



**JOURNAL OF
SOCIAL RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT**

www.jsrd.org.pk

editor@jsrd.org.pk

HIGH-PERFORMANCE WORK SYSTEMS AND INDIVIDUAL PERFORMANCE: THE MEDIATING ROLES OF JOB SATISFACTION, AFFECTIVE COMMITMENT, AND PSYCHOLOGICAL EMPOWERMENT IN PUBLIC- SECTOR ORGANIZATIONS

Aamir Waheed¹, Dr. Shams Ur Rehman², Dr. Shahid Mehmood³

¹PhD Scholar, Department of Management Sciences, Faculty of Management Sciences, Mohi-Ud-Din Islamic University, Nerian Sharif AJ&K, Email: aamir_khan282@hotmail.com

²Associate Professor, Department of Management Sciences, Faculty of Management Sciences, Mohi-Ud-Din Islamic University, Nerian Sharif AJ&K

³Assistant Professor, Department of Management Sciences, Faculty of Management Sciences, Mohi-Ud-Din Islamic University, Nerian Sharif AJ&K

KEYWORDS	ABSTRACT
High-Performance Work Systems, Individual Performance, Job Satisfaction, Affective Commitment, Psychological Empowerment, Mediation	This study examines the relationship between High-Performance Work Systems (HPWS) and individual performance, with particular focus on the mediating roles of job satisfaction, affective commitment, and psychological empowerment. The study was conducted in bureaucratic public-sector organizations in Azad Jammu and Kashmir. A quantitative, cross-sectional survey design was adopted, and data were collected from employees using a structured questionnaire. A total of 346 valid responses were included in the final analysis. Data were analyzed using IBM SPSS and AMOS through descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, correlation, regression, and mediation analysis. The findings revealed that HPWS had a significant positive effect on individual performance. HPWS also demonstrated significant positive relationships with job satisfaction, affective commitment, and psychological empowerment. Furthermore, job satisfaction, affective commitment, and psychological empowerment were positively associated with individual performance. The mediation analysis showed that all three variables significantly mediated the relationship between HPWS and individual performance, as the bootstrap confidence intervals for the indirect effects did not include zero. The direct effect of HPWS on individual performance remained significant after including the mediators, indicating partial mediation. The findings suggest that effective HR practices can improve individual performance not only directly but also by enhancing employees' job satisfaction, affective commitment, and psychological empowerment. The study contributes to the understanding of the mechanisms through which HPWS influences employee performance in bureaucratic public-sector organizations.
ARTICLE HISTORY	 2026 Journal of Social Research Development
Date of Submission: 07-05-2026	
Date of Acceptance: 07-06-2026	
Date of Publication: 12-06-2026	
Correspondence	
Email:	aamir_khan282@hotmail.com
DOI	https://doi.org/10.59075/jsrd.v7i4.532
Volume/Issue	7(4), 2026, 69-83

Introduction

In the contemporary and highly competitive organizational environment, human resources have become a fundamental source of organizational effectiveness and performance. Employees' knowledge, skills, abilities, and contribution are increasingly viewed as essential to organizational success, particularly in the knowledge economy (Mello, 2011; Armstrong, 2014; Delery & Roumpi, 2017; Vrontis et al., 2022). Consequently, organizations have increasingly adopted strategic human resource management (SHRM) systems to develop employee capabilities, motivate employees, and create opportunities for their effective participation. Among these approaches, High-Performance Work Systems (HPWS) have received considerable attention because of their potential to improve employee attitudes, behaviors, and performance.

HPWS represent an integrated set of human resource practices designed to enhance employees' ability, motivation, and opportunity to contribute to organizational objectives (Rabl et al., 2014). Rather than operating as isolated HR practices, HPWS combine practices such as employee development, participation, performance appraisal, rewards, and supportive employment practices to create a workforce capable of achieving organizational goals (Macky & Boxall, 2007; Evans & Davis, 2005). Previous research suggests that effective implementation of HPWS can contribute to employee and organizational performance by developing a skilled and motivated workforce (Appelbaum, 2000; Delery & Doty, 1996; Paauwe & Boselie, 2005; Messersmith et al., 2011). Meta-analytic and empirical evidence has further established a positive association between high-performance work practices and organizational performance (Combs et al., 2006; Jiang et al., 2012).

