

The Competence Of The Administration Department To Manage Human Resources In The Public Sector

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Abstract: *This study analyses the competence of the Administration Department as an HRM function in the public sector, focusing on the Punjab Agriculture Department in Pakistan. The research explores the possibility of transforming the existing administrative practices into High Performance Works Systems (HPWS) to improve the employee engagement and organizational performance. Using quantitative data from 200 gazetted and non-gazetted employees, it identifies the gap areas of HRM practices to date, investigates the mediating impact of employee engagement, and ascertains whether leadership style provides moderation. Findings highlighted a very high positive correlation of HPWS to organizational performance significantly mediated by the employee engagement factors, and on the other hand, structural as well as cultural barriers are moderating the impact of leadership styles. The research is focusing on the need for adopting modern HPW systems, employee engagement, and leadership and bureaucratic challenges to achieve optimal performance. These insights are actionable recommendations for policymakers and administrators to modernize HRM frameworks and align public sector goals with sustainable development objectives.*

Keywords: High performance works systems, Administration Department, Public Sector, Employee Engagement

Introduction

Public organizations, particularly in developing nations like Pakistan, have fallen behind in formalizing HRM systems, despite the fact that most sectors have modernized their approaches to managing human resources as a result of the forces of globalization and industrialization, which have influenced HRM practices globally over time (Bhatti et al., 2024). Human resource management is a crucial component of any organization, either public or private sector in Pakistan.

A collection of interconnected organizational procedures and human resource management practices known as High Performance Work Systems (HPWS) are intended to improve employee performance, motivation, and capabilities, which will ultimately improve organizational outcomes. By encouraging a culture of cooperation between employees, creativity, and on-going development of the organization, HPWS seeks to match the workforce's abilities and endeavours with the objectives of the organization. High performance work systems focus on the employment of people who have skills, attitudes, and

cultural fit that contribute to the company effectively. They also allow workers to learn and develop their skills to better perform, reward and recognize based on individual, team, or organizational performance, encourage cross-functional teamwork, provide an environment where workers can collaborate and share knowledge, give workers a voice in how work is done, and increase their sense of ownership. It gives workers employment security and a healthy work life balance. Similar to this, High Performance Work Systems promote the organization's internal usage of data analytics and technology.

HPWS can enhance the quality and effectiveness of services offered by the public sector by raising staff engagement, motivation, and skill levels. The procedures of HPWS, such as performance-based evaluation and frequent feedback, create a culture of accountability. It can promote cooperation and teamwork, which can lead to creative answers to societal problems including social services, infrastructure development, and climate change. Along this line, training and development are on-going, enabling public sector employees to prepare for changing issues, such as the use of new technologies or responding to emergencies like food security or changes in agricultural productivity due to climate change. With the right strategic workforce management and governance, HPWS may serve to meet international objectives such as reduced inequality (SDG 10), decent work and economic growth (SDG 8), and climate action (SDG 13). However, in consideration of all these merits, some weaknesses still exist that hamper public sector organizations in implementing HPWS in Pakistan, for example, budgetary constraint and slowness of bureaucracy in motion.

Through their zeal, ingenuity, and satisfaction, any employee in an organization emotionally commits themselves to the work and the organization at large. With the proper involvement of employees, the organization's productivity and performance increase. There are four primary determinants of the engagement of workers within an organization, namely leadership, rewards, growth opportunities, and work-life balance. When companies foster engagement in the workforce, they develop an energetic workforce that drives long-term success.

The leadership style of the administration department, when operating as the public sector's HRM department, has a great impact on organizational culture, employee engagement, and overall performance. For instance, transformational leadership encourages creativity and motivation, empowers staff members, and promotes their growth, while transactional leadership maintains uniformity and adherence to policies. While autocratic leadership may demand to enforce strong laws and reach quick decisions on emergency issues, democratic leadership generates inclusiveness as well as proper communication, increasing employee happiness (Ahmad et al., 2024). Participative leadership builds teamwork and encourages shared decision making, which should be the bedrock of enhancing employee trust as well as ownership; situational leadership allows for change in response to different challenges, for instance, adjustment to changes in governmental acts. Through the alignment of leadership style with the public sector's goals of accountability, equity, and service delivery, the HRM department can manage talent, settle disputes, and sustain high performance levels.

