A Study of High Performance Work Practices and its Impact on Organizational Performance

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Abstract

Since last few years, a large number of companies are inclined towards designing and implementing high performance work practices (HPWPs) in order to improve organizational performance and productivity. These practices denote a strategic approach to human resource management and in order to develop a highly skilled, flexible, and motivated work force and facilitate organizations to become cost efficient, flexible, and more responsive to changing markets and technologies.

HPWPs that explain why workplaces with employee involvement, profit-sharing, and other new workplace practices might have different outcomes for employees than more traditional workplaces. These include: human capital, compensating differences, efficiency wages, incentives.

This paper tries to find out the relationship between high performance work practices and sustainable competitive advantage. The paper tries to explore the unique bundles of resources and capabilities of the organizations which are inimitable by rival firms. The organizations will make every effort to deploy existing resources and capabilities to maximize their performance, and, also develop resources to have competitive advantage over others. The research paper also tries to find out the relationship between high performance work practices and Organizational Citizenship Behavior.

Key words: Competitive Advantage, High Performance Work Practices, Human capital, Intention to stay, Organizational Performance

Introduction

HPWP is defined as bundle of practices labelled employee skill and direction ‘, were related positively to perceptions of employees’ willingness to go beyond contract, negatively to employee absence, and positively to the perceived economic performance of the firm.

A wide range of terminologies is being used to describe the innovative workplace human resource management (HRM) practices such as best practice’HRM, high commitment’or high involvement’management. HPWPs may be introduced individually or in groups, called bundles of practices, to ensure improved performance of individual employees and of the organizations employing them. The synergy associated with the bundles of practices provides additional positive outcome as compared to the individual practices implemented in silos.

High Performance Work Practices are intended to better use the employee skills and knowledge to smooth the organizations functioning and to become more responsive towards

changing markets. The rewards and pay for performance promise workers challenging and satisfying jobs with higher wages and opportunities for greater autonomy, and participation. While the nature and scope of these practices may vary by firm size and industry.

A lot of research conducted in this field provides strong support for the relationship between high performance work systems and various positive outcomes like higher productivity, profitability, and lower turnover.

In the present study, the model used to explain the HPWPs is the ability, motivation and opportunity (AMO) model. It proposes that HPWPs enhance the employees' ability and skills to do their job, motivating them to excel and perform and the opportunity to participate could lead to positive outcomes for the organization. These three elements contribute to build sustainable employee performance. Boxall and Purcell summarize it as:

Performance = f (employees' Ability, Motivation, and Opportunity to participate).

Ability refers to the set of practices that ensure employees are equipped with the skills needed to undertake their jobs. HR practices which have an impact on employee 's ability and capability for performance. The major firms adopt suitable selection practices to ensure capable hiring workforce in the first place, training for workers (Huselid, 1995; Appelbaum, et al., 2000), fair and unbiased performance appraisal and providing career planning opportunities for employees.

Secondly, employees needed to have the motivation to use discretionary effort. Motivation has been categorized into three forms: extrinsic/financial; intrinsic; and mutual trust/employees as stakeholders (Appelbaum, et al., 2000) and leads to fewer turnover and absences from workplace. Extrinsic factors could be in the form of incentive pay schemes, such as employee stock option plan, and group-based performance pay. Intrinsic motivation refers the degree of employees' satisfaction on the job. Organizations can embolden employees by creating an atmosphere of mutual trust and considering themselves as stakeholders in the company. The HPWPs to motivate employees could be in the form of pay for performance, adequate job security, work life balance, opportunities and information sharing with the employees

Opportunity to participate refers to involvement in the decision-making process. In HPWPs, decision-making is supposed to be decentralized and participatory. Wood and Wall (2007) identify a number of ways in which employees might be given an opportunity to participate. Employees may enjoy a higher level of autonomy in performing their tasks, team based organization structure may be implemented, and participation in decision making may be encouraged.

In order to analyze the impact of High Performance Work Practices on Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) of the employees several studies have been conducted. OCB includes such individual behaviors that are above and beyond the call of duty and is, therefore, discretionary and not directly recognized by the formal reward system but are beneficial to the organization and can contribute to performance and competitive advantage.

Theoretical Framework of High Performance Work Practices

There are few theories under HPWPs that explain why workplaces with participative decision making, profit-sharing, and other high performance work practices might have different outcomes for employees than more traditional workplaces, these include: human capital,

compensating differences, efficiency wages, incentives and complementarily, and theories centering on conflict over distributive issues within the firm.