Despite this growing body of research, relatively greater attention has been given to private-sector organizations and developed economies, while HPWS in bureaucratic public-sector settings remains comparatively underexplored (Budhwar & Debrah, 2009; Khilji & Wang, 2006). This issue is particularly important in public-sector organizations where formal procedures, hierarchical authority, centralized decision-making, and limited employee autonomy can influence how HR practices are experienced by employees. In Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), public-sector organizations operate within formal bureaucratic structures characterized by hierarchical control and relatively limited flexibility. Such characteristics raise questions concerning whether HPWS can generate similar performance benefits in bureaucratic public-sector environments as those reported in other organizational contexts (Jha, 2021; Han et al., 2018).

Moreover, understanding the relationship between HPWS and individual performance requires attention to the psychological and attitudinal processes through which HR systems influence employees. Previous research indicates that HPWS may improve employee outcomes not only directly but also by shaping employees' work attitudes and psychological states (Appelbaum et al., 2000; Takeuchi et al., 2007). Job satisfaction, affective commitment, and psychological empowerment represent three potentially important mechanisms. Job satisfaction reflects employees' positive evaluation of their work and is associated with improved performance (Judge et al., 2001). Affective commitment represents employees' emotional attachment to their organization and can encourage greater effort and performance (Meyer & Allen, 1997; Meyer et al.,

2002). Psychological empowerment reflects employees' perceptions of meaning, competence, autonomy, and influence in their work and has been linked with improved individual performance (Spreitzer, 1995; Seibert et al., 2011).

Although these mechanisms have been examined in previous studies, limited research has simultaneously investigated the mediating roles of job satisfaction, affective commitment, and psychological empowerment in the relationship between HPWS and individual performance, particularly in bureaucratic public-sector organizations. Therefore, this study examines whether HPWS enhances individual performance directly and indirectly through these three psychological and attitudinal mechanisms among employees in public-sector bureaucratic organizations of Azad Jammu and Kashmir. Drawing on the Ability-Motivation-Opportunity (AMO) framework, the study seeks to provide a more comprehensive explanation of how HPWS contributes to individual performance in a context characterized by formal administrative structures and hierarchical organizational arrangements (Appelbaum et al., 2000; Jiang et al., 2012; Boxall & Purcell, 2016).

Problem Statement

Despite extensive research on High-Performance Work Systems (HPWS), limited empirical evidence explains how HPWS enhances individual performance through employees' psychological and attitudinal responses, particularly in bureaucratic public-sector organizations. Existing research has largely examined the direct relationship between HPWS and performance, while comparatively limited attention has been given to the simultaneous mediating roles of job satisfaction, affective commitment, and psychological empowerment. This gap is particularly evident in the public-sector context of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, where formal structures, hierarchical authority, and limited flexibility may shape employees' responses to HR practices. Therefore, this study examines the direct effect of HPWS on individual performance and the mediating roles of job satisfaction, affective commitment, and psychological empowerment.

Research Objectives

1. To examine the effect of High-Performance Work Systems on individual performance among employees in bureaucratic public-sector organizations of Azad Jammu and Kashmir.
2. To examine the effects of High-Performance Work Systems on job satisfaction, affective commitment, and psychological empowerment.
3. To examine the effects of job satisfaction, affective commitment, and psychological empowerment on individual performance.
4. To examine the mediating roles of job satisfaction, affective commitment, and psychological empowerment in the relationship between HPWS and individual performance.

Research Questions

1. What is the effect of High-Performance Work Systems on individual performance among employees in bureaucratic public-sector organizations of Azad Jammu and Kashmir?
2. What are the effects of High-Performance Work Systems on job satisfaction, affective commitment, and psychological empowerment?
3. What are the effects of job satisfaction, affective commitment, and psychological empowerment on individual performance?
4. Do job satisfaction, affective commitment, and psychological empowerment mediate the relationship between HPWS and individual performance?

Literature Review

1. High-Performance Work Systems and Individual Performance

High-Performance Work Systems (HPWS) represent an integrated set of human resource practices designed to improve employees' abilities, motivation, and opportunities to contribute to organizational objectives. These practices commonly include selective staffing, training and development, performance appraisal, employee participation, performance-based rewards, and opportunities for career development (Appelbaum et al., 2000; Boxall & Purcell, 2016). Rather than treating individual HR practices separately, HPWS emphasizes their combined and mutually reinforcing influence on employee attitudes, behaviors, and performance. The Ability-Motivation-Opportunity (AMO) framework provides an important theoretical explanation for this relationship because employees are expected to perform effectively when organizations develop their abilities, motivate them through appropriate rewards and recognition, and provide opportunities to participate in organizational processes (Boxall & Macky, 2009; Jiang et al., 2012).

