

A Study of the Effect of High Performance Work Systems on Employees' Job Change Intentions - A Moderated Two-Agent Model

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Received: 2 June 2025; Accepted: 27 June 2025; Published: 19 July 2025

Abstract:

In the research related to leadership and human resource management, employees' attitudes and change behaviors towards work have always been concerned by scholars. This study explores the influence of "high-performance work system" on employees' "change of work intention" from the three dimensions of system-supervisor-employee, and introduces "attribution of employee performance in human resource management" as a mediator variable to explore its influence on "high-performance work system" and employees' "change of work intention". Through modeling and hypotheses, questionnaire design, regression analysis and other empirical studies, it is verified that a high performance work system increases employees' internal job change intention and decreases employees' external job change intention, and that the variable of "performance human resource management attribution" plays a mediating role in the path between the two. At the same time, two variables, "task trait trading" and "job prosperity" are introduced, and it is proposed that "task trait trading" and "job prosperity" can play a mediating role in the path of "task trait trading" and "job prosperity". Finally, if all the hypotheses are verified, based on the constructed theoretical model and empirical results, this study can initially determine the differences in the influence of system, leadership, and employees' personal characteristics on employees' intention to change jobs, and plan to put forward relevant suggestions for enterprise management change to help enterprises improve employees' internal intention to change jobs and reduce employees' external intention to change jobs, in order to promote the sustainable development of the enterprise, thus enhancing the practical role of this study. This will enhance the practical usefulness of this study.

Keywords:

High Performance Work System, Job Change Intention, Employee Performance Human Resource Attribution, Task Trait Transaction, Job Prosperity

1. Introduction

Scholars in the fields of leadership and human resource management share a common goal of "better understanding how to effectively manage people in

organizations” [1]. Scholars usually measure the effectiveness of management in two ways, namely “job performance” and “employee attitudes”, and therefore, in most studies in related fields, scholars explore the effects of various behavioral variables on employees’ job performance or job satisfaction. Therefore, in most studies in this field, scholars have explored the effects of each behavioral variable on employee performance or job satisfaction. In recent studies, scholars have not only emphasized the impact of good HR practices or leadership types on improving employee performance, but have also focused on employee attitudes toward perceived systems or leadership attitudes, such as employee happiness and turnover intentions, which suggests that the research on employee feelings and attitudes has further increased in popularity.

At the same time, in human resource management, which is centered on “people”, the career experience of employees also needs our further attention. Currently, career research has evolved from focusing on traditional organizational careers (i.e., job mobility within the organization) to models featuring increased job mobility within and across organizational boundaries [2], i.e., not only focusing on external job change intentions, but also further focuses on the differences between the two job change intentions. In addition, as a hotspot in human resources research, current research on high performance work systems (HPWS) focuses on the role of HPWS in improving employee performance, with little attention paid to its impact on employees’ career experience. Then, under the influence of high performance work systems, whether employees will choose internal promotion or external job-hopping, i.e., its impact on the change of employees’ work intention, deserves further in-depth study.

Through the literature review, we found that although prior studies have separately explored the relationship between HPWS, psychological contract, organizational identification, sense of organizational fairness, and job change intention, fewer studies have considered the complex interactions between these variables in an integrated manner. The development of career research needs to focus on the different impacts that external job change (i.e., job change across organizational boundaries) and internal job change (i.e., job change within the organization) may have on organizations and employees [3], and despite these advances, existing research has not yet examined external and internal differences between job change intentions.