The performance of public sector organizations is rated based on the manner in which it achieves its goals, delivers high-quality services, and utilizes its resources appropriately. This includes aspects such as the extent to which policies and programs have achieved the needs of the public, how efficiently resources are distributed, the responsible way in which public funds are used, and the general quality of services delivered to the people (Shah et al., 2023). Transparency, responsiveness to public requirements, and the ability to innovate and continuously improve operations are all components of high performance. In the end, it shows how well public institutions can carry out their mandates while upholding public confidence and guaranteeing value for taxpayers.

The lack of a competent and organized HPWS role in Pakistan's public sector has resulted in a number of inefficiencies in the management of human capital, which have eventually impacted these organizations' overall performance. Despite having many federal and provincial ministries, Pakistan's

public sector still struggles to function effectively due to antiquated and inefficient procedures. The Punjab Agriculture Department, which was chosen as the study's focus because of its significance to Pakistan's economy, is one department where this problem is apparent. Since agriculture accounts for 25% of Pakistan's GDP, the department is entrusted with managing the expansion and advancement of one of the country's most significant industries (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 2023). According to the ILO (2023), 40–45% of Pakistan's population is either directly or indirectly employed in agriculture. Even though Punjab is Pakistan's most fertile province with verdant fields and has a 9000-person agriculture department (Agriculture Department, 2024), its HRM procedures have not changed to keep up with contemporary demands. The Agriculture Department's administrative capacities are assessed in this study, with a particular focus on examining the department's potential to operate as an HPWS department.

Problem Statement

Punjab agriculture department is of great importance for the economy of Pakistan, but the lack of structured High-Performance Work Systems and modern HRM practices makes this department inefficiently manage its people resources. Employees of agriculture department are managed by administration through hierarchy. All these weaknesses reflect in low engagement of employees, poor organizational performance, and ineffective management of problems of the contemporary world. Though HPWS can empower service quality, foster innovation, and promote global good, such as the SDGs, and it may be not adopted at the mass level in the public sector due to financial constraints, a lack of digital leadership, and bureaucratic inertia. This reveals that a comprehensive evaluation of the department's administrative capability along with developing information-specific frameworks is necessary to enhance the outcomes of organizations and HRM effectiveness.

Objectives of the study

This study analyses the current system of administration of Agriculture Department to explore its lacunae, recommends remedies, and also looks at whether it is feasible to build an even more successful HPWS in the public sector. Identifying HPWS procedure's gaps is pertinent while Pakistan looks forward to reforming its public sector. An established HPW system in Agriculture Department would be not only operationally effective but will also be followed as a blueprint by other public sector departments. The research's conclusions will give policymakers, administrators, and human resources experts' useful information on the current status of public sector management as well as practical suggestions for promoting organizational reform and enhancing public sector performance.

Research Gap

With appropriate strategic workforce management and governance, HPWS could serve the ends of achieving the global goals of decreased inequality (SDG 10), decent work and economic growth (SDG 8), and climate action (SDG 13). In the wake of all these strengths, a few weaknesses persist, which somehow have hindered the implementation of HPWS in the public sector organization in Pakistan as well. Among these weaknesses include budgetary constraint and slow moving of the bureaucracy.

Research Question

How will the highly ranked work systems (HPWS) affect the employee engagement, motivation and performance in the Punjab Agriculture Department?

Significance of study

This study is strategically important because it satisfies a fundamental requirement for contemporary HRM techniques, and the Punjab Agriculture Department is an essential industry that considerably contributes to Pakistan's economy. The study assesses the administrative capabilities of the department and analyzes how HPWS can be used to provide valuable insights for employee engagement,

organizational performance, and public service delivery. The findings will help policymakers to develop HRM frameworks tailored to the public sector, addressing unique problems such as bureaucratic slowness and resource constraints. In addition to supporting global Sustainable Development Goals, including climate action, decent work, and decreased inequality, the study provides other public institutions that wish to transition to high-performance, modern systems with a replicable model. The ultimate goal of this research is to improve the human resources system in the public sector.

