

The Effect of High-Performance Work System Attributions on Employees' Emotion

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Abstract

Previous studies have found that employees' perception of the high-performance work system implemented by the organization is not necessarily positive, which will affect employees' emotional experience in the work process. It is not to be underestimated that employees' emotional problems in the workplace will have a certain impact on employees' work experience and subsequent behavioral decisions. Overall, this study developed a conceptual model between HPWS attributions and employees' emotion. Based on the data of 264 employees from Jiangsu, Anhui, Zhejiang, Shanghai provinces, this paper uses structural equation to test the research model. It arrives at the main findings as follows: the different HPWS attributions have different effects on employees' CWB. The well-being HPWS attribution can significantly increase employees' positive emotion, while the HPWS performance attribution can significantly increase employees' negative emotion. Lastly, the conclusion not only provides a new way to reduce employees' emotion problem, but also provides practical guidance for enterprises impulses the construction of harmonious labor relations.

Keywords

HPWS well-being attributions, HPWS Performance attributions, positive emotion, negative emotion.

1. Introduction

HPWS is an optimal combination of a series of interrelated and mutually reinforcing human resource management practices, which can help enterprises to improve organizational performance and restrain employees' counter-productive behaviors in some specific situations (Peccei et al.,2013; Wang Juan, Zhang Zhe,2018). Karina & Susanne (2015) found that the employees' subjective judgment of HPWS is different, and employees' different attributions to HPWS implemented by the enterprise largely affect employees' emotional feelings and behavioral performance at work.

HPWS attribution is the subjective evaluation made by employees on why the organization implements HPWS, it depends on the actual experience of employees on the work situation. Different evaluations will stimulate the physical and psychological reactions of individuals with good or bad information, generate different emotions, and then affect the attitude and behavior of employees (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). on this basis, Karina & Susanne (2015) found that HPWS can be divided into two categories: (1) HPWS well-being attribution; (2) HPWS performance attribution. When employees make the former attribution, they will think that the motivation of HPWS is to pay attention to the well-being of employees, while when employees make the latter attribution, they will have a less positive view of the organization, and think that the motivation of HPWS is to maximize the organizational performance. So, under these two attributions, are there differences in employees' emotions?

This paper is based on the resource conservation theory (COR) and the classification of HPWS well-being attribution and HPWS performance attribution, explore the relationship between

HPWS attribution and employees' emotions. The conclusion not only provides a new way to reduce employees' emotion, but also provides practical guidance for enterprises impulses the construction of harmonious labor relations.

2. Theoretical Hypothesis

2.1. The Association between Hpws Preference Attributions and Employees' Emotions

According to COR theory, people are motivated to obtain, protect and retain important tangible (e.g. money) and intangible (e.g. social support) resources; the accumulation of resources enables people to invest and re-invest resources in their work. When employees are in a state of sufficient resources and their investment can get a good return, they will tend to invest extra resources to obtain more resources. On the contrary, when employees are in a state of resource shortage, they will take actions to reduce the further loss. Different attributional concepts make employees make different judgments on their own resource possession, which has an important impact on their emotional feelings and behavioral decisions (Halbesleben, Neveu et al.,2014)

Emotions are physical and psychological responses to good or bad information from the environment that rely on short-term or sustained evaluation (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984). In its earlier formulation, the evaluation process is most involved at the beginning of an event in the evaluation of its individual significance (primary evaluation) and the selection of evaluation response (secondary evaluation). The two assessments are said to work together to determine the extent to which an event is assessed as a harm, threat or challenge. Injury assessment is accompanied by negative emotions such as sadness or anger Threat assessment is accompanied by negative emotions such as anxiety or fear. And positive emotions, such as excitement, desire and confidence, were associated with the assessment of the challenge (Folkman & Lazarus, 1985). Warr (1990) proposed work-related emotions. Negative emotions include depression, distress, worry, tension and restlessness, while positive emotions include ease, satisfaction, calmness, optimism, enthusiasm and pleasure. These emotions are positively related to employees' work experience. Relevant studies have found that when people's evaluation of the situation is a potential threat to their growth and future development, they will produce negative emotions; When people's evaluation of the situation is challenging and encouraging for their growth and future development, they will produce positive emotion (Cavanaugh et al., 2000;Folkman, 2008). Positive and negative emotions are often the opposite, but they are subjective estimates based on personal feelings.