Previous research has generally reported a positive association between HPWS and employee performance. Combs et al. (2006) demonstrated that bundles of HR practices are associated with improved organizational performance, while Jiang et al. (2012) emphasized that HPWS can influence performance through employee-related mechanisms. Similarly, Takeuchi et al. (2007) argued that HR systems influence employee outcomes by shaping employees' perceptions and attitudes toward the organization. These findings suggest that the effect of HPWS is not limited to the direct provision of skills or incentives; rather, HR practices can create psychological and attitudinal conditions that encourage employees to perform more effectively.

The relevance of HPWS is particularly important in bureaucratic public-sector organizations. Existing evidence has predominantly emerged from private-sector organizations and developed economies, whereas comparatively less attention has been given to bureaucratic public organizations in developing contexts (Budhwar & Debrah, 2009; Khilji & Wang, 2006). Public-sector organizations in Azad Jammu and Kashmir operate through formal rules, hierarchical structures, centralized decision-making, and established administrative procedures. Consequently, examining whether integrated HR practices can enhance individual performance in such an

environment provides an important contextual contribution. The literature therefore supports the expectation that HPWS positively influences individual performance while also indicating the importance of examining the psychological mechanisms through which this relationship occurs.

2. Job Satisfaction, Affective Commitment and Psychological Empowerment

Job satisfaction refers to employees' positive evaluation of their work experiences and the extent to which their work meets important needs and expectations (Locke, 1976). HPWS can contribute to job satisfaction by providing employees with training, development opportunities, participation in decision-making, fair performance evaluation, recognition, and performance-based rewards. Such practices may signal that the organization values employees and is willing to invest in their development. Research reported in the thesis indicates that HPWS practices involving training, growth opportunities, employee involvement, and reward systems are associated with higher levels of job satisfaction (Fabi et al., 2015; Miao et al., 2022).

Affective commitment represents employees' emotional attachment, identification, and involvement with their organization. According to Meyer and Allen (1991), employees with strong affective commitment are more likely to remain with the organization and contribute to its objectives. HPWS can strengthen such commitment by demonstrating organizational investment in employees through development, recognition, participation, and autonomy. When employees perceive that their organization values their contribution and supports their professional development, they may develop stronger emotional attachment to the organization (Miao et al., 2022; Al-Ajlouni, 2021). Recognition and performance-based rewards can further create a culture of appreciation, strengthening employees' commitment to the organization (Miao & Cao, 2019).

Psychological empowerment is another important employee-related outcome of HPWS. It reflects employees' perceptions of meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact in relation to their work (Spreitzer, 1995). HPWS practices that provide employees with training, autonomy, participation, and opportunities to influence work decisions can strengthen these perceptions. From the perspective of self-determination theory, employees are more likely to experience positive motivational states when their needs for autonomy and competence are supported (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Psychological empowerment is therefore particularly relevant to HPWS because high-performance practices can provide employees with the resources and opportunities necessary to exercise greater control over their work.

3. Mediating Roles of Job Satisfaction, Affective Commitment and Psychological Empowerment

The literature suggests that HPWS may improve individual performance not only directly but also indirectly through employees' psychological and attitudinal responses. This perspective addresses the "black box" between HR practices and performance by explaining how organizational practices are translated into employee outcomes (Boselie et al., 2005). Job satisfaction is one important mechanism because satisfied employees are more likely to demonstrate motivation, involvement, discretionary effort, and positive work behaviors. Previous research indicates that HPWS practices

that enhance job satisfaction can subsequently improve individual and organizational performance (Miao et al., 2019; Alfes et al., 2021; García-Chas et al., 2016).

Affective commitment can similarly explain how HPWS contributes to performance. Employees who develop emotional attachment to their organization may be more willing to exert additional effort and engage in behaviors that support organizational objectives. HPWS practices that develop employees, recognize their contributions, and provide autonomy can strengthen affective commitment (Allothmany et al., 2023). Stronger commitment may subsequently encourage employees to contribute beyond minimum job requirements and improve their performance (Miao et al., 2020; Zhang et al., 2019).