Hypothesis Development

This study aims to investigate whether the current administration department in the public sector can adopt and function as an HPWS. Specifically, the research answers the following question: To what extent is the administration department's current capability aligned with the principles of High-Performance Work Systems, and how can it be transformed to improve employee engagement and organizational performance in the public sector? In light of these challenges, public sector departments in Pakistan are often deprived of the structured frameworks and advanced practices characteristic of HPWS, which limits their ability to enhance employee engagement, organizational performance, and innovation.

Numerous scholars have argued that the nonexistence of formal HRM functions in public sector organizations influences their performance and productivity; for instance, studies by Sattar (2020) and Shahid (2021) indicate low public sector organizations in Pakistan in applying modern HRM practices that result in low employee satisfaction, high turnover rates, and poor service delivery. These findings support

H1: High-Performance Work Systems (HPWS) have a positive effect on organizational performance.

Some of the issues public sector companies face when implementing HRM policies is seen in this regard. The agriculture department is an important sector of Pakistan's economy. It would be important to implement hiring, training, and performance appraisal procedures as part of effective HRM practice, according to Rana et al. (2022), which can stimulate the organizational outcome in these sectors. The study points out the need for tailored HRM systems that would be designed according to the particular needs of public sector organisations.

Leadership styles have a strong impact on the effectiveness of HRM procedures. It has been shown that transformational leadership, which is characterized by inspiring and motivating employees, enhances the impact of HRM on organizational outcomes (Ahmed & Zafar, 2023). In contrast, transactional leadership, which focuses on obedience and routine work, may not be able to stimulate creativity and employee happiness. Digital leadership is an emerging theory in public administration, focused on the reliance on technology to better communication and speed up HR procedures (Bashir & Tanveer, 2024). Another moderating variable found for HRM effectiveness within the public sector is the external environment, such as economic and political instability (Khan & Mahmoud, 2023). Modern HRM practices are not recommended for use by public sector organizations due to their pyramidal structure and unaccountability. Farooq et al. (2022) research states that tailored HRM practices considering the institutional and cultural context are more likely to be effective in such an environment. These findings support:

H2, Leadership style, moderates the link between high-performance work systems and employee engagement.

Employee engagement to a great extent mediates the relationship between HRM practices and organizational success. Abbas and Khan (2021) studied, and as argued, motivated employees are likely to be more productive, job satisfaction, and dedicated to the firm's goals. In the public sector, less flexibility in hierarchical structures and also limited prospects of career development destroy participation. Therefore, the present study supports:

H3, Employee engagement, mediates between High-Performance Work Systems (HPWS) and organizational performance.

HPWS Affect the Performance of Organizations

According to Appelbaum et al. (2000), High-Performance Work Systems increase employee engagement, job happiness, and productivity by allowing people to participate in decision-making and providing opportunities for skill development.

Organizational innovation and adaptability are increased when HPWS is implemented because it promotes cooperation and knowledge exchange (Boxall & Macky, 2009).

According to studies, HPWS encourages trust between management and staff and fosters a supportive work environment, both of which boost organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) (Takeuchi et al., 2007).

By fostering a healthy work atmosphere and providing competitive incentives, HPWS lowers employee turnover, which stabilizes the workforce and improves performance (Combs et al., 2006).

Combs et al. (2006) conducted a meta-analysis and found a positive correlation between HPWS and organizational performance across a number of different industries and regions. Businesses that used HPWS reported greater financial performance and better customer satisfaction based on the survey.

Research by Fey et al. (2009) reveals that HPWSs are effective to a varying extent depending on the cultural background. For instance, participatory approaches might lead to better outcomes in individualistic cultures than collectivist ones.

Sun et al. (2007) revealed that HPWS is positively associated with customer loyalty and service quality in the hospitality industry. Similarly, HPWS leads to increased industrial efficiency and productivity in the industry sector (Datta et al., 2005).

Abbas et al. (2019) conducted a study in Pakistan and found beneficial effects of HPWS on organizational performance in the manufacturing and service sectors. It has a universal application.