1.) The Human Capital and Abilities, Motivation and Opportunity (AMO) Theory

Human resource practices can influence a firm's future return through the embedding of resources in people which is called investing in human capital. The core concept of human capital is that people possess skills, experience, and knowledge that have economic value to firms. Firms attain human capital through recruiting employees with high level of skills and knowledge, much of these skills and knowledge are intangible, including such abilities as solving problems, coordinating, and making decisions in new situations. These intangible skills and knowledge constitute idiographic resources which help in creating competitive advantage to firms.

The AMO theory states that a firm's performance is a function of employee's ability, motivation and opportunity to participate. Firms can generate competitive advantage through improving employee's ability, motivation and provide employees opportunities to participate in value creation, which will result in higher productivity and better organizational performance (Appelbaum et al., 2000; Bailey et al., 2005).

2.) Resource-Based Theory

Resource-based theory specifies that organizations differ in their unique bundles of resources and capabilities (Barney, 2007). The organizations will make every effort to deploy existing resources and capabilities to maximize performance, and, at the same time, further develop resources in order to remain competitive, trying to prevent competitors from imitating valuable resources.

The resource- based view of the firm (RBV) focuses on organizational features i.e., resources- that are the basis of competitive strength if exploited properly.

Subsequent developments of this theory focused on the importance of the unique, often hidden, aspects of an organization, such as tacit knowledge, because which is hard to codify or write down, and therefore almost impossible for competitors to acquire or replicate. Moreover, if a firm starts earlier than competitors, it may be able to build up advantages that they will have difficulty in overcoming.

Resource – based view of the firm is a model that can be used to analyze a firm's strengths and weaknesses. It focuses on the idiosyncratic, costly-to-copy resources controlled by a firm-resource whose exploitation may give a firm competitive advantage.

Competitive advantage can be defined as the ability to generate higher economic returns than another firm could achieve, given the same investment. (Selznick & Ricardo, 2007).

3.) Human Capital Theory

Human capital represents the human factor in the organization, the combined intelligence, skills and expertise that gives the organization its distinctive character. The human elements of the organization are those that are capable of learning, changing, innovating and providing the creative thrust which if properly motivated can ensure the long – term survival of the organization.

Human capital theory specifies three principles:

- a) Investment in employee development in terms of skills and knowledge is justified only when future productivity exceeds the cost

b) Firms should invest in employee having firm specific skills and knowledge, whereas general skills should be developed by the employee

c) Organizations need to protect their human capital from being transferred to other firms
Human capital theory explains the relationships between human resource practices and human capital accumulation. One example of these human resource practices is HPWS focusing on human capital elements such as skills, firm specific knowledge, and rewards systems that enhance employee performance, and could lead to better organizational performance.

Human capital theory is associated with the resource – based view of the firm as developed by Barney, (2007). This proposes that sustainable competitive advantage is attained when the firm has a human resource pull that cannot be imitated or substituted by its rivals.

The theories explain how the high performance work practices can be incorporated in organizations through employees via Abilities, motivation and opportunity(AMO) theory, Resource based theory, Human capital theory, to enhance performance.

Features of High Performance Work Practices

The notion of HPWS has gained a widespread popularity and it is used not only by academics but also by government ministers, think-tanks, HR professional associations, trade unions, and management consultancies. If organizations are interested in implementing HPWS successfully for their organizations, the following characteristics need to be supportive.

- Selective hiring of new personnel
- Comparatively high compensation including performance and commitment incentives (e.g., financial incentives)
- Extensive training
- Employment security
- Reduced status distinctions and barriers, including dress, language and office arrangements

High Performance Work Systems

The notion of HPWSs are systems of managerial practices that increase the empowerment of employees and enhance the skills and incentives that enable and motivate them to take advantage of this greater empowerment.

In this study, we highlight two sets of issues that have gained prominence under the rubric of High performance work practices.

The first issue is concerned with those situations where a company 's HR systems for its production workforce do not fit with its current competitive context. In these situations, firms need to make some kind of serious change. They can either outsource their production to sites which perform much better in cost-effectiveness or revitalize their historical production sites through better HR systems and new technology.

The second set of issues is to do with how the links between these new HR systems and organizational performance can be improved. Research on HPWSs highlights the importance of the mediating links or intervening variables between HR systems and organizational outcomes, including critical variables to do with employee beliefs, attitudes and behaviors.

The lessons from this line of HPWS research have much wider applicability: they are telling us important things about how any HR system needs to work.