Psychological empowerment provides a third mechanism linking HPWS with individual performance. Employees who feel competent, autonomous, and influential are more likely to take responsibility for their work and actively contribute to organizational goals. HPWS practices emphasizing employee independence, expertise, participation, and meaningful work can strengthen psychological empowerment, which may subsequently enhance employee motivation and performance (Spreitzer, 1995; Jha, 2021; Miao et al., 2020).

Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in the Ability–Motivation–Opportunity (AMO) Model. The AMO model proposes that employee performance improves when organizations develop employees' abilities, enhance their motivation, and provide opportunities to participate and contribute (Boxall & Macky, 2009; Jiang et al., 2012). HPWS incorporates practices such as training and development, performance appraisal, rewards, and employee participation that collectively strengthen these three dimensions.

In the present study, HPWS is considered the main predictor of individual performance, while job satisfaction, affective commitment, and psychological empowerment explain the psychological mechanisms through which HPWS influences performance. HPWS develops employees' abilities, motivates them through supportive HR practices, and provides opportunities for participation, which can increase satisfaction, commitment, and feelings of empowerment and ultimately improve individual performance. This framework is consistent with previous applications of the AMO model to HPWS and employee performance (Appelbaum et al., 2000; Jiang et al., 2012; Boxall & Purcell, 2016).

Research Methodology

The study adopted a quantitative, cross-sectional survey design to examine the relationships among High-Performance Work Systems (HPWS), job satisfaction, affective commitment, psychological empowerment, and individual performance. The target population comprised employees of bureaucratic public-sector organizations in Azad Jammu and Kashmir, with individuals serving as the unit of analysis. A stratified random sampling technique was employed, including multiple administrative levels to improve representation. Although 350 questionnaires

were received, 346 complete and usable responses were retained after data screening and cleaning. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire containing 70 items, with ten items measuring each major construct and responses recorded on a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The instruments underwent validity and reliability assessment, including expert review and pilot testing, while internal consistency was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha. Data were analyzed using IBM SPSS and AMOS. Descriptive statistics, correlation, regression, and mediation analysis were conducted. Mediation was tested using **Hayes' PROCESS Model 4 with 5,000 bootstrap resamples**, allowing assessment of indirect effects and confidence intervals.

Results and Findings

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Demographic Variable	Category	f	%
Age	20–30 years	55	15.9
	31–40 years	60	17.3
	41–50 years	50	14.5
	51 years and above	181	52.3
Gender	Male	195	56.4
	Female	151	43.6
Education	Bachelor	20	5.8
	Master	121	35.0
	MPhil.	143	41.3
	Ph.D.	62	17.9
Designation	Secretary	22	6.4
	Additional Secretary	48	13.9
	Deputy Secretary	62	17.9
	Section Officer	91	26.3
	Other	123	35.5
Years of Service	Less than 5 years	44	12.7
	5–10 years	54	15.6
	11–15 years	64	18.5
	16–20 years	46	13.3
	More than 20 years	138	39.9
Administrative Role	Junior Official	76	22.0
	Mid-Level Official	130	37.6

Demographic Variable	Category	f	%
Total	Senior Official	140	40.5
		346	100.0

The age figures are reported in the thesis as 55, 60, 50, and 181 respectively. Gender is reported as 195 males and 151 females. Education is reported as 20 Bachelor, 121 Master, 143 M.Phil., and 62 Ph.D. respondents. The designation, service, and administrative-role figures are also directly reported in the thesis.

Table 2: Reliability Statistics of Study Variables

Variable	No. of Items	Cronbach's α
High-Performance Work Systems (HPWS)	10	.923
Job Satisfaction (JS)	10	.919
Affective Commitment (AC)	10	.924
Psychological Empowerment (PE)	10	.930
Individual Performance (IP)	10	.922

All five variables have **Cronbach's alpha values above .90**, indicating high internal consistency. The HPWS reliability is directly reported as .923 and JS as .919. The thesis reports PE = .930 and IP = .922, while its overall reliability summary confirms AC = .924 as well.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics and Correlations among Study Variables

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. HPWS	3.35	0.99	—						
2. Job Satisfaction	3.34	0.96	.618***	—					
3. Affective Commitment	3.42	0.99	.562***	.480***	—				
4. Psychological Empowerment	3.34	1.00	.528***	.468***	.430***	—			
5. Perceived Organizational Politics	2.98	1.00	-.011	-.030	-.060	-.013	—		
6. Authoritarian Leadership	2.99	0.98	-.149**	-.083	-.088	-.095	.008	—	