When faced with an adverse situation, individuals will first evaluate the threat, challenge or harm extent of the event or situation to themselves, and then produce a series of emotional reactions (Lazarus&Folkman,1984). When employees make HPWS performance attribution, the resources consumed by employees in work cannot be well supplemented. When faced with the loss or threat of resources, people will become relatively vulnerable, and psychological pressure will drive people to the dark side of ethics (Hobfoll,2001). At this point, employees' evaluation of the work situation is unfavorable to them, and they will experience more negative emotional experience and generate negative emotions, and less positive emotions. Emotional state will affect people's action tendency and behavior intention (Hobfoll,1989). Therefore, negative emotions may play a mediating role between HPWS performance attribution and negative emotions. Lee & Spector (2006) study confirmed that negative emotions can cause interpersonal and organizational CWB. When employees have negative emotions, such unpleasant emotional experience will stimulate individuals to take actions to escape from this state (Gruped & Nitschke,2013). In order to relieve negative emotions and reduce further loss of resources, employees' CWB may increase.

Based on the above analysis, the hypothesis is proposed:

hypothesis 1: The Preference attribution of HPWS can reduce employees' positive emotions;

hypothesis 2: The Preference attribution of HPWS can increase employees' negative emotions..

2.2. The Association between HPWS Well-being Attributions and Employees' Emotions

Similarly, when employees make HPWS well-being attribution, employees are in a state of abundant resources, and the acquisition and surplus of resources will make them feel happy (Cohen & Wills, 1985; Isen, 1987; Rappaport, 2002). At this time, employees' evaluation of the work situation is conducive to their own development and experience more positive emotional experience to promote the generation of positive emotions. Positive emotions help increase positive behaviors and reduce negative behavioral tendencies (Zhang & Schwarzer, 1995). Fredrickson (1998) creatively broadened and established the model of positive emotions, believing that positive emotions can broaden the attention focus and behavioral skills of employees, so as to supplement their social intelligence and physical resource. Employees in positive emotional experience are more likely to choose altruistic behavior in order to maintain such experience and reduce the occurrence of counterproductive behavior (Spector, 2002). Dalai (2009) also prove that positive emotions tend to lead to organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) and reduce CWB. Based on the above analysis, the hypothesis is proposed:

hypothesis 3: The Well-being attribution of HPWS can increase employees' positive emotions;

hypothesis 4: The Well-being attribution of HPWS can reduce employees' negative emotions.

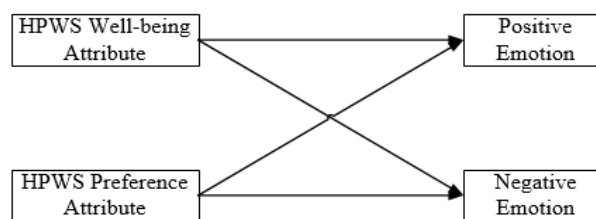


Figure 1: Conceptual Model

3. Method

3.1. Sample and Procedure

This paper adopts questionnaire survey to collect data. Based on the data of 264 employees from Jiangsu, Anhui, Zhejiang, Shanghai provinces, the selected enterprises have established a relatively perfect human resource management system, and there are unions within the enterprises. Data collection can take the form of E-mail and on-site recycling. In the process of questionnaire survey, procedural control measures are adopted to improve the effectiveness of the questionnaire, ensure that the survey process strictly complies with the principle of anonymity, so that the testee can be assured to fill in the questionnaire and make the information closer to their real situation. In addition, the testee is instructed to fill in the questionnaire, so that the testee can fill in the questionnaire as carefully as possible to improve the quality of the questionnaire. The survey period was from March 2019 to the end of June 2019. A total of 364 questionnaires were collected this time. In order to ensure the effectiveness of the questionnaire, invalid questionnaires with too many missing and same options were eliminated, and the remaining 264 valid questionnaires were obtained, with an effective rate of 72.5%. Among them, 43.2% are men and 56.8% are women; In terms of age, 10.5% are under 25 years old, 27.2% are between 26 and 30 years old, 44.7% are between 31 and 40 years old, and 17.1% are over 41 years old; Education: 72.8% of the students received

a bachelor's degree or above; In terms of corporate tenure, 68.5% of them have been employed for more than three years; In terms of enterprise positions, 74.3% were ordinary employees and 25.7% were managers at the grass-roots level or above.

