



The Role of High-Performance Work Systems in Enhancing Work Engagement

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Received: 27 August 2025

Accepted: 13 December 2025

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.32479/irmm.22140>

ABSTRACT

Scholars and practitioners endeavor to understand the factors influencing work engagement, thereby enabling employees to display high levels of discretionary behavior, enthusiasm, and absorption in their roles within an organization. This study attempts to fill this research gap by investigating the various effects of High-Performance Work Systems (HPWS) dimensions on work engagement and its dimensions. Using a sample of 237 employees from seven commercial banks in Jordan, the study employs a quantitative research approach, including regression analysis, to investigate the proposed relationships among constructs. The results reveal that the four dimensions of High-Performance Work Systems have various effects on work engagement. The findings indicate that communication and involvement, and career management affect vigor, while performance management and rewards, and training and development influence dedication and absorption. These findings will help managers effectively allocate their rare and valuable financial and human resources to deal with work engagement issues in commercial banks.

Keywords: High-Performance Work System, Engagement, Commercial Banks

JEL Classification: M12, M53, O15

1. INTRODUCTION

Work engagement refers to a fulfilling and affirmative work-related state of mind, described by vigor, dedication, and absorption (Schaufeli et al., 2002). Many studies indicate that engagement enhances employee behaviors and attitudes that focus on work commitment and the willingness to work hard with enthusiasm and integrity (Aybas and Acar, 2017). Work engagement has been of central importance in the confluence of corporate strategy and human resource management (HRM) studies, including in the new field of strategic human resource management (SHRM). This concentrates on methods to develop HRM practices and policies that create strategic capabilities that, in turn, ensure that organizations have the committed, skilled, knowledgeable, and motivated workforce that is required to gain a competitive advantage (Armstrong, 2025). One outcome of SHRM research

is HPWS, which refers to a set of combined and mutually reinforcing HRM practices used to create a superior organizational performance culture and foster employee commitment, skills, and motivation (Armstrong, 2025).

The studies conducted in Middle Eastern Arab countries (Aboramadan, 2022; Bakker and Albrecht, 2018; Obeidat et al., 2016) highlighted the need to conduct more studies on HPWS practices in Arab countries. Therefore, this study attempt to fill these gaps and contribute to the HPWS and work engagement theories by expanding the literature on HPWS and work engagement fields and theories. Therefore, it aims to examine the impact of HPWS practices on work engagement among employees in Arab Middle Eastern countries, case in point being Jordan, and in different contexts namely, commercial banks.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. High Performance Work Systems (HPWS)

SHRM concentrates on organizational, rather than employee, performance, and regards the role of HRM policies and practices as a solution for entire businesses rather than in terms of isolated practices (Becker and Huselid, 2006). Within this new field, HPWS has emerged as a cluster of HRM practices impacting employees' performance by advancing their knowledge, abilities, skills, and motivation; therefore, it is assumed to improve the financial and non-financial performance of organizations (Jiang et al., 2012). The development of HPWS is, to some extent, due to the importance of workforces as a source of sustained competitive advantage, given that highly engaged and productive employees can be rare, valuable, and unique (Oliveira and Silva, 2015).

HPWS consists of coherent HRM practices usually including selective recruitment, extensive training, participation, performance management and appraisal, flexible job design, involvement, and pay for performance (Huselid, 1995; Sun et al., 2007), and is designed to improve not only employees' motivation and skills, but also opportunities for them to contribute (Lepak et al., 2006). The literature on HPWS proposes that organizations should manage overall, rather than individual HRM practices. This is because, in HPWS, HRM practices will be interrelated and mutually supportive to generate high levels of knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSA) among well-motivated employees for them to perform effectively (Lin et al., 2022).

The procedures through which HPWS is associated with positive work outcomes can be clarified in many ways (Karadas and Karatepe, 2019). In job demand-resources theory, the motivational pathway assumes that personal resources and job role activate employee engagement, which, in turn, generates desirable attitudes and behaviors (Bakker and Demerouti, 2017). The attribution-based framework proposes that employees in organizations with high levels of work engagement show positive behaviors and attitudes in response to the investment made by organizations in HPWS to improve their well-being and increase the quality of services (Nishii et al., 2008). According to resource theory, employees work hard to protect job resources that enhance their work engagement, thus producing positive work-related outcomes (Hobfoll, 2001).

