

# HIGH PERFORMANCE WORK SYSTEM AND WOMEN EMPLOYEE ATTITUDES: A FEMALE WORKER'S PERSPECTIVE

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## ABSTRACT

*Societies and organizations have realized the need to encourage the women at workplaces by eliminating the gender preferences. Exploring the tendencies of females at workplace holds significant importance in a country where females constitute almost equal portion of population. This study investigated the university female faculty members' point of view regarding various job attitudes under the umbrella of high performance work systems. Self-administrated questionnaires distributed among female faculty members of universities across the Pakistan. A sum of 400 questionnaires was distributed, 305 received back and out of them 226 completely filled which considered for data analysis. Data analysis show that HR practices such as High selective staffing, Performance based pay, Empowerment, Internal career opportunity, result oriented appraisal and Employment security stimulate positive job attitudes in the shape of organizational commitment and job satisfaction in female faculty members.*

**Keywords:** *HPWS, Women employees' attitude, job satisfaction, organizational commitment*

## INTRODUCTION

The women role as an employee is increasing in societies across the globe. Even the organizations are under pressure to announce the vacant position of any kind and for any position without gender discrimination. After selection of employees the organization again need to develop the work environment that should be free from gender discrimination. Moreover, all the function of human resource management should be implemented in a manner that suit both to men and women workforce.

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The literature is taking new turn to explore the effect of implementation of commonly use HPWS on employees behaviour so that this effect can be used as a strategy to make difference as compared to their competitors. As most of organizational management structure in Pakistan is being adopted from western and European management practices, so there is need to analyse the effect of HPWS under contingent factors. The second most important question that as Pakistan is in the list of high masculine and high power distance culture so either bundle of HRM practices in shape of HPWS can be useful for the satisfaction and organizational commitment of women work force.

Pfeffer (1995) projected, sixteen practices that found interrelated and most of the companies use these practices to achieve success through management of people. These practices were High selection system, high wages, employment security, information sharing, symbolic egalitarianism, training and development opportunity, wage firmness across levels and department, incentive compensation, pay for skill empowerment, internal career opportunity, cross training and cross utilization, long term perspective, measurement to assess progress, overarching vision or mission and employee ownership. Huselid (1995) defined that extensive recruitment and selection, formal information sharing, training procedure, attitude evaluation, job design, grievance procedure, employment participation, incentive compensation system and employees reward system can be used to explain high performance work system (HPWS).

Emerging trends in economies and globalization have driven organizations in a world of competitive environment and it has become obvious for the organizations to maintain and sustain goodwill, retain the workforce and consistently enhance the performance. On the other hand, these trends have also boosted the expectations of employees towards employer. Under such circumstances traditional human resource management practices cannot meet the employees demands in a dynamic and competitive global environment. It has explored that this relation is not simple and an ideal one. Contingency theory explained that some external factors and organization's cultural values can affect the relationship between HPWS and employees attitudes (Aguilera & Dencker, 2004; Appelbaum, 2000; Lertxundi & Landeta, 2011; Schneider, 1987; Wu & Chaturvedi, 2009). The women employee's attitude of job satisfaction and organizational commitment are also important for organizations. These employees' attitudes help organizations to attain internal stability and provide competitive advantage in global world of business by reducing cost through turn over. It is an

established fact that employees job satisfaction and organizational commitment has strong positive co-relationship with each other (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990).

However the nature of this co-relation is not entirely understood but other studies that suggesting satisfaction is a determinant of organizational commitment (Lance, 1991; Macky & Boxall, 2007; Mathieu & Farr, 1991; Vandenberg & Lance, 1992). This study is an attempt to investigate the effect of human resource management practices in the shape of high performance work systems (HPWS) on women employees work attitudes such as job satisfaction and OC under the light of social exchange and contingent theories explanation.

The organizations are striving hard to implement the human resource management system to satisfy both female and male employees. Organizations are seeking a mechanism which can bring job satisfaction and OC by fulfilling the ultimate objective of firm productivity and performance. Numerous HR system have shown their worth and are beneficial for organizations and employees, such as High involvement HR system (Guthrie, 2001; Lawler, 1986), High commitment HR practices(Wood & Menezes, 1998), and High Performance Work System (HPWS) (Huselid, 1995).