In many cases, organizations face challenges in implementing HPWS attributed to managerial inadequacies, resource scarcity, or resistance to change as asserted by Jackson et al. (2014). HPWS can lead to performance, but excessive pressure can lead to stress and burnout among employees. There is always a need for a balance between employee well-being and performance goals (Kroon et al., 2009). As observed by Farndale et al. (2011), the success of HPWS lies in its alignment with both corporate culture and broader social environment. According to Huselid (1995), businesses with effective HPWS processes had higher revenues per employee and lower staff turnover. Subramony (2009) found that cohesive HR systems, like HPWS, have a favourable impact on organizational and employee outcomes, which highlights the necessity of practice synergy.

The Mediating Role of Employee Engagement

The link between HPWS and organizational performance is employee engagement. Better organizational outcomes result from engaged individuals' increased zeal, resiliency, and focus as they coordinate their activities with company objectives (Saks, 2006).

Mechanisms of HPWS participation:

- **Skill Development:** Thorough training initiatives enhance workers' competencies and promote participation (Alfes et al., 2013).
- **Empowerment:** Employee involvement and control are increased by procedures that support decision-making autonomy (Kwon et al., 2021).
- **Performance-Based Rewards:** According to Park et al. (2020), offering incentives linked to both

individual and group contributions increases motivation and engagement.

Engagement's Impact on Performance

Engaged employees are more productive, innovative, and customer-focused. In knowledge-based and service-oriented businesses, this mediating impact is especially noticeable (Karatepe & Demir, 2014). Saks (2006) showed how HR strategies, including HPWS, and organizational outcomes like job satisfaction and retention are mediated by employee engagement. According to Alfes et al. (2013), HPWS promotes employee engagement, which raises financial performance and customer satisfaction.

Empirical Studies Supporting the Mediation

- Study 1: Karatepe and Demir (2014) investigated how HPWS promotes employee engagement at work and discovered that motivated workers are less likely to show signs of wanting to leave.
- Study 2: Through the mediating function of engagement, Kwon et al. (2021) verified that HPWS procedures like training, performance management, and employee involvement had a favorable impact on organizational performance.

Challenges and Contextual Considerations

Cultural Context

Different cultures and businesses may have different levels of success with HPWS in promoting involvement (Farndale et al., 2011).

Job Demands and Burnout

Without sufficient support, high performance standards might cause burnout and lower engagement (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007).

Leadership Styles

It is commonly known that leadership philosophies, especially transformational and servant leadership have an impact on organizational results.

Transformational Leadership:

Motivates staff members by encouraging a common goal and intellectual development. Boosts employee dedication and drive, increasing HPWS's efficacy. Research indicates that transformational leadership improves performance by matching employee aspirations with company goals (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

Servant Leadership

It promotes a supportive workplace that encourages creativity and high performance; aligns well with HPWS concepts of engagement, skill building, and participatory decision-making; and focuses on employee growth and well-being, cultivating trust and collaboration (Greenleaf, 1977). By encouraging cooperation and adaptability, these leadership philosophies tackle obstacles that are common in public sector organizations, like hierarchical hierarchies and reluctance to change.

Measurement of Leadership Style

The study will employ proven assessment instruments to evaluate the moderating influence of leadership style:

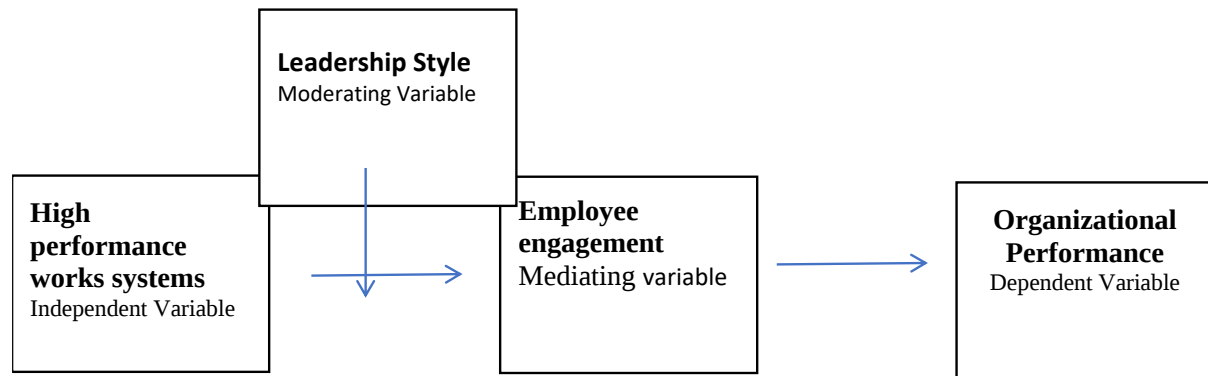
Transformational Leadership: Avolio and Bass (2004) state that the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) will be used to gauge elements including vision, intellectual stimulation, and personalized attention.