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. Individual Performance	3.41	0.96	.647***	.603***	.535***	.506***	-.174**	-.298***	—

Note. HPWS = High-Performance Work Systems. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Table shows descriptive statistics and correlation table of the variables of the study. The average scores point to the fact that all of the variables are in the moderate range, and Individual Performance ($M = 3.41$, $SD = 0.96$) and Affective Commitment ($M = 3.42$, $SD = 0.99$) are relatively higher, whereas Perceived Organizational Politics ($M = 2.98$, $SD = 1.00$) and Authoritarian Leadership ($M = 2.98$, $SD = 1.00$) are relatively lower. Correlation analysis indicates that High-Performance Work Systems (HPWS) are significantly correlated positively with Job Satisfaction ($r = .618$, $p < .001$), Affective commitment ($r = .562$, $p < .001$), Psychological Empowerment ($r = .528$, $p < .001$), and Individual Performance ($r = .647$, $p < .001$). In the same manner, Individual Performance is positively and significantly related to Job Satisfaction, Affective commitment, and Psychological Empowerment. On the other hand, Perceived Organizational Politics and Authoritarian Leadership have negative correlations with Individual Performance, indicating that the higher the politicality and authoritarian leadership, the lower the performance outcomes. These results provide a few initial empirical indicators to the interrelationships among the study variables.

Table 4: Direct Effects Testing

Path	β	R^2	p
HPWS → Individual Performance	.647	.419	< .001
HPWS → Job Satisfaction	.618	.382	< .001
HPWS → Affective Commitment	.562	.316	< .001
HPWS → Psychological Empowerment	.528	.279	< .001
Job Satisfaction → Individual Performance	.603	.363	< .001
Affective Commitment → Individual Performance	.535	.286	< .001
Psychological Empowerment → Individual Performance	.506	.256	< .001

Note. Values are standardized regression coefficients (β).

Table shows the results of the direct effect testing. The results show that HPWS impacts Individual Performance ($\beta = .647$, $p < .001$) positively with a significant impact. Equally, HPWS has a strong impact on Job Satisfaction ($\beta = .618$, $p < .001$), Affective commitment ($\beta = .562$, $p < .001$) and Psychological empowerment ($\beta = .528$, $p < .001$). Moreover, Job Satisfaction ($\beta = .603$) and Affective ($\beta = .535$) and Psychological ($\beta = .506$) both have a significant positive effect on Individual Performance thus proving. The values of R^2 indicate that HPWS explains a large portion of variance in Individual Performance (41.9) and Job Satisfaction (38.2) and a smaller portion of variance in Affective commitment (31.6) and Psychological empowerment (27.9). Overall, the results validate that HPWS and the three mediating variables are significant variables that help to enhance individual performance.

Table 5: *Mediation Analysis*

Mediation Path	a	b	c'	Indirect Effect (ab)	95% CI for Indirect Effect
HPWS → Job Satisfaction → Individual Performance	.618***	.328***	.445***	.203	[.135, .275]
HPWS → Affective Commitment → Individual Performance	.562***	.250***	.507***	.141	[.081, .200]
HPWS → Psychological Empowerment → Individual Performance	.528***	.227***	.527***	.120	[.070, .173]

Note.

a = effect of HPWS on mediator.

b = effect of mediator on individual performance controlling HPWS.

c' = direct effect of HPWS on individual performance controlling mediator.

Bootstrapped confidence intervals exclude zero for all three indirect effects.

The mediation analysis is presented in Table The findings reveal that Job Satisfaction plays a significant role in mediating between HPWS and Individual Performance with a significant indirect impact ($ab = .203$) which does not contain zero. [135, 275]. Similarly, this relationship is also mediated by Affective Commitment ($ab = .141$, CI [.081, 200]). In addition, the Psychological Empowerment is also a major mediator ($ab = .120$, CI [.070, 173]). In every situation, the direct effect (c') is important, which indicates partial mediation. These findings suggest that HPWS has a direct facilitative impact on the performance of individuals, as well as an indirect impact on the performance of the individuals via its positive impact on job satisfaction of the employees, affective commitment and psychological empowerment.