Scholars have found that High Performance Work System (HPWS) puts the organization on a path which transform the employees into productive units. Around the globe HPWS has become a subject of hot debate. HPWS is implemented by the organizations not only to boost performance, but it is also used to enhance OC (Lertxundi & Landeta, 2011; Qiao, Khilji, & Wang, 2009; Wu & Chaturvedi, 2009). Through a growing body of research from various disciplines, HPWS has been promoted as a modern approach for productive enterprises and characterized as form of HRM which has results in various firm level positive outcomes. Efficient and effective HR practices enables organizations to utilize their resources in effective way on order to establish competitive advantages(Barney, 1995).

Scholars are still in search of best HR practices which can be used as a bundle to construct HPWS as single entities and either it is acceptable for both male and female employees (Mahesar, 2015). However as explained by Chaudhuri, (2009) various HR practices like “targeted selection and recruitment, training, internal promotion, employees participation programs, team as fundamental unit of organization, formal performance appraisal,

development appraisal, performance based pay system, merit based promotion, formal communication programs to keep employees informed about the firm, reduce differential status between manager and employees egalitarian, formal grievance or complaint resolution system, employees job security policies” were used as HPWS in various studies to approve the linkage between HR practices and employees level outcome(Ahmad & Schroeder, 2003; Guthrie, 2001; Huselid, 1995; Pil & MacDuffie, 1996; Truss, 2001; Wood, 1996; Zacharatos, Barling, & Iverson, 2005)

Organizations use HPWS in order to foster organizational strength through employees attitudes and behaviours attain goals (Jianqiao, et al., 2011; Mahesar, 2015). In the opinion of Huselid (1995) HPWS in the shape of HR practices are used to attain the synergistic benefits. The organizations who is using HPWS are investing in their human resource to provide “training, empowerment, improve knowledge, skill and abilities that enhance employee’s motivation level, reduce shirking, decrease turnover rate of potential employees while encouraging non performer to quit the job and as potential source of competitive advantages”(Becker & Huselid, 1998; Cappelli & Singh, 1992; Huselid, 1995; Jackson, Schuler& Rivero, 1989; Wright & McMahan, 1992; Mahesar, 2015).

In the dynamic and competitive environment organizations, try search best system to run the organizational operations. In comparison to traditional source of competitive advantage, now employees considered as vital source to attain sustained competitive advantages, the reason is that it is very difficult to imitate the human resource of any organization(Neal, West, & Patterson, 2005). Organizations mostly use HPWS to engage employees in work related issues as well as decision-making. Such exchange of attitude from the employer side develops a social relation with employees which cause employees motivation and help them for future growth(Way, 2002).

Keeping in view the importance of women as employees in strategic management, researchers and organizations are striving hard to choose and implement the best HRM practice in the form of HPWS that can satisfy women employees and induce organizational commitment. In the opinion of Bowen & Ostroff, (2004), attempts are being made to explore the relationships between high performance work system and various employee attitudes under the umbrella of different theories and demographic factors. This study attempts to examine the effect of HPWS on women employee’s most sensitive attitude toward the job and organization i.e. job satisfaction and organization commitment in context of Pakistan.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The women employee's attitude of job satisfaction and organizational commitment are also important for organizations. These employees' attitude helps organizations in internal stability and provide competitive advantage in global world of business by reducing cost through turn over. It is an established fact that employees job satisfaction and organizational commitment has strong positive co-relationship with each other (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990). However, the nature of this co-relation is not entirely understood but other studies that suggesting satisfaction is a determinant of organizational commitment (Lance, 1991; Macky & Boxall, 2007; Mathieu & Farr, 1991; Vandenberg & Lance, 1992). This study highlights the importance of these employees' attitudes (Job satisfaction, organizational commitment) in universities of Pakistan.