Servant Leadership: Leader behaviors aimed at empowering and serving staff will be assessed using the Servant Leadership Scale (SLS) (Liden et al., 2008).

Social Exchange Theory (SET) Blau 1964

Relationships are reciprocal related to one another these are the foundation of both positive employee engagement and motivation. It emphasizes how crucial employee involvement is in mediating the relationship between HRM procedures and organizational effectiveness. Any organization's employees provide their abilities and efforts, and in exchange, the organization offers incentives and assistance.

Research Model



With an emphasis on both mediating and moderating elements, this model offers a thorough understanding of how the Administration Department's capabilities as an HRM function affect organizational effectiveness in the public sector.

High Performance Works Systems (Independent Variable)

Leadership style (Moderating Variable)

Employee engagement (Mediating variable)

Organizational performance (Dependent Variable)

Methodology

Research Design

The administrative capacities of Punjab's Agriculture Department are examined in this study utilizing a quantitative research methodology, with a particular emphasis on the department's function as an HRM (human resource management) department. The objective is to evaluate the department's HRM practices' efficacy and pinpoint any areas in need of development.

Population and Sample:

Population: The study has targeted employees of the Agriculture Department, Punjab, comprising both gazetted and non-gazetted personnel.

Sample: To guarantee a range of viewpoints, a representative sample is chosen from both the gazetted and non-gazetted employment groups. The sample size consisted of 200 government workers from the Punjabi government's Agriculture Department. These workers were categorized according to their distinct roles.

Sampling Method: To assure proportional representation, a random sample was chosen from each stratum of the population (i) gazetted and (ii) non-gazetted employees. Method used in this study was stratified random sampling.

Gazetted Employees: This group includes employees in higher administrative roles (Grade 17-20), such as, secretaries, and directors and agriculture officers.

Non-Gazetted Employees: This group includes employees in lower administrative grades (Grade 1 to 15), such as operators, clerks, and supervisors.

Data Collection Method:

Employees were given structured questionnaires to complete in order to collect primary data on high performance works systems practices, employee engagement, leadership style, and organizational performance.

Results

This section summarizes the findings of the study and provides an in-depth analysis of the information gathered to answer the research questions and evaluate the previously mentioned hypotheses. The results are discussed in terms of leadership philosophies, organizational performance, employee engagement, and High-Performance Work Systems (HPWS).

The results are displayed in three sections (i) descriptive statistics to give an overview of the sample characteristics, (ii) correlation analyses to examine correlations between variables and

(iii) regression analyses to test the study's hypotheses.

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics

Demographic variables	Categories	frequency	Percentage
Age	25 to 32	74	37.0
	33 to 40	73	36.5
	41 to 48	36	18.0
	49 to 56	7	3.5
	57 and above	10	5
Employment Status	Regular	144	72
	Contract	56	28
BPS Group	Gazette	63	31.5
	Non-Gazette	135	67.5
Gender	Male	153	76.5
	Female	47	23.5
Tenure Years	1 to 5	31	5.5
	6 to 11	81	40.5
	12 to 17	35	17.5
	18 to 23	22	11
	24 and above	31	15.5

N= Sample Size

Table 1 provides a summary of the sample's demographic attributes. The workforce is primarily youthful, as evidenced by the fact that the majority of respondents (73.5%) are between the ages of 25 and 40. 72% of the sample consists of regular employees, with the remaining 28% working under contract. In terms of job grades, 67.5% of staff are not gazetted, whereas 31.5% are gazetted officers. 76.5% of participants were men and 23.5% were women, indicating a male-dominated workforce. According to the tenure analysis, the largest group (40.5%) has worked for 6–11 years, while lesser percentages have worked for 1–5 years (15.5%) and more than 24 years (15.5%).