2.2. Work Engagement

Work engagement is affirmative, fulfilling, and worthwhile work-related state of mind, characterized by vigor, absorption, and dedication (Oliveira and Silva, 2015). Vigor refers to high levels of resilience, persistence, and energy when performing work. Dedication refers to a feeling of importance, enthusiasm, challenge, inspiration, and pride in one's work. Absorption refers to being happy, totally concentrated, and deeply absorbed in one's work (Salanova et al., 2005). When employees are completely engaged in their jobs, they become involved in their tasks and more motivated to share creative ideas and experiences with other employees (Kahn, 1990). Similarly, engaged employees are willing and enthusiastic to put extra effort into generating job resources (Kakkar et al., 2020), perform their routine tasks and activities

faster, offer additional resources and time to develop new ideas and approaches to complete work and share their accumulated knowledge with coworkers (Alfes et al., 2013; Chen et al., 2011).

Previous literature has identified several antecedents of employee engagement, including leadership (Kumalo and Schutte, 2024), trust (Håvold et al., 2021), person-organization fit (Alfes et al., 2016), HRM practices (Jose et al., 2022), emotional intelligence (Liu and Cho, 2018), and organizational justice (Aggarwal et al., 2022). The reviewed literature posits several individual and organizational outcomes related to engagement, such as reduced turnover and burnout (Santhanam and Srinivas, 2020), job performance (Arshad et al., 2025; Ismail et al., 2019; Naqshbandi et al., 2023), organizational effectiveness (Jha et al., 2019), career success (Vincent-Höper et al., 2012), innovativeness (Sharma and Nambudiri, 2020), and team and employee performance (Mahmood et al., 2019).

2.3. HPWS and Work Engagement

From the viewpoint of social exchange theory (Blau, 1986), it can be claimed that staffs perceive HPWS practices as a form of reinforcement provided by their organizations, which creates a sense of obligation among them to "pay back" the organization with increased engagement in their work. Considerable literature has focused on investigating the factors that generate work engagement, owing to their obvious importance, and has demonstrated that HPWS can improve engagement (Almadana et al., 2022).

Karatepe (2013) found that employees exhibit a high level of work engagement because of the presence of HPWS practices; this reflects a trusting relationship between the employees and their organization. As a result of such trust, employees reciprocate the organization by exhibiting positive attitudes and behaviors (Saks, 2006). Organizations can thus transmit positive signals and support to their employees through HPWS practices, such as fairness, by rewarding excellent performance (Gong et al., 2010), effective communication, acknowledging employees' values and contributions, and displaying appreciation and commitment towards employees (Aboramadan et al., 2019; Saks, 2006).

Previous research has revealed that HPWS practices lead employees to be more engaged in their jobs, with increased effort and energy at work, and make them feel supported and valued by their organizations (Ananthram et al., 2018; Lin et al., 2022). Numerous positive effects of HPWS on work engagement have been documented in the literature (Huang et al., 2018; Mehmood et al., 2023). For example, Karadas and Karatepe (2019) demonstrated the impact of HPWS on work engagement. Oliveira and Silva (2015) found that HRM practices and policies, designed to develop employees' skills, knowledge, commitment, and motivation, positively affect their work engagement. Similarly, Lin et al. (2022) found that HPWS in the service sector positively impacted work engagement. Almadana et al. (2022) revealed that HPWS is positively associated with work engagement in financial service companies in Indonesia.

Such findings support the theoretical idea that HPWS practices provide the workforce resources and support necessary to

perform operational tasks more effectively (e.g., socialization, knowledge, teamwork, and skills). Commensurate resources and support are likely to generate workforces with positive attitudes towards their work (i.e., commitment and job satisfaction) and superior enthusiasm and ability (employee engagement) to achieve organizational goals (Ananthram et al., 2018). Based on the reviewed literature, this study examines a bundle of HPWS practices related to performance management and rewards, communication and involvement, career management, and training and development, which are expected to impact employee engagement in commercial banks in Jordan. Specifically, this study tests the following hypotheses:

- H_1 : HPWS practices positively affects work engagement
- $H_{1,a}$: HPWS practices positively affects vigor
- $H_{1,b}$: HPWS practices positively affects dedication
- $H_{1,c}$: HPWS practices positively affects absorption.

3. CONCEPTUAL MODEL

The research model proposed is illustrated in Figure 1. The independent variable in this study was HPWS, which was represented by the following practices: performance management and reward (PM&R), communication and involvement (C&I), career management (CM), and training and development (T&D). The dependent variable was work engagement, which represented by the following subdivisions: vigor, dedication, and absorption.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Population Sampling and Procedures of Data Collection

This study targeted commercial banks operating in Jordan. Seven banks decided to participate in this study. Banks that agreed to participate were personally contacted to discuss the questionnaire distribution process. Each bank appointed a contact person. According to the contact people, 6,794 full-time employees worked at these banks. A total of 392 surveys (questionnaires) were distributed to obtain the total sample size. A total of 283 questionnaires were returned, of which 237 were found to be suitable for statistical analysis.