HPWS is usually implemented to improve organization's performance through employees job satisfaction (Macky & Boxall, 2007). HPWS practices provide opportunity to employees to participate in decision making that entrust and intrinsic job satisfaction (Appelbaum, 2000). The employees, who perceive HPWS positively, reported high job satisfaction (Bashir, Jianqiao, Jun, Ghazanfar, & Khan, 2011; Wu & Chaturvedi, 2009). Job satisfaction holds crucial rule for the development of organization, in all type of economies. Previous studies show that satisfied employees tend to stay at their jobs or with organizations. In a survey report published by SHRM, "Job security, Benefits, compensation/pay, opportunity to use skills/ability, feeling safe in a working environment were highlighted just as important characteristics of employee's job satisfaction along with other individual job satisfaction aspects: like career development, employee's relation with management and working environment". Intrinsic factors contribute to personal growth and development of employees, which enhances employee satisfaction. On the other hand extrinsic factors are linked work related security issues (hygiene factors) and these bring job dissatisfaction (Herzberg, Mausner, & Snyderman, 1959; Ssesanga & Garrett, 2005). Reason is that such factors have a power to influence the job satisfaction, so it has become indefinable and mythical concept (Lacy & Sheehan, 1997; Ssesanga & Garrett, 2005). Employees are satisfied in those organizations who are using HPWS by offering opportunity to employees to participate in decision making processes, enhance knowledge, following career path and autonomy at workplace.

Literature provides support regarding the argument that HR practices and its outcome in the shape of job satisfaction tends to vary under demographic factors such age, gender, designation, tenure as well as with region e.g. in developed nations, younger employees tends to secure their satisfaction due to the result of extrinsic rewards while in developing nations intrinsic rewards bring satisfaction in employees (Oshagbemi, 1996; Ronen, 1978; Siassi, Crocetti, & Spiro, 1975). Underdeveloping nations such as Uganda, older employees tend to achieve job satisfaction through extrinsic and intrinsic rewards (Ssesanga & Garrett, 2005). According to perception of Alam, Talha, Sivanand, & Ahsan, (2005) female employees in under developing countries female employees show higher level of satisfaction as compared to male employees. Additionally, level of satisfaction also varies according to different job positions (Eyupoglu & Saner, 2009). HPWS are equally beneficial for both the employees and employer, for employer HPWS becomes a source to compete in dynamic and competitive environment whereas for employees it brings higher level of job satisfaction (Gürbüz, 2009). So there is need to analyse that can we use these human resource management practices as bundle or in shape of HPWS to satisfy women employees especially educated women that have high expectation against their education from organization? On the basis of literature review we propose that:

**H1:** There is significant impact of HPWS on women employees' attitude in shape of job satisfaction

The organization commitment attitude is selected on the basis of evidence that both job satisfaction and employees commitment to their organizations are positively related with each other (Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes, 2002; Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch, & Topolnytsky, 2002). Organizational commitment (OC) is a psychological trait of attachment of employees with organization (O'Reilly & Chatman, 2004).

Individuals often show a strong desire to keep association and belongingness with the organization which has strong impact on satisfaction, and this satisfaction boosts up organizational performance (Mowday, Steers, & Porter, 1979). Investigating the literature, it can be traced out that success or failure of HPWS totally depends upon the employees' perception of HR practices, which lead to various outcomes like such as OC and organizational performance. Individuals show higher level of commitment with their employers when they perceive that their employer cares about them in terms of opportunities for growth (Zaleska & de Menezes, 2007).

The employees show high level of organizational commitment when organizations culture characterized by high adoptability and frame of HRM system embedded with HPWS (Taylor, Levy, Boyacigiller, & Beechler, 2008). It has been observed that the conception and knowledge transformation basically depend upon the willingness and commitment of employees to carry out the organizational tasks of coordination and communication necessary to influence knowledge for competitive advantage (Kogut & Zander, 1996; Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998; Storey & Quintas, 2001).

HRM theorist explained that employee's behaviour and attitude are shaped by the nature of HR practice (Guzzo & Noonan, 1994) that may lead to development of psychological links between firms and employees by establishing trust and producing norms of reciprocity (Arthur, 1994; Wu & Chaturvedi, 2009). Empirical research discovers that HPWS influence employee's attitude and performance through the quality of social exchange relationships (Takeuchi, Lepak, Wang, & Takeuchi, 2007; Tsui, Pearce, Porter, & Tripoli, 1997; Wu & Chaturvedi, 2009). In the first part of this study, the effect of perception of existence of HPWS in the relationship between academic faculty attitude (job satisfaction and OC) in universities of Pakistan is analysed.