The process of HRM is actually a chain of links in which

- 1) intended HR practices lead to
- 2) actual HR practices, which lead to
- 3) perceived HR practices, and then to
- 4) employee reactions, and, finally, to
- 5) organizational performance.

The AMO Model- Facilitating High Performance Work Practices

This model focuses on those HR practices that increase effective discretionary behavior amongst employees. Thus, the workers should feel highly committed to their organization, cooperative to their colleagues and ready to go the extra mile. This is also known as organizational citizenship behavior (OCB). OCB is employee behavior that is above and beyond the call of duty and is therefore discretionary and rewarded in the context of an organizations formal reward system. For e.g.: Going the extra mile in health care is directly linked to customer care and therefore worthwhile pursuing.

Boxall and Purcell (2003) observe that according to the AMO model people perform well when: —they are able to do so (they can do the job because they possess the necessary knowledge and skills) —they have the motivation to do so (they will do the job because they want to and are adequately incentivized) || and their work environment provides the necessary support and avenues for expression (for example, functioning technology and the opportunity to be heard when problems occur).

The AMO model suggests that specific HR practices – often termed high performance work practices or HPWPs – enhance the three main components of the model. HPWPs that enhance Abilities include: skills training, general training, job enrichment and coaching. Typical HPWPs that enhance motivation include: high wages, fair pay and pay for performance. Finally, HPWPs that enhance the opportunity to participate include: employee involvement in decision making, participation, job and team autonomy, and decentralization.

The AMO model suggests that HRM can contribute to critical HR goals (for example labor productivity and flexibility) and suggests that this relationship is mediated by employee attitudes and behaviors. In other words, HR practices affect employee attitudes (for example, employee commitment and motivation) and employee behaviors (for example, organizational citizenship behavior and turnover), and these attitudes and behaviors in turn have an impact on efficiency, flexibility and legitimacy.

Sustainable Competitive Advantage and High Performance Work Practices

Theoretical perspective of resource base view (RBV) supports the argument that high performance work practices system helps the organizations to develop core competencies, which in turn create sustained competitive advantage. Further, by using resources it creates implicit organizational knowledge. Whereas the organization's resources that are possessed and controlled by the organization are consisted of all tangible and intangible resources. But to acquire such resources organizations need capabilities. Which are defined as core competence or distinctive competence with a wide variety of academic and research viewpoints.

Fig: AMO Model Functioning

Source: Appelbaum et. al, (2000)

The basic assumption of RBV is that sustainable competitive advantage is based on heterogeneity and immobility of organizational competencies and it is also the ultimate goal of RBV and currently the competitive advantage can only come through people in this study adaptation of right bundles of HPWP gives competitive advantage though inimitable HRM outcome. Boxall (1996) proposes that HRM can be the base for sustainable competitive advantage.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

There has been a lot of research on HRM practices and their impact on organizational performance. Studies suggest that HR practices affect organizational outcomes by shaping employee behaviors and attitudes (Huselid, 1995). More specifically, high performance work practices (HPWP) increase organizational effectiveness by creating conditions where employees become highly involved in the organization and work hard to accomplish its goals. High-performance work practices can enhance organizational performance by encouraging the development of coordination between employees who perform distinct functions.

James Comes, et al. (2006) found that HPWPs materially affect organizational performance. Systems of HPWPs have stronger effects than individual HPWPs. Carl F. Fey, et al. (2009) The study seeks to investigate the role that employee motivation and ability play as mediating variables in this relationship. HRM practices may be considered the force that enhances employee ability and motivation leading to an increase in firm performance. Neither motivation nor ability alone can result in maximum performance. The interaction effect between motivation and ability results in a positive effect on performance that is greater than the sum of the individual effects. Therefore, in order to achieve maximum performance, employees need to possess both ability and motivation. Further, the study highlights the significance of context in which the firm operates which results in different systems of HRM practices being more efficient in different countries. Human capital, when paired with the

appropriate HRM practices, facilitates a firm to attain competitive advantage and thus to maximize performance.

Paul and Anantharaman (2003) conducted a study on software professionals in India and found that HRM practices such as employee-friendly work environment, career development, development - oriented appraisal and comprehensive training indicated a significant positive relationship with organisational commitment. In summary, high performance work practices (HPWPs) that stimulate employee ability, employee motivation and employee opportunity to participate (AMO) are deemed to contribute to employee discretionary effort. In turn, discretionary effort is thought to form the basis for efficiency, flexibility and social legitimacy in the organisation (Boxall and Purcell, 2003).