Table 1 shows that 56.5% of the participants were males and 43.5% were females. Regarding age, most (47.7%) employees were in the 20-29 years age group. Most of the respondents had undergraduate

or postgraduate degrees (96%). In terms of length of service, most employees (39.6%) had, at most, 5 years of experience.

4.2. Measurements

HPWS practices were measured using a modified version of the Abutayeh's (Abutayeh, 2017) scale, developed based on previous research (Cafferkey and Dundon, 2015; Fu et al., 2015). This measure consists of 25 items divided into four main dimensions: training and development (T&D), performance management and rewards (PM&R), communication and involvement (C&I), and career management (CM). Participants were asked to respond to items related to HPWS, using a five-point Likert-type scale, ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).

Work engagement was measured using the scale developed by Schaufeli et al., 2002, which includes nine items distributed equally along the three dimensions of work engagement: dedication, vigor, and absorption. The Likert-type responses to work engagement scale ranged from 1 (never) to 5 (always).

5. RESULTS AND DATA ANALYSIS

Table 2 shows a descriptive statistics on means, standard deviation, correlation, and internal consistency reliability coefficient values for research variables, as discussed below.

5.1. Descriptive Analysis

5.1.1. Means for study variables

The results indicate that the participating bank employees were moderately satisfied with the HPWS and its practices of performance management (3.23), rewards (3.38), communication (3.13), involvement (3.10), and career management (3.30). Furthermore, work engagement, vigor, dedication, and absorption had moderate scores (with means of 3.22, 3.24, 3.20, and 3.22, respectively), indicating that employees were not fully engaged in the execution of their roles in the banks for which they worked.

5.1.2. Relationships among HPWS and work engagement variables

Statistically significant moderate correlations were observed between all HPWS practices and work engagement: performance management and rewards ($R = 0.37$, $P < 0.01$), communication and involvement ($R = 0.43$, $P < 0.01$), career management ($R = 0.41$,

Figure 1: Research model

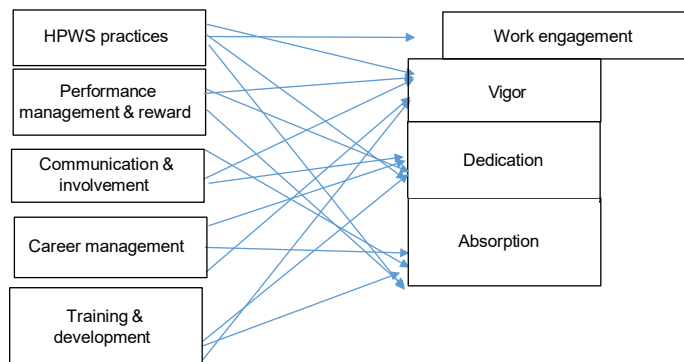


Table 1: Descriptive statistics of frequencies and percentile of the sample according to demographic variables (gender, age, educational level, and length of service)

Characteristic	Category	n	Percentage
Gender	Male	134	56.5
	Female	103	43.5
Age (years)	20-29	113	47.7
	30-39	102	43
Educational level	40+	22	9.3
	Diploma	9	4
	Bachelor's degree	179	75
Length of service (years)	Master/Ph.D. degree	49	21
	≤5	94	39.7
	6-10	80	33.7
	10+	63	26.6

Table 2: Descriptive statistics on means, standard deviation, correlation, and internal consistency reliability coefficient values for research variables

Variables	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1- PM&R	3.38	0.86	(0.75)								
2- C&I	3.13	0.97	0.49**	(0.86)							
3- CM	3.10	0.95	0.50**	0.30**	(0.83)						
4- T&D	3.30	0.96	0.28**	0.29**	0.22**	(0.82)					
5- HPWS	3.23	0.91	0.55**	0.52**	0.42**	0.35**	(0.89)				
6- Work engagement	3.22	0.85	0.37**	0.43**	0.41**	0.38**	0.44**	(0.78)			
7- Vigor	3.24	0.97	0.31**	0.27**	0.40**	0.28**	0.26**	0.75**	(0.75)		
8- Dedication	3.20	0.90	0.29**	0.35**	0.30**	0.31**	0.37**	0.84**	0.41**	(0.72)	
9- Absorption	3.22	0.92	0.29**	0.40**	0.28**	0.29**	0.41**	0.80**	0.38**	0.56**	(0.76)

n=237, *, **Correlation significant at $P < 0.05$ and $P < 0.01$, respectively. The Cronbach's alpha coefficients are given in parentheses. M: Mean, SD: Standard deviation

Table 3: Results of linear regression test of the effect of HPWS practices on work engagement and its subdivisions