**H2:** There is significant impact of HPWS on women employees' attitude in shape of organizational commitment.

## **METHODOLOGY**

Following section describes the research methodology and design of study used to analyse the relationship between perception of existence of HPWS and employees attitude in shape of their Job satisfaction and organization commitment with their universities under organization cultural values.

### **Sample and Procedure**

This study based on data collected from female academic faculty members of public sector universities of Pakistan. Data was collected under simple random sampling technique. Demographic factors such as ranks, age group, nature of appointment and marital status of female faculty members were also enquired. Questionnaires were distributed among female academic faculty members with covering letter in which the purpose of research was explained and assured them that their response will be treated as confidential.

## **Measures**

Literature was reviewed to solve the issues of biasness and reliability at different level of analysis. The literature reveals that to evaluate HPWS, mostly HR manger were used to take information but some researcher pointed out that HR manger might exaggerate the amount of HPWS being used in their organization. Due to this reason, it might be less dependable to measure HPWS at firm level. The employees can be used as best source of information to evaluate HPWS in an organization (Wu & Chaturvedi, 2009). On the basis of previous research, it was decided to take response from academic faculty in universities to evaluate HPWS, attitude of employees and organization culture values.

### **HPWS (High Performance Work System)**

The selection of dimensions that can represent and be used to evaluate HPWS was based on author's review of various empirical and theoretical studies related to HPWS over the last decades (Ahmad & Schroeder, 2003; Becker & Huselid, 1998; Delaney & Huselid, 1996; Guest, Conway, & Dewe, 2004; Hartog & Verburg, 2004; Huselid, 1995; Pfeffer, Hatano, & Santalainen, 1995; Wu & Chaturvedi, 2009). The empirical studies reveal that most of researchers use seven to twenty-four item scales to analyse HPWS. Keeping in view the previous study and direction of current study, we select Six (6) practice i.e. High selective staffing, Performance based pay, empowerment, Internal career opportunity, result oriented appraisal and employment security to measure HPWS from previous published and validated instruments(Bae & Lawler, 2000; Delery & Doty, 1996). To analyse the perception of existence of HPWS, we used 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

### **HPWS Scale Reliability**

Reliability is important to define the validity of scales. The combined Cronbach's alpha of these HR practices used as HPWS of the aggregate measures was found .87.

### **High Selective Staffing**

To measure the subscale of high selective staffing five items were used e.g. extensive effort to select employees, money spent on selection process, selection on skill basis, effort during selection, high selection criteria(Bae & Lawler, 2000). Cronbach's alpha of subject scale was .54.

### **Performance Based Pay**

The performance based pay scale was measured by using three items like reward based on seniority, wide range in pay within same scale, close relationship between individual and group performance (Bae & Lawler, 2000). Cronbach's alpha of this scale was observed .69.

### **Empowerment**

To measure empowerment among academic faculty in universities seven statements were used e.g. status differential for egalitarianism, academic faculty engagement in problem solving, transference of task and responsibility, chance for personal initiative, discretion in doing work, participation in wide range of issues and cooperative and trustful environment (Bae & Lawler, 2000). Cronbach's alpha was 0.77.

### **Internal Career Opportunity**

Four statements were used to measure internal career opportunity e.g. individual in academic career have clear path within the university, individual have little future in university, employees are known by their immediate boss and employees who desire promotion have more than one potential position (Delery & Doty, 1996). Cronbach's alpha of this scale was .44.

### **Result oriented appraisal**

To measure this scale 2 items were used like performance is often measures with objective quantifiable measures results and performance appraisal based on objective, quantifiable results (Delery & Doty, 1996). Cronbach's alpha of this scale was observed 0.81.

### **Employment Security**

Four statement were used to analysed employment security e.g. employees can expect to stay in this university as long as they wish, very difficult to dismiss an employee from job, guaranteed job security and during economic crises in university employees would be the last to get out (Delery & Doty, 1996; Mahesar, 2015). Cronbach's alpha of this scale was observed 0.72 respectively.