Discussion

The first major contribution of this thesis is the confirmation that high-performance work systems are positively associated with individual performance in the bureaucratic public sector context of Azad Jammu and Kashmir. The results indicate that employees who perceive stronger training, development, merit-based rewards, performance evaluation, participation, and supportive human resource policies also report better performance outcomes. This finding is consistent with strategic human resource management theory, which argues that HR systems create value when they strengthen employee ability, motivation, and opportunity to contribute. The evidence of coherent bundles of HR practices supporting enhanced organizational and employee performance has been long-standing (Huselid, 1995) and subsequently corroborated by meta-analytic studies that high-performance work practices are positively associated with performance in various contexts (Combs et al., 2006; Jiang et al., 2012). The current thesis has advocated the existence of literature at large and has extended the literature to a bureaucratic administrative setting where inflexible

procedures and hierarchy may have limited the efficacies of the system. Rather, the results show that even within a formalized public-sector organization, employees react positively to the well-designed HR planning.

This finding is theoretically significant in that bureaucratic organizations tend to be presumed to be more dependent on formal authority, rules, and standardized procedures rather than on developmental HR practices. The worth of HPWS can be misjudged in these situations. The results of this paper however indicate that administrative formality does not nullify the significance of people-management systems. Instead, it seems that good HR arrangements complement formal structure by providing employees with increased clarity, fairness, developmental support and recognition. This helps to argue that the HR systems cannot be perceived as the instrument of the private sphere, but of the public sphere with the aim to achieve higher employee performance. Previous surveys on HRM and performance studies highlighted that the black box between HR interventions and performance should be given a greater consideration, particularly in diverse organizational environment (Boselie et al., 2005). The current thesis will add to that debate by demonstrating that the beneficial contribution of HPWS is still useful even in a bureaucratic environment.

Another aspect that makes the discussion of the direct effects even more important is the fact that HPWS is discussed as a predictor not only of performance, but also of such significant employee attitudes and psychological states. The thesis demonstrates that greater HPWS correlates with greater job satisfaction. This is consistent with the reasoning that employees are better placed when the organizations invest in them, treat them equally, clearly define what is expected and highly reward good performance. Job satisfaction has been discussed as the key attitudinal result of positive work experiences since ancient times, and the present results prove that HR systems influence the level of satisfaction by determining how the employees perceive the quality of their relations with the organization. In reality, it is not likely that employees will be satisfied in a work environment where they do not undergo training, where performance is not fairly determined, or where voice is limited. On the other hand, satisfaction is more probable when HR practices signal their assistance and equity. This trend aligns with previous research that identified that HR practices can influence employee attitudes by both instrumental and social-exchange channels (Takeuchi et al., 2007; Jiang et al., 2012).

A second direct pathway advocated in the thesis is that of affective commitment. The findings reveal that HPWS leads to greater emotional attachment between the employees and their organizations. This comes in conceptual agreement with the commitment framework of Meyer and Allen, which sees affective commitment as the desire-based aspect of attachment to the organization (Meyer and Allen, 1991). Employees are more likely to become identified to the organizational goals and more emotionally membership when they feel that their organization invests in them, appreciates their contribution, and provides equitable opportunities to perform and grow. This tendency is especially significant in the current thesis since continuity, duty, and institutional loyalty are typically relied upon in public organizations. Affective commitment is therefore not just an outcome of attitude but it is a significant measure of whether employees

perceive themselves as having an attachment to the institution psychologically and not just holding a position in office. The results indicate that HPWS can be used to shift employees to that more profound attachment.

The positive direct impact of HPWS on psychological empowerment is also significant. Psychological empowerment is the feeling of meaning, competence, self-determination, and an influence of employees in their job and the thesis indicates that psychological empowerment is positively correlated with better HR systems. This is very much in line with the conceptualization of empowerment, as a motivational state that is shaped by the work environment (Spreitzer, 1995). The more probable that employees feel capable, trusted, and influential is the HR systems which provide training, clarity, participation and developmental support. This observation is particularly remarkable in a bureaucratic environment since it is frequently believed that empowerment is harder to produce in the hierarchical environment. However, the outcomes indicate that empowerment can be achieved even in the situation when the HR architecture promotes employee development and engagement. It implies that structure is not needed to be abandoned in the process of empowering public administration; the issue is the application of structure in a way that augments competence and agency but not the imposition of compliance.