The study conducted by Paul Boselie (2010) seeks to present an empirical study of the effect of high performance work practices on commitment and citizenship behaviour in the Dutch health care sector. The results of the study suggest that OCB can be increased by HPWPs that enhance opportunity to participate. The study also indicated that potentially powerful HR interventions such as employee involvement in the recruitment and selection of new colleagues and employee involvement in decision making on departmental issues could facilitate creating a high performance work climate among employees. A health care organization's most important assets are its human assets and therefore affective commitment and organisational citizenship behaviour in the employees is crucial for the health care sector. In the study conducted by Guy Paré and Michel Tremblay (2007) which seeks to analyze the turnover intentions among Information Technology professionals, it was observed that organisational citizenship behaviours are negatively related to quit intentions. HR practices of an organisation which provide employees sufficient resources and opportunities to improve their skills i.e. competence development, recognize individual contributions, encourage attainment of new levels of responsibility and empowerment of employees result in higher level of affective commitment among its highly skilled professionals leading to low turnover intentions. Further, it was found that nonmonetary recognition, competency development, fair rewards and information-sharing practices, are negatively related to turnover intentions.

In a study on OCB, Smith, Organ and Near (1983) showed that many critical behaviours in organisations rely on acts of cooperation, altruism, and spontaneous unrewarded help from employees. Organisational citizenship behaviour plays a critical role in the functioning of an organisation and ways to maximize and understand what creates it are important.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Given the exploratory nature of the research the present study is *ex post facto* in nature. The design of the approach for investigation included self-completed questionnaires and possible secondary sources (statistical handbooks, books, reports, journals, internet information). Primary data was collected through administered questionnaires to assess the impact of high performance work practices, organisational citizenship behaviour on turnover intentions amongst employees working in IT industry. The data was collected from 62 employees, who are working in various IT companies in Delhi and NCR region. The respondents were approached personally for their responses and interviews

Dépendent Variables : Organizational Citizenship Behavior

In the present study, the organisational citizenship behaviour is a measure of such individual behaviours that are above and beyond the call of duty and is, therefore, discretionary and not recognized by the formal reward system but are beneficial to the organisation and can

contribute to Organizational performance and competitive advantage. Organisational Citizenship Behaviour Questionnaire (OCBQ) consisting of the five factors identified by Organ (1988b): altruism (5 items), courtesy (5 items), civic virtue (4 items), sportsmanship (5 items) and conscientiousness (5 items). Responses were obtained on a five point Likert scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree and the Cronbach alpha in the present case was 0.829 which suggests that the internal consistency amongst the scale items is good.

Employee Turnover: Employee Turnover was measured using two items. I often feel like quitting my present job in this organisation? and —How likely is that you will actually leave your organisation within the next year? Responses were obtained on a five point Likert scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree and a higher score reflected higher intention to quit.

Independent Variables: High Performance Work Practices

After extensive review of literature and discussions with HR experts and employees of IT companies, the high performance work practices that influence employee abilities, motivation and opportunity to participate were selected. Practices pertaining to selection, training, performance appraisal and career planning relate to the ability and skill development of employees. Practices of organisations on pay for performance, job security, work-life balance, and information sharing were considered to be part of motivation. Opportunity to participate was emphasized by the HR practices on Participation in decision making, teamwork and autonomy.

The reliability coefficient measures for the questions related to the AMO model of HPWP were determined by Cronbach Alpha. The Cronbach alpha in case of the scale was 0.867 which suggests that the internal consistency amongst the scale questions is very high. The Cronbach alpha in case of the ability component of the scale was 0.716.

There were twenty items on this measure which were adopted and designed on the basis of literature review. Responses were obtained on a five point Likert scale (from strongly disagree to strongly agree). Responses which were in a higher score reflected greater emphasis on ability component. The items included questions pertaining to high performance practices of the organisation with regards to selection of employees, training, performance appraisal and career planning of the employees in the organization.

The Cronbach alpha in case of the motivation measure of the scale was 0.749 which suggests that the internal consistency is good. There were eighteen items on this measure which were adopted and designed on the basis of literature review. The items included questions pertaining to high performance practices of the organisation with regards to pay for performance, job security, work-life balance and information sharing with the employees in the organisation. The Cronbach alpha in case of the opportunity to participate measure of the scale was 0.709 which suggests that the internal consistency amongst the scale items is good. On the basis of literature review, there were twelve items on this measure which were adopted and designed. The items included questions pertaining to high performance practices of the organisation with regards to participation in decision making, teamwork and autonomy within the organisation were included.

