training that signals future opportunity and psychological safety, thereby supporting not just job performance but overall workforce resilience.

In conclusion, the study advances the conversation around employee development by emphasizing the psychological dimensions of training. It suggests in state-owned commercial banks, training should be leveraged not only as a tool for upskilling but also as a relational mechanism to deepen employee-employer bonds.

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