In summary, this study incorporates HPWS, employee job change intentions, employee performance HR attributions, task trait transactions, and job prosperity into the same analytic framework, collected through a questionnaire, and aims to contribute in four ways: first, this study once again strengthens the understanding of the differences between external and internal job switching intentions [4,5]. Second, we extend the literature on job mobility by introducing high-performance work systems to examine the antecedents of job change intentions. In doing so, we introduce performance HRM attribution to further emphasize the effect of high-performance work systems on job change intentions while incorporating employees’ true perceptions into the analysis; third, supervisors, as an important variable in the implementation of HR systems, have an impact on employees that may influence the effectiveness of HR practices; and, fourth, we argue that individual employee perceptions of variability also influence the effect of high-performance work systems on employees’ intentions to change their jobs; this paper examines the combined effects of high-performance work systems, performance HRM attributions, employees’ job prosperity, and task-specific transactions between employees and

supervisors on their external and internal intentions to change their jobs. This multifocal perspective extends the career literature by integrating the triple roles of the HR system with the leader and the individual employee, examining the system-supervisor-employee triad of behaviors[4].

2. Literature Review

2.1. High Performance Work System (HPWS)

The concept of high performance work systems originated in the United States and was originally known as high performance work practices [6]. High performance work systems (HPWS) is a system consisting of a package of interconnected and facilitating human resource practices that have a synergistic effect on organizational performance, and is a new direction for human resource management under the guidance of strategic goals [7]. Martinaityte et al. [8] believe that high performance work system promotes the organization to enhance its own competitive advantage by stimulating the individual attitudes and behaviors of the organization, so as to achieve the organizational goals. Since Huselid [9] proposed high performance work system, this concept has been attracting much attention and focus from scholars and managers. In this study, HPWS “is conceptualized as a set of distinct but interrelated human resource management policies and practices, rather than as isolated individual human resource management practices to select, develop, retain, and motivate employees to achieve superior business performance.” [10]

2.2. Job change intentions

Employee job intention has two main dimensions, internal job change intention and external job change intention. Internal job change intention refers to the desire to “make any substantial change in job duties, rank, or title within the organization” [11], including both upward and lateral job change intentions. External job-hopping intention refers to the intention to change jobs by moving to a different organization. Current research mainly focuses on employees’ external job change intention, such as “tendency to leave the job, employee job-hopping”, etc. Few studies focus on employees’ internal and external job change intention at the same time.

3. Theoretical Modeling and Hypotheses

3.1. Theoretical basis

Conservation of Resources (COR) theory, developed by Hobfoll in 1989, emphasizes the tendency of individuals to acquire, conserve, and restore personal resources (e.g., time, money, social support) to maintain mental health and well-being in times of stress [12]. Resource Conservation Theory recognizes that individuals have a tendency to strive to acquire, maintain, cultivate, and protect resources. Based on resource conservation theory, individuals with fewer initial resources are more likely to experience a loss of resources and find it difficult to acquire new resources, i.e., the Loss Spiral; whereas individuals with more initial resources are more resilient to loss of resources and are more likely to acquire and accumulate new resources, i.e., the Gain Spiral [13].

Attribution theory, which began with Heider’s social cognitive theory, was developed by Weiner [14] and others to become an important psychological

framework for explaining how individuals understand and interpret behavioral outcomes [15]. The theory distinguishes three key dimensions of internal and external causes, stability and controllability, which are used to analyze the causes of success and failure. Individuals attribute events that occur accordingly to further relevant behaviors. Research indicates that individuals tend to attribute success to internal stability (e.g., competence) and failure to external instability (e.g., luck), and that this attributional pattern directly affects emotional reactions, future behavioral intentions, and performance expectations[15].

Social exchange theory originates from social psychology and emphasizes the process of exchanging resources in interactions between individuals, including material and non-material resources such as information, emotional support and status [16,17]. Applied to organizational behavior, the theory reveals the dynamics of relationships between employees and their organizations, superiors, and colleagues based on the principle of reciprocity. Research has shown that when employees perceive that the organization provides fair compensation, career development opportunities, and a good working environment [18], they tend to reciprocate with higher job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and performance [19]. Also, when employees are provided with a more harmonious leader-member relationship, it increases their organizational commitment based on social exchange theory.