3.2. Measures

In the study, the relevant variables were measured using domestic and foreign mature scales, and all scales used Likert5 subscale, strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). One part is the localization scale developed and revised by Chinese scholars, which has been tested empirically, and other English scales are under the help of experts and scholars and business managers, referring to the translation and back translation process of previous studies, To ensure the reliability and validity of the scale.

(1)HPWS attribution. According to the study by Nishii et al. (2008), we asked employees to rate two attributions for each HPWS activity, rather than having employees choose an attribution for each HPWS activity, this leaves room for the possibility of attaching multiple goals to each activity. We carried out an exploratory factor analysis on the 10 attribution items, using the principal components procedure with varimax rotation in SPSS.25.0. The rotated solution showed that all items for HRM performance attributions loaded onto one factor, whereas all items for HRM cost attributions loaded onto a second factor. There were no items with cross loadings. These results show that the items loaded by attribution and not by HRM practice and demonstrate that employees attributed all five HRM practices to the same underlying HRM intent. In addition, we carried out a confirmatory factor analysis to examine whether the two HRM attributions were distinct. Specifically, the five items for HRM performance attributions were loaded onto one factor, whereas the five items for HRM cost attributions were loaded onto a second factor. The results revealed an acceptable model fit. The reliability coefficient of HPWS well-being attribution scale and performance attribution scale were 0.872 and 0.865 respectively

(2)Employees emotion. Employees' emotions were measured by Warr (1990) emotion scale, which was used to measure work-related emotions. It consisted of 12 items, six of which measured negative emotions, such as anxiety, stress and pain; Six measures positive emotions, such as lightheartedness and happiness. And the reliability coefficient was 0.924 and 0.923 respectively.

(3)Control variables. In this paper, population variables such as gender and age as well as enterprise tenure and enterprise position are selected as control variables to be controlled in the analysis.

3.3. Results

3.3.1. Statistical Examination of Common Method Variance

First, the paper conducts confirmatory factor analysis on five potential variables, including HPWS well-being attribution, performance attribution, positive emotion and negative emotion, to test the discriminant validity of the research variables. As shown in table 1, through comparison, it is found that the fitting of the four-factor model is the most ideal ($\chi^2/df = 2.641$, CFI=0.840,TLI=0.825,RMSEA=0.079,SRMR=0.077).

Table 1: Fit Statistics of the Structural Model

Models	χ^2	df	χ^2/df	CFI	TLI	RMSEA	SRMR
Model A	5824.791	1158	5.030	0.674	0.656	0.124	0.154
Model B	4812.189	1169	4.117	0.682	0.667	0.109	0.123
Model C	3060.039	1122	2.727	0.831	0.815	0.081	0.088
Model D	2949.668	1117	2.641	0.840	0.825	0.079	0.077

Note. Model A : All constructs combined into one factor; Model B: Two factors; Model C :Three factors; Model D : four factors.

As all study data are filled in by employees, common method deviation testing is required. In this paper, Harman single-factor test method is used to include all measurement items into a common factor for model fitting (as shown in model 1 in table 1). The results show that the single-factor model fitting condition is poor, indicating that the common method deviation of questionnaire data is not serious.

3.3.2. Descriptive Statistics and Intercorrelations

Table 2 shows the mean value, standard deviation and correlation coefficient of each variable. The critical value of correlation level of the table is no more than 0.75. Therefore, there is no serious multicollinearity problem in the research data of this paper.

Table 2: Means, Standard Deviations, and Zero-Order Correlations of the Study Variables

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1.Gender	1						
2.Age	.055	1					
3.Position	-.207**	.257**	1				
4.HPWS-W	.041	.099	.055	1			
5.HPWS-P	-.037	.049	.077	.618**	1		
6.PE	-.100	.165**	.187**	.374**	.220**	1	
7.NE	.020	.028	-.032	-.012	.120*	-.301**	1
M	1.570	3.720	1.300	2.223	2.199	2.638	3.452
SD	.496	.941	.563	.620	.590	.829	.807

Note. ① * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$; ② Gender: 1= man, 2= woman; Position:1= Laborial Staff, 2= junior managers, 3= Middle management and above.