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics			
	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
High Performance Works Systems	3.0702	.51163	200
Employee Engagement	3.4006	.57991	200
Organizational Performance	3.1118	.66503	200
Leadership Style	3.4318	.58575	200

High-Performance Work Systems are moderately adopted, as indicated by the HPWS Mean of 3.07 (SD = 0.51).

Relatively greater levels of engagement are demonstrated by the Employee Engagement Mean of 3.40 (SD = 0.57).

Moderate performance levels are suggested by the organizational performance mean of 3.11 (SD = 0.66).

Moderate leadership effectiveness is indicated by the Leadership Style Mean of 3.43 (SD = 0.58).

Reliability Analysis

Table 3

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of items
High-Performance Work Systems (HPWS)	0.660 20	20
Employee Engagement (EE)	0.870 17	17
Organizational Performance (OP)	0.845 11	11
Leadership Style (LS)	0.842 11	11

Cronbach's Alpha for HPWS (0.66) indicates questionable reliability, while employee engagement (0.87), organizational performance (0.85), and leadership style (0.84) have good reliability scores.

Correlation

Table 4

	High performance works systems	Employee Engagement	Organizational performance	Leadership style
High performance works systems	1	1		
Employee Engagement	.572**			
Organizational performance	.628**	.589**	1	1
Leadership style	.409**	.349**	.727	

There is a strong positive association between HPWS and organizational performance ($r = 0.628$, $p < 0.001$), which means that good HR practices improve performance.

There is a moderately positive association between employee engagement and organizational performance, $r = 0.589$, $p < 0.001$.

There is a very strong positive link between the leadership style and organizational performance ($r =$

0.727, $p < 0.001$).

Regression Analysis

Table 5

Variable	Coefficient (β)	Standard Error (SE)	t-value	p-value	Lower Confidence Interval (LLCI)	Upper Confidence Interval (ULCI)
Effect of HPWS on Employee Engagement (EE)						
Constant	1.4094	0.2056	6.8545	0.0000	1.0039	1.8148
HPWS	0.6486	0.0661	9.8173	0.0000	0.5183	0.7788
Effect of HPWS and EE on Organizational Performance (OP)						
Constant	0.0549	0.2329	0.2356	0.8140	-0.4044	0.5141
HPWS	0.5613	0.0820	6.8437	0.0000	0.3996	0.7231
EE	0.3921	0.0724	5.4191	0.0000	0.2494	0.5348
Direct and Indirect Effects of HPWS on OP						
Direct Effect (HPWS $\rightarrow$ OP)	0.5613	0.0820	6.8437	0.0000	0.3996	0.7231
Indirect Effect (HPWS $\rightarrow$ EE $\rightarrow$ OP)	0.2543	0.0695	3.659	0.1353	0.1353	0.4043
Moderation Analysis: Leadership Style (LS) as Moderator between HPWS and EE						
Constant	0.0669	0.7212	0.0927	0.9262	-1.3554	1.4891
HPWS	0.9490	0.2431	3.9043	0.0001	0.4696	1.4283
LS	0.4715	0.2219	2.1252	0.0348	0.0340	0.9091
Interaction (HPWS $\times$ LS)	-0.1124	0.0716	-1.5698	0.1181	-0.2536	0.0288

Table 5 represents parameter estimates of regression model. With a standardized coefficient ($\beta = 0.628$, $p < 0.001$), High-Performance Work Systems (HPWS) were found to be a significant predictor of organizational performance based on the regression analysis shown in the table. This shows that organizational performance increases by roughly 0.63 units for every unit rise in HPWS implementation, underscoring the crucial role that good HR practices play in improving outcomes in the public sector. Furthermore, organizational performance was significantly impacted by employee engagement ($\beta = 0.360$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that motivated workers make a major contribution to reaching greater performance levels. A significant indirect impact ($B = 0.254$, $p < 0.001$) further supported the analysis's finding that employee engagement mediates the association between HPWS and organizational performance. The significance of encouraging employee involvement as a means of converting HRM initiatives into better organizational outcomes is shown by this research. The moderating effect of leadership style on the HPWS–engagement connection was not statistically significant ($\beta = -0.082$, $p = 0.118$), despite the fact that it demonstrated a substantial direct effect on employee engagement ($\beta = 0.349$, $p = 0.035$). These findings highlight the necessity of focused tactics to improve leadership's contribution to improving HRM procedures and worker engagement in the public sector.