Self-Determination Theory (SDT) is a cognitive theory of motivation developed by psychologists Deci and Ryan in the 1980s. This theory focuses on the three basic psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness in human behavior and how these needs affect an individual's motivation and behavior. It is believed that individuals have basic psychological needs such as autonomy and belonging, which influence their intrinsic motivation and healthy development [20]. When the individual's needs are met, the individual's motivation and willingness to engage in work activities increases, and work behaviors are more sustained, of higher quality, and enhance the individual's physical and mental health.

3.2. Research hypotheses

3.2.1. High-performance work system and employees' intention to change jobs

When employees are in organizations that provide high-performing human resource practices, their development is valued and they are provided with more effective resources, Resource Conservation Theory suggests that individuals tend to make efforts to retain and maintain existing resources and continually acquire new resources. Individuals with sufficient resources have a greater ability to acquire new resources and are more willing to implement resource investments that produce resource gain spirals, and they may be more inclined to change jobs within the organization, producing low external job-hopping intentions. Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

H1: A high performance work system increases employees' internal job change intentions and decreases their external job change intentions.

3.2.2. The mediating role of human resource attributions for employee performance

When employees are in a high-performance work system, they are more likely to generate performance human resource attributions that the organization has implemented a high-performance work system in order to improve the quality of

service (organizational performance). Based on attribution theory, when employees believe that they are able to clearly capture the performance requirements of the organization, they are likely to increase their work enthusiasm and involvement, establish a transactional psychological contract with the organization, and thus pay more attention to promotion within the organization. that is, they will further increase internal job change intention; and decrease external job change intention. Therefore, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H2: Performance human resource attributions mediate the mechanism between high performance work systems and employees' job change intentions.

3.2.3. The moderating role of task trait trading

While organizations have their own practices, supervisors often have discretion in the placement of employees on tasks, and employees can negotiate specific terms of employment with their supervisors [13]. Among the supervisory practices that affect employees' work experiences, task-specific deals are critical to managing careers (i.e., job changes) in organizations [21]. Initial predefined tasks and job duties can be adjusted based on an agreement between the employee and the supervisor. Due to favorable changes in job characteristics, task trait transactions lead to positive employee attitudes [22]. Based on social exchange theory, task trait trading is highlighted by the fact that it enhances employees' sense of reciprocal obligation [23] and commitment to their supervisors [24]. Employees who experience a high degree of task-trait matching at work, i.e., a high degree of fit between their personal abilities and preferences and the demands of their job tasks, tend to hold stronger satisfaction with their supervisors and subsequently deepen their level of commitment to the organization. This is because they gain a certain degree of job flexibility and autonomy, which in turn affects employees' job change intentions, e.g., when employees prefer task-trait trading (i.e., high task-trait trading) at work, they are prone to develop higher levels of organizational and supervisory commitment, which plays a more important role in reducing their desire to leave the organization for a new job, and, at the same time, may be more willing to make appropriate organizational contribution to the organization for the internal development of the organization. In summary, we propose the following hypotheses:

H3a: Task trait trading moderated the negative relationship between employee performance human resource attributions and external job-switching intentions, which became weaker as task trait trading increased.

H3b: Task trait transactions moderated the positive relationship between employee performance human resource attributions and internal job change intentions, and this relationship became stronger as task trait transactions increased.

3.2.4. The moderating role of work prosperity

Whether an employee develops the idea of job change is highly related to his own career planning and the employee's personal character traits. Based on the self-determination theory, after their performance human resource attribution, employees with a high sense of prosperity will try to cultivate the resource value-added spiral under the condition of sufficient resources, delay and eliminate the negative impacts of burnout and other negative impacts caused by resource depletion, and they will endogenously generate a steady stream of energy and put more resources into their work behaviors to form a vigorous psychological state, which will effectively promote

the smooth implementation of work and more easily generate career adaptability, thus increasing the internal job change intention of the employees, at this time the employees will pay more attention to their career planning and personal character traits. smoothly, more likely to produce career adaptability, thus increasing employees' internal job change intention, at which time employees will pay more attention to promotion, position change, etc. within the organization; on the contrary, employees with a low sense of job prosperity will be more likely to have a tendency to leave the job, i.e., change the status quo by way of external job-hopping. Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

H4: High job prosperity moderates the positive relationship between employee performance human resource attributions and internal job change intentions, and low job prosperity moderates the positive relationship between employee performance human resource attributions and external job change intentions.