### **Organizational Commitment**

Keeping in view the empirical research, Mowday, Steers, & Porter, (1979)

OC measurement scale was adopted to measure organization commitment in this study. Sample statements were “I am willing to put in great deal of effort beyond that normality expected in order to help the organization be successful”. Cronbach’s alpha of this scale was.66.

**Job Satisfaction**

Job satisfaction is important output of HPWS. The issue that, which kind of factors contribute in employee’s job satisfaction and how to measure it, has widely discussed. Some researchers favoured to take overall satisfaction score, either through single items. Suitable scale for this study that can be characterized both intrinsic and extrinsic satisfaction was inevitable to link it with HPWS. To evaluate job satisfaction, items were adopted from Warr et al., (1979). These items are empirically validated and reliable to measure Job satisfaction(Wu & Chaturvedi, 2009).Cronbach’s alpha was calculated 0.90.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

This section covers the results and discussion section. The preliminary phase of this section discusses the demographic profile of the respondents, followed by correlation and regression analysis.

Table1. Demographic Profile of the Respondents

	Frequency	per cent
<b>Designation</b>		
Professor	17	8 %
Associate Professor	23	10 %
Assistant Professor	58	26 %
Lecturer	128	56 %
<b>Marital Status</b>		
Married	137	61 %
Unmarried	89	39 %
<b>Age (years)</b>		
Less than 30	90	40 %
31 – 40	88	39 %
41 – 50	32	14 %
Above 50	16	7 %
<b>Nature of tenure</b>		

Regular	151	67 %
Contract	75	33 %
<b>Experience (years)</b>		
Less than 3	63	28 %
3 – 5	63	28 %
5 -10	40	17 %
10 – 15	28	12 %
15 – 20	15	7%
20 and above	17	8 %
<b>Religion</b>		
Islam	225	99.6 %
Christian	1	0.4 %

Above table illustrates the distribution of respondents according to designation, marital status, age, nature of tenure, experience in years, job nature and finally religion. Results show that most of the respondents were under the category of lecturer followed by assistant professor. Similarly, distribution of results depicts that majority of female respondents were unmarried. Additionally, most of the female faculty staff was appointed on regular basis. Age distribution shows that majority of respondents age fall below 40 years. Most of the respondents has experience under 10 years, and finally Islam was the dominant religion in respondents and only one respondent was Christian.

Table 2. Correlation Coefficients along with descriptive statistics.

Description	Mean	S.D	Correlations									
			High selective staffing	Performance based pay	Empowerment	Internal career opportunity	Result oriented appraisal	Employment security	Organizational commitment	Job satisfaction	High performance work system	
High selective staffing	3.02	0.6714	(.54)									
Performance based pay	2.99	0.7919	.409**	(.69)								
Empowerment	3.29	0.6819	.480**	.451**	(.77)							
Internal career opportunity	3.06	0.6849	.406**	.382**	.403**	(.44)						
Result oriented appraisal	3.24	0.9674	.270**	.274**	.585**	.409**	(.81)					
Employment security	3.18	0.7830	.307**	.308**	.435**	.313**	.390**	(.72)				
Organizational commitment	3.13	0.5341	.336**	.260**	.353**	.361**	.358**	.416**	(.66)			
Job satisfaction	3.29	0.3951	.421**	.370**	.603**	.535**	.524**	.416**	.463**	(.90)		
High performance work system	3.45	0.6533	.656**	.669**	.794**	.679**	.733**	.662**	.497**	.682**	(.88)	

\*\* Level of significance is 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\* Level of significance is 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Note: Values at diagonals in parenthesis show Cronbach's Alpha

Above illustration shows mean, S.D, Chronbach Alpha and correlation coefficients against all the study variables. Analysis of mean values show that all the variables have mean value greater than 3 except Performance based pay (2.99). Chronbach Alphas against all variables were within acceptable range except one component of HPWS i.e. Internal Career Opportunity. The selected components of HPWS showed positive correlations with employee attitudes i.e. Organizational commitment (Arthur, 1994; Wu & Chaturvedi, 2009) and Job satisfaction (Takeuchi, Lepak, Wang, & Takeuchi, 2007; A. S. Tsui, Pearce, Porter, & Tripoli, 1997; Wu & Chaturvedi, 2009), implying that increase in these practices will also bring change in the same direction in employee attitudes.