Reliability

The reliability of the questionnaire to measure the high performance work practices (ability, motivation and opportunity to participate), organisational citizenship behaviour and employee turnover was determined from Cronbach Alpha. The Cronbach alpha in case of the HPWP

scale was 0.867 which suggests that the internal consistency amongst the scale questions is very high. Cronbach alpha in OCB scale was 0.829 and for employee turnover was 0.6. This shows that reliability of questions for high performance work practices in terms of ability, motivation and opportunity to participate, organisational citizenship behaviour and employee turnover was good.

	High Performance Work Practices	Organizational Citizenship Behaviour	Turnover Intention
High Performance Work Practices	1		
Organizational Citizenship Behaviour	0.558	1	
Turnover Intention	0.126	0.603	1

Pearson Correlation Analysis

Pearson Correlation Analysis in the table above indicates that there is a moderate correlation of 0.558 between high performance work practices and organisational citizenship behaviour. The correlation observed between HPWP and Employee Turnover is low i.e. 0.126 and the correlation between OCB and Employee turnover is also low, i.e. 0.063.

Principal Component Analysis

The Principal component analysis was done to understand the key factors which affect High performance work practices, Organisational Citizenship behaviour for employees in IT Companies. This will help the Senior Management understand and maintain focus on a limited set of primary factors to help reduce attrition rates.

High Performance Work Practices

The value of KMO is 0.802 which indicates that the correlation between the pairs of variables can be explained and factor analysis as a data reduction technique is appropriate. Eigen values represent the amount of variance associated with the factor. The results showed that three components are able to explain 57.167% of variance. The rotated component matrix and loading plot indicates that the various practices in the HPWP are loaded on one of the two components. The two components could be labeled as ability and motivation enhancing practices which provide flexibility and opportunity to participate. This indicates that these factors are significant for the HPWP to be effective. (Fig: Loading Plot of HPWPs)

Organizational Citizenship Behaviour

In case of Distributive Justice, KMO value is 0.800 which shows factor analysis as a data reduction technique is appropriate. Eigen values show that one component is able to explain 59.69% of variance. This indicates that the five variables of OCB are representing the discretionary behaviour which may not be directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system.

(Please turn over for the loading plot for OCB)

Fig: Loading Plot for OCB

Regression Analysis

Regression analysis helps us understand how the typical value of the dependent variable changes when any one of the independent variables is varied, while the other independent variables are held fixed.

On taking the independent variables as high performance work practices and the dependent variable as organisational citizenship behaviour, the value of R² derived was 0.354 which shows that 35% of the variation in organisational citizenship behaviour can be explained by high performance work practices in terms of ability-motivation enhancing practices and opportunity to participate practices.

The equation derived from regression analysis is: Organisational citizenship behaviour = 32.234+0.494 ability - motivation +.235 opportunity to participate This shows that in IT companies, organisational citizenship behaviour is expected to increase by 0.494 when ability - motivation increases by 1 and by 0.235 when opportunity to participate increases by 1.

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Standard error of the estimate
1	0.595	0.354	0.327	9.98314

Fig: Regression Analysis

Conclusion

The present study was conducted to analyze the linkage between multidimensional high performance work practices, organisational citizenship behaviour and employee turnover of employees working in in NCR region. The results of the study suggest that the implementation of HPWP in IT companies have a strong positive link with OCB of employees and the results of the study are in line with other similar studies trying to study the relationship. The correlation of HPWP and OCB with employee turnover is not very significant. This indicates that there is an inverse relationship between HPWP and employee turnover and that between OCB and employee turnover, the present study suggests that there could be other reasons such as challenging work role, development opportunities, supervisor 's role etc. which could also be the reason for the high attrition rates and the same needs to be further researched.

The organizations which intend to gain competitive advantage through positive employee 's attitude and behavior must focus on the mentioned practices. Such high performance work practices system provides the base for competitive advantage because it is difficult to imitate.

The study finds that there are different set of high performance work practices that affect significantly organizational subjective performance, financial performance, and employee 's productivity directly or through mediating role of employee 's attitude and behavior. These high performance work practices help the organizations to develop such skills and capabilities that lead to competitive advantage. Further, employment security and self-managed team repeatedly turned out to be most significant high performance work practices. These practices are not only impacting organizational performance and employee 's productivity but these are also significantly and positively impacting employee 's attitude and behavior.

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