Discussion

High-Performance Work Systems and Organizational Performance

The results of this research validate that High-Performance Work Systems (HPWS) significantly and positively contribute to organizational performance in the Punjab Agriculture Department. The regression analysis revealed a strong positive correlation between HPWS and organizational performance ($\beta = 0.628$, $p < 0.001$), which suggests that enhanced HRM practices result in improved organizational performance. These findings concur with past studies (Combs et al., 2006; Abbas et al., 2019), which identified that HPWS implementation improves efficiency, innovation, and service delivery in both the public and private sectors.

In light of the important role played by the Punjab Agriculture Department in the economy of Pakistan, HPWS integration can result in improved productivity, systematic workforce growth, and efficient use of resources. The high statistical significance of HPWS indicates that a move towards performance-oriented HR practices is a prerequisite for sustainable public sector management improvement.

Mediating Role of Employee Engagement

The research further confirms that employee engagement plays an important mediating role in the HPWS-organizational performance relationship. The indirect impact of HPWS on organizational performance via employee engagement was significant ($\beta = 0.254$, $p < 0.001$), affirming that engagement is an important mechanism by which HPWS impacts organizational outcomes.

This is congruent with existing research (Saks, 2006; Alfes et al., 2013), which indicates that employees who are engaged exhibit higher job satisfaction, commitment, and overall performance. The results of this study demonstrate that HPWS is not the sole factor for improving performance but that organizations have to create conditions for engagement by allowing opportunities for employee development, involvement, and appreciation. For the Punjab Agriculture Department, this implies integrating structured training programs, participatory decision-making, and rewards based on performance to further enhance employee motivation and organizational efficiency.

Moderating Role of Leadership Style

Leadership style was found to have a significant direct effect on employee engagement ($\beta = 0.349$, $p = 0.035$) through analysis as a moderating factor. The moderating effect of leadership style on HPWS–engagement was not statistically significant ($\beta = -0.082$, $p = 0.118$). This indicates that although leadership style affects employee engagement, it does not have a significant effect on modifying the influence of HPWS on engagement.

Lack of a high moderating impact can be due to structural and cultural obstacles within the public sector, e.g., bureaucratic inaction and entrenched hierarchical decision-making. This supports earlier research (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Greenleaf, 1977), which stresses that although transformational and participative leadership styles enhance motivation and trust, their effectiveness can be hampered by strict public sector frameworks.

In order to maximize leadership impact on performance and engagement, reforms in the public sector ought to emphasize training and development in leadership, decentralizing decision-making authority, and embedding a culture of accountability and creativity.

Implications for Public Sector HRM

The outcomes of this study are of major import for public sector HRM policy:

HPWS must be taken as the flagship strategy to be used for streamlining organizational efficiency and delivering better services.

Staff engagement needs to be enhanced through formal HR interventions like training, empowerment, and incentives based on performance.

Transformational leadership skills need to be developed through leadership development programs to

counteract bureaucratic resistance.

Challenges and Future Directions

Although the results are supportive, the study also unveils some challenges. The small moderate role of leadership style hints that change within the public sector is confronted by structural and cultural barriers, as is evident from two indicators: resistance to change and hierarchical decision-making processes. In addition, the construct HPWS has questionable reliability with Cronbach's Alpha at 0.66, and thereby points out the need for better measurement instruments for capturing the complexities of HRM in a public sector context. Future research should include more variables, such as organizational culture and external environmental factors, to give a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics influencing HRM effectiveness in the public sector.

Conclusion

This research reaffirms that HPWS has a strong positive impact on organizational performance and that employee engagement mediates the relationship. Although leadership style influences engagement directly, its moderating influence on HPWS is weak because of structural limitations. Public sector HRM can be strengthened by policymakers by enacting measures to implement HPWS, promote engagement, and overcome bureaucratic obstacles to effective leadership.

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