The thesis also confirms that job satisfaction, affective commitment and psychological empowerment all have positive direct correlations with individual performance. This trend conforms to a wide theoretical anticipation in organizational behavior. The higher the satisfaction of employees with the work they do, the more engaged and ready to work is the employee. Affectively committed employees are also more inclined towards organizational goal congruence in their behavior. Psychologically empowered employees are more assured, assertive and tenacious in addressing job requirements. The current findings thus indicate a stratified understanding of performance: performance is not just a product of formal systems, but a product also of the emotional and cognitive experience of employees with regard to those systems. This is how the thesis provides a human-based explanation of performance in the government. Instead of looking at performance as a procedural measure, it demonstrates that performance relies on the levels of satisfaction, identification, and ability of the employees.

The second significant theme of the thesis is related to mediation. Results indicate that job satisfaction, affective commitment and psychological empowerment mediate the connection between HPWS and individual performance. This implies that the impact of HPWS on performance is not only realized in a direct direction, but also in the attitudinal and psychological experiences of employees. This is especially a significant finding since one of the classic problems of HRM studies is the so-called black box problem: researchers understand that HR systems tend to predict performance, but the mechanisms by which they do this are not always obvious (Boselie et al., 2005; Jiang et al., 2012). That problem is directly tackled by the current thesis which demonstrates that the line between HPWS and performance is partially elaborated by satisfaction, commitment and empowerment. In this regard, the thesis not only validates the fact that HPWS is important; it clarifies how and why it is important in the context under study.

The mediation role of job satisfaction implies that employees are better because the HR practices are in place, and better because the HR practices enhance the feelings of the employees towards their work. This is a theoretically plausible understanding. HR systems that are clear, recognize, merit oriented and developing enhances the overall quality of the working experience. The satisfied employees tend to devote effort, stay focused and constructive in their approach towards the organizational expectations. Satisfaction can be of particular significance in maintaining motivation in organizations in the public sector where formal roles can become routine and highly regulated. The thesis thus suggests that job satisfaction is not a by-product of emotion; it is a process in which HR practices are converted into positive performance. This can be explained in line with the larger argument of social exchange, which contends that the workers respond positively to a supportive organizational treatment by giving back in terms of positive attitudes and behaviors (Takeuchi et al., 2007).

Affective commitment is also an important mediating variable. Affective commitment is connected with the emotional attachment, identification and involvement in the organization. The findings suggest that HPWS enhances performance in part due to its ability to increase emotional attachment of employees to the institution. This description is very suitable to commitment theory. According to Meyer and Allen, affective commitment is not similar to the other types of commitment as it is based on the desire and not on the obligation or necessity (Meyer and Allen, 1991). Employees would be more inclined to believe that the organization is worthy of their participation and dedication when investments, fairness, and trust are conveyed through HR systems. This closer bond, in its turn, helps to improve performance since workers are more eager to make their efforts worth the organizational goals.

Mediating mechanisms also included psychological empowerment. This is to say that HPWS contributes to performance improvement by making employees feel more competent, in control, influential and meaning of work. It is a significant contribution since, despite the conceptual nature of empowerment in leadership and organizational behavior research, the current thesis places it firmly as a part of the HPWS-performance chain. The work by Spreitzer has confirmed that empowerment is a multidimensional motivational state which is influenced by the organizational environment (Spreitzer, 1995). The current results are in line with that stance. When employees are developed, supported in their performance and given a chance to participate, they are more likely to feel competent and powerful. When they think so, they will tend to be proactive and be functional. This is especially so in bureaucratic organizations, where empowerment is commonly thought to be limited by hierarchy. The thesis demonstrates that even formal administrative systems can be empowered provided that HR arrangements promote it.

Another significant point to the mediation outcome is that the three mediators were meaningful in the same stage as being applied as theoretical explanations although job satisfaction seems to be the most powerful of them in the model tested. This implies that HPWS does not have one channel of action, but a variety of psychological actions. Satisfaction reflects the evaluative component of the work experience, affective commitment reflects the relational and emotional component and empowerment reflects the competence and control component. Combined, these mediators are able

to explain performance in a more comprehensive way than a one dimensional model would have done. This is in line with the wider AMO view and meta-analytic studies that reveal that HR systems can affect performance in various proximal effects that are associated to employee skill, motivation and acting opportunities (Jiang et al., 2012). The current thesis thus adds to theory by demonstrating that the HR-performance relationship is multiplex mediated and psychologically stratified and not linear and entirely structural.