3.3.3. Tests of Hypotheses

According to the views of Hayes (2013) and Zhonglin & Ye Baojuan (2014), this paper adopted SPSS25.0 Process macro program and combined with Bootstrap method to test the hypothesis. The approach draws on ordinary least squares regression to estimate direct and indirect effects of mediation and uses 1,000 bias-corrected bootstraps (e.g. Baron and Kenny, 1986).

According to table 3, the HPWS performance attribution can significantly increase employees' negative emotions ($r = 0.501, p < 0.001$), but has no significant effect on employees' positive emotions ($r = -0.035, p > 0.05$). Hypotheses 1 therefore is not supported and hypotheses 2 is supported. Meanwhile, the results of table 3 also show that HPWS well-being attribution can significantly promote employees' positive emotions ($r = 0.501, p < 0.001$), but has no significant effect on employees' negative emotions ($r = -0.184, p > 0.05$); Hypotheses 3 therefore is supported and hypotheses 2 is not supported.

Table 3: Regression Analysis

Variables	PE		NE	
	β	se	β	se
HPWS-W	0.501***	0.112	-0.179	0.101
HPWS-P	-0.035	0.101	0.278**	0.107
R ²	0.182		0.066	
F	9.367***		2.176*	

Note. *p<0.05,**p<0.01,***p<0.001; HPWS-W(HPWS well-being attribution); HPWS-P(HPWS performance attribution);PE(positive emotions);NE(negative emotions).

4. Conclusion

The main purpose of this paper is to explore the mechanism of HPWS attribution on employees' emotion within the framework of COR theory:

(1) Employees' different attributions to HPWS have different influences on employees' emotion. HPWS well-being attribution can significantly increase employees' positive emotions, while HPWS performance attribution can significantly increase employees' negative emotions, which enriches the research achievements on HPWS attribution. HPWS needs to influence employees' attitudes and behaviors through their subjective perception (Guzzo,1994; Wright, 2007; Zhang Junwei, Long Lirong, ,2016). As the core goal of HPWS is to improve business performance, it brings high work requirements as well as high resources to employees. This dichotomy makes employees give a very different interpretation of the implementation purpose of HPWS, that is, from the perspective of enterprises, "I" is a sustainable asset or the cost of control and exploitation required by enterprises? When employees make the former attribution, Will think enterprise focusing on organizational performance, is also highly concerned about the development of the employees, the enterprise and the staff has a common goal, tin this case, all employees pay is rewarding, employees can increase the investment in work in order to get more resources, and they experience more positive emotions; When the employee makes the latter explanation. Employees will think that they are just a tool for enterprises to improve their performance, and even take control over employees in order to reduce costs. In this case, it is difficult for employees to get a corresponding return on their resource investment, The resources lost in work cannot be effectively replenished, employees will have more negative emotions. The paper's findings suggest that staff views of HPWS are not always positive. They may not really understand some of the practices of the organization, At this point, the organization can properly guide employees to better understand HPWS.

(2) The research makes a certain contribution for enterprises to attach importance to communication with employees. This is also in line with HPWS 'core management philosophy: Based on the Job Demands-Resources Model, HPWS brings high work resources (such as participation in decision-making, etc.) as well as high work requirements (such as performance appraisal, etc.). When employees' resources consumed in the work can be timely and effectively replenished by the organization, the work resources can effectively reduce the physical and psychological cost of work requirements, enable employees to achieve their goals, promoting individual learning, development and growth, It can promote employees' positive working attitude and promote the generation of positive emotions. At this point, staff resources are sufficient, in order to get more resources and maintain this positive emotional experience; On the contrary, when the job requirements are higher than the job resources provided by the enterprise, will increase employees' work pressure, leading to disappointment, anxiety, burnout and other negative emotions. In this case, the employee is in

a resource deficit state, in order to restore the balance of resources, relieve negative emotions, employees will invest less resources in their work. This suggests that different HPWS attributions trigger different emotions, then it will affect their subsequent behavior, we can start from the perspective of employees' emotions to relieve their negative emotions in the work, replenish the employee's missing resources. Such as the establishment of psychological counseling room, pay attention to the psychological status of employees and work feelings.

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