3.3. Theoretical models

Based on the above theoretical foundation and hypothesis analysis, we propose the hypothesis model: high performance work system will increase employees' internal job change intention and decrease employees' external job change intention, and employees' performance human resource attribution plays a mediating role in the path of high performance work system and employees' job change intention, at the same time, the task trait transaction, job prosperity plays a moderating role. The theoretical model of this study is shown in Figure 1.

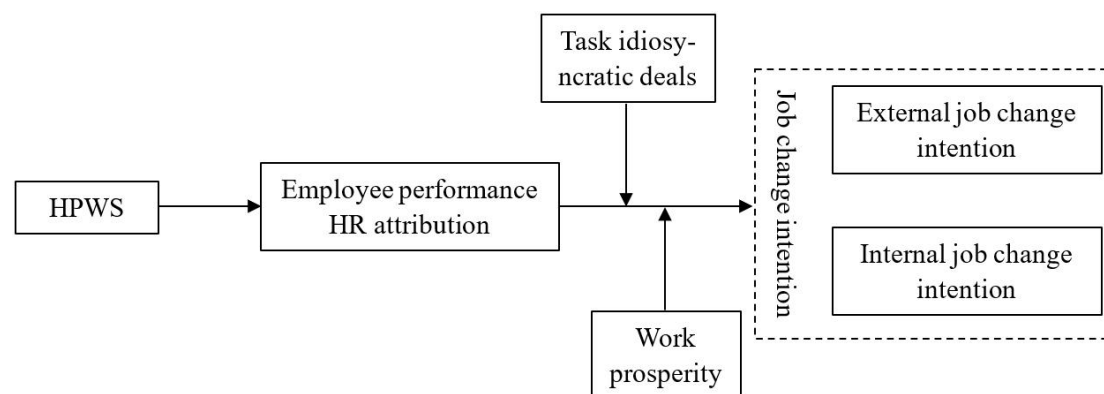


Figure 1. Theoretical model.

4. Conclusions

This paper aims to explore how high-performance work systems (HPWS), employee job change intentions, human resource attributions of employee performance, task characteristics transactions, and job flourishing interact to influence both internal and external job change intentions of employees by constructing a theoretical model. Through theoretical analysis, it is found that HPWS not only significantly enhances employees' internal job change intentions but also reduces their external job change intentions. This indicates that when enterprises implement a series of efficient human resource management policies, employees are more inclined to seek development opportunities within the organization rather than choosing to leave for other companies.

Furthermore, this study plans to verify the mediating role of human resource attributions of employee performance between HPWS and employee job change

intentions. This means that employees' perception of the motivation behind the implementation of HPWS by the organization (i.e., believing that the system aims to improve service quality or organizational performance) will directly affect whether they are willing to seek promotion within the organization or consider leaving. Additionally, task characteristics transactions and job flourishing, as moderating variables, play a significant role in this process. Specifically, we believe that a higher level of task characteristics transactions can enhance the reciprocal relationship between employees and their immediate supervisors, thereby strengthening employees' commitment to the organization and reducing the tendency to leave for external opportunities; while a high level of job flourishing helps promote career adaptability, thereby increasing internal job change intentions.

In conclusion, this study aims to provide valuable insights for enterprise managers, indicating that by optimizing the human resource management system, especially by focusing on individual employee needs and development potential, it is possible to effectively increase internal mobility among employees, reduce unnecessary personnel turnover, and ultimately promote the sustainable development of the enterprise. Future research can further adopt empirical methods for verification and explore the differences in these relationships under different cultural backgrounds, and consider more potential influencing factors to improve the existing theoretical framework.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

Funding

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial or not-for-profit sectors.

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