It is also significant that the mediation is not complete, but partial, which can be interpreted. It implies that HPWS continues to have a direct effect on performance, over and above the impact that it has on performance via the three mediators. It is indicative that not all components of the HPWS-performance relationship can be modeled by other processes that are not directly captured by the thesis, which include role clarity, behavioral coordinations, skill development, trust, less ambiguity, or better work processes. This interpretation aligns with earlier studies that suggest that HR systems have an impact on outcomes via an attitudinal, behavioral, and human-capital chain (Jiang et al., 2012; Takeuchi et al., 2007). In this way, the present thesis has pointed out three significant mediators, although it does not exclude the possibility of further studies to investigate further channels of explanation.

Conclusion

The study concludes that High-Performance Work Systems significantly enhance individual performance in bureaucratic public-sector organizations. The findings further demonstrate that job satisfaction, affective commitment, and psychological empowerment significantly mediate the relationship between HPWS and individual performance. Although HPWS has a direct positive effect on performance, its influence is also transmitted through employees' attitudes and psychological states. These findings highlight the importance of implementing effective HR practices that enhance employee satisfaction, organizational attachment, and psychological empowerment to improve individual performance.

Recommendations

1. Public-sector organizations should strengthen HPWS practices, particularly employee training, fair performance appraisal, participation, and rewards.
2. Management should focus on improving job satisfaction by providing supportive, fair, and employee-oriented working conditions.
3. Organizations should promote affective commitment by recognizing employees' contributions and strengthening their sense of belonging.
4. Managers should enhance psychological empowerment by providing employees with greater autonomy, competence development, and participation in decision-making.

5. Future researchers should examine these relationships in other sectors and organizational contexts to improve the generalizability of the findings.

References

- Appelbaum, E., Bailey, T., Berg, P., & Kalleberg, A. L. (2000). *Manufacturing advantage: Why high-performance work systems pay off*. Cornell University Press.
- Boselie, P., Dietz, G., & Boon, C. (2005). Commonalities and contradictions in HRM and performance research. *Human Resource Management Journal*, 15(3), 67–94.
- Boxall, P., & Purcell, J. (2016). *Strategy and human resource management* (4th ed.). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Combs, J., Liu, Y., Hall, A., & Ketchen, D. (2006). How much do high-performance work practices matter? A meta-analysis of their effects on organizational performance. *Personnel Psychology*, 59(3), 501–528.
- Jiang, K., Lepak, D. P., Hu, J., & Baer, J. C. (2012). How does human resource management influence organizational outcomes? A meta-analytic investigation of mediating mechanisms. *Academy of Management Journal*, 55(6), 1264–1294.
- Judge, T. A., Thoresen, C. J., Bono, J. E., & Patton, G. K. (2001). The job satisfaction–job performance relationship: A qualitative and quantitative review. *Psychological Bulletin*, 127(3), 376–407.
- Meyer, J. P., & Allen, N. J. (1997). *Commitment in the workplace: Theory, research, and application*. Sage.
- Meyer, J. P., Stanley, D. J., Herscovitch, L., & Topolnytsky, L. (2002). Affective, continuance, and normative commitment to the organization: A meta-analysis of antecedents, correlates, and consequences. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 61(1), 20–52.
- Seibert, S. E., Wang, G., & Courtright, S. H. (2011). Antecedents and consequences of psychological and team empowerment in organizations: A meta-analytic review. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 96(5), 981–1003.
- Spreitzer, G. M. (1995). Psychological empowerment in the workplace: Dimensions, measurement, and validation. *Academy of Management Journal*, 38(5), 1442–1465.
- Takeuchi, R., Lepak, D. P., Wang, H., & Takeuchi, K. (2007). An empirical examination of the mechanisms mediating between high-performance work systems and the performance of Japanese organizations. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 92(4), 1069–1083.
- Baron, R. M., & Kenny, D. A. (1986). The moderator–mediator variable distinction in social psychological research: Conceptual, strategic, and statistical considerations. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 51(6), 1173–1182.
- Preacher, K. J., & Hayes, A. F. (2008). Asymptotic and resampling strategies for assessing and comparing indirect effects in multiple mediator models. *Behavior Research Methods*, 40(3), 879–891.