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Title: High-Performance Work Systems, job strain and job engagement: What is the role of Work–Home Interference?

Purpose:

For several years, a growing body of research has focused on human resource management practices labelled as ‘high performance work systems’ (HPWS). This concept refers to a group of separate but interconnected human resource practices (e.g., teams and decentralized decision making, information sharing, extensive training and development). Such practices are designed to increase employees’ competencies and motivation in order to engender employee and organizational performance (Appelbaum, Bailey, Berg, and Kalleberg, 2000) thereby contributing to organizations’ competitive advantage (Combs, Liu, Hall, and Ketchen, 2006). According to several researchers, components of HPWS can be regarded as job resources (e.g., Salanova, Agut and Peiró, 2005).

Previous research focused on the implications of such practices for organizational performance and for employees’ experience of work (e.g., Ramsay, Scholarios, and Harley, 2000). Clear evidence was found for a positive relationship between HPWS practices and attitudinal variables, implying that HPWS can provide win-win outcomes for employees and employers (e.g., Macky and Boxall, 2007). By comparison, research on the potential effects of HPWS on employee well-being is emerging. However, it seems that these effects are not so clear. Indeed, some researchers have found positive impacts of HPWS on well-being (e.g., Gonçalves and Neves, 2012) while others have shown negative ones (e.g., Kroon, van de Voorde, and van Veldhoven, 2009). Moreover, the underlying mechanisms of this relationship remain weak.

The present study examines the impact of HPWS on two well-being outcomes (i.e. job strain and job engagement). Furthermore, following the recommendation of Carvalho and Chambel (2014), we investigate the underlying mechanisms by considering negative and positive work-home interference (respectively NegWHI and PosWHI) as possible mediators. Specifically, we hypothesize that NegWHI and PosWHI mediate the effects of HPWS respectively on job strain and job engagement.

Design/Methodology/Approach:

An online questionnaire was administrated to employees from a public Belgian company. 455 people were invited to participate in this research. We received 170 exploitable data (response rate of about 37%).

We used Structural Equation Modelling to analyze data (Lisrel 8.80) and the bootstrapping technique to estimate indirect effects.

Key findings:

Results show that: (a) HPWS is negatively related to NegWHI which, in turn, has a significant positive effect on job strain; (b) HPWS is directly negatively related to job strain; (c) HPWS is positively associated to PosWHI which, in turn, has a significant positive impact on job engagement; (d) HPWS is also directly positively related to job engagement.
Bootstrap analyses indicate that (a) NegWHI partially mediates the relationships between HPWS and job strain; (b) PosWHI partially mediates the relationships between HPWS and job engagement.

**Practical implications:**

Employers can apply HPWS practices within their organization in order to increase well-being. Indeed, by applying such practices, managers provide workers with job resources to their workers and therefore give them more possibilities for adapting their work and family lives, leading to increased well-being.

**Research limitations:**

The three main limitations of this study are: the cross-sectional design of our research (which precludes any inference of causality among the variables), the specificity of our data (which makes it difficult to generalize our results to other professional sectors) and the use of self-reported data (which may lead to common method bias).

**References:**