This study investigated the relationship of HPWS with organizational commitment and job satisfaction. Analysis of individual HR practices showed lower correlations with organizational commitment as compared to job satisfaction. From all the HR practices empowerment showed higher level of relationship with the job satisfaction whereas performance based pay and employment security showed less relationship with job satisfaction. Here it reveals that in the perception of female faculty members of Pakistani Universities Empowerment at workplace brings more satisfaction to them. Result oriented appraisal and internal career opportunities demonstrated a moderate correlation with the job satisfaction, this level of correlation shows that these two practices are a good source to create job satisfaction among female faculty members of the Pakistani Universities.

Contrary to individual HR practices the bundle of HR practices in the shape of HPWS showed different results. HR practices as a bundle showed strong correlation with job satisfaction whereas moderate correlation was observed in case of organizational commitment.

**Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

<b>Predictors</b>	<b>Unstandardized Coefficients</b>			<b>t</b>	<b>Adjusted R-Square</b>
	<b>B</b>	<b>Std. Error</b>			
High selective staffing	.198 (.000)	.037	5.343		.100
Performance based pay	.130 (.000)	.032	4.025		.060
Empowerment	.204 (.000)	.036	5.645		.120
Internal career opportunity	.208 (.000)	.036	5.801		.130
Result oriented appraisal	.146 (.000)	.025	5.733		.120
Employment security	.210 (.000)	.031	6.848		.170
HPWS	.367 (.000)	.043	8.564		.240

Dependent Variable: Organizational commitment

Values in the parenthesis are p values

**Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

<b>Predictors</b>	<b>Unstandardized Coefficients</b>			<b>t</b>	<b>Adjusted R-Square</b>
	<b>B</b>	<b>Std. Error</b>			
High selective staffing	.410 (.000)	.059	6.954		.170
Performance based pay	.305 (.000)	.951	5.956		.130
Empowerment	.578 (.000)	.510	11.316		.360
Internal career opportunity	.510 (.000)	.054	9.467		.280
Result oriented appraisal	.354 (.000)	.038	9.204		.270
Employment security	.347 (.000)	.051	6.843		.170
HPWS	.834 (.000)	.060	13.958		.460

a. Dependent Variable: Job Satisfaction

Values in the parenthesis are p values

Regression analysis showed that one unit change in HPWS will bring .367 units change in organizational commitment and .834 units change in job satisfaction. Hence H1 and H2 are accepted.

## CONCLUSIONS

This investigation was made to explore the impact of HPWS on female faculty attitudes in the shape of organizational commitment and job satisfaction. Results showed that six HR practices under HPWS bring

positive change in female employee attitudes ( High selective staffing, Performance based pay, Empowerment, Internal career opportunity, Result oriented appraisal and Employment security ). However, results were significantly different when impact of these HR practices was analysed individually and showed low correlations with job satisfaction and organizational commitment. As a bundle these HR practices showed better results. This study revealed that to shape female job attitudes in shape of organizational commitment and job satisfaction now it is imperative to use HPWS. The implication of such practices are subject to the condition of cultural orientation. As the literature showed that Pakistan is high power distance culture (Hofstede 1986), so there is need to shape the practices in a manner that best suited to existing work force of female, as there is negative relationship between implementation of HR practices and high orientation of cultural values. This study is another endorsement to existing practices in shape of HPWS and it will equally create benefit in shape of women faculty attitudes as observed in male counterpart in common pool.

### **Limitations and future directions**

Like other researches, this one also has some limitations. Due to cross sectional nature the results cannot be generalized at large, however these can be generalized with care keeping in view the context. Other limitation of the study is its small sample size. In addition to this data was collected only from the university female employees and other areas were not included in this research.

In future, studies should be conducted by including other sectors other than educational institutes. Male respondents could also be the potential area of research in future. The impact of female age can also be potential area for future studies. Religion might also be a factor which should be explored in future. Large and diverse sample size may yield different results. Inclusion of other HPWS practices can also be future area for study.

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