Variables	Vigor		Dedication		Absorption		Work engagement	
	B	T	B	T	β	T	β	T
HPWS	0.334	5.221***	0.321	3.431***	0.441	5.635***	0.325	6.067***
PM&R	0.117	1.639	0.185	2.548**	0.231	3.273***	0.219	3.273***
C&I	0.317	4.601***	0.144	2.071*	0.109	1.609	0.236	3.671***
CM	0.164	2.596**	0.092	1.439	0.124	2.079*	0.162	2.746**
T&D	0.021	0.303	0.181	2.318**	0.219	2.884**	0.157	2.185*
R ²	0.218		0.200		0.242		0.319	
F	12.83***		11.466***		14.695***		21.57***	

*, **, and *** indicate significance at the $P < 0.05$, $P < 0.01$, and $P < 0.001$ levels, respectively

$P < 0.01$), and training and development ($R = 0.38$, $P < 0.051$). It can also be seen that HPWS practices were significantly correlated with vigor; there were small correlations for communication and involvement ($R = 0.27$, $P < 0.01$) and training and development ($R = 0.28$, $P < 0.01$), and moderate correlations for performance management and rewards ($R = 0.31$, $P < 0.01$) and career management ($R = 0.40$, $P < 0.01$). A statistically significant moderate correlation for all HPWS practices was observed with dedication, performance management, rewards ($R = 0.29$, $P < 0.01$), communication and involvement ($R = 0.35$, $P < 0.01$), career management ($R = 0.30$, $P < 0.01$), and training and development ($R = 0.31$, $P < 0.051$). Similarly, all HPWS practices related to absorption were significantly and positively correlated, with moderate results for performance management and rewards ($R = 0.29$, $P < 0.01$), communication and involvement ($R = 0.40$, $P < 0.01$), and training and development ($R = 0.29$, $P < 0.051$), and small correlation results for career management ($R = 0.28$, $P < 0.01$).

5.1.3. Internal consistency reliability coefficient

Cronbach's alpha was used to determine the reliability coefficient of the study variables. The results regarding HPWS practices all fell within acceptable levels for performance management and rewards (0.75), communication and involvement (0.86), career management (0.83), and training and development (0.82). Work engagement (0.785) and its subdivisions of vigor (0.75), dedication (0.72), and absorption (0.76) all fell within acceptable level (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016).

5.2. Testing of Hypotheses

Linear multiple regression was employed to test hypotheses H_1 , $H_{1.a}$, $H_{1.b}$, and $H_{1.c}$, which proposed a positive effect of HPWS practices on work engagement. Table 3 shows the results of hypotheses testing. Before conducting multiple regression analyses, VIF (the variance inflation factor) was used to investigate

multicollinearity. VIF values ranged from 1.17 to 1.76, indicating that multicollinearity does not exist in our data.

It can be observed that HPWS has a positive and significant effect on work engagement in commercial banks in Jordan ($\beta = 0.325$, $T = 6.067$), explaining almost a third (32%) of the variance in work engagement. The results in table 3 reveal that performance management and reward ($\beta = 0.219$, $T = 3.273$), communication and involvement ($\beta = 0.236$, $T = 3.671$), career management ($\beta = 0.162$, $T = 2.746$), and training and development ($\beta = 0.117$, $T = 2.185$) have a significant positive impact on work engagement; consequently, H_1 is supported.

It can be observed that HPWS has a positive and significant effect on vigor ($\beta = 0.334$, $T = 5.221$), explaining almost 22% of the variance in vigor, thereby supporting $H_{1.a}$. Performance management and reward ($\beta = 0.117$, $T = 1.639$), and training and development ($\beta = 0.021$, $T = 0.303$) are not significantly related to vigor, but communication and involvement ($\beta = 0.317$, $T = 4.601$) and career management ($\beta = 0.164$, $T = 2.596$) significantly impact vigor; consequently, $H_{1.a}$ is supported

Table 3 indicates that HPWS has a positive and significant effect on dedication ($\beta = 0.321$, $T = 3.431$), explaining 20% of the variance for this variable, thereby supporting $H_{1.b}$. Performance management and reward ($\beta = 0.185$, $T = 2.548$), communication and involvement ($\beta = 0.144$, $T = 2.071$), and training and development ($\beta = 0.181$, $T = 2.318$) are significantly related to dedication. Career management ($\beta = 0.021$, $T = 0.303$) is not observed to significantly impact dedication; consequently, $H_{1.b}$ is supported.

Table 3 indicates that HPWS has a positive and significant effect on absorption ($\beta = 0.321$, $T = 3.431$), explaining 24% of variance for absorption, supporting $H_{1.c}$. Performance management and

reward ($\beta = 0.231$, $T = 3.273$), career management ($\beta = 0.124$, $T = 2.079$), and training and development ($\beta = 0.219$, $T = 2.884$) are significantly related to absorption. Communication and involvement ($\beta = 0.109$, $T = 1.609$) do not have a significant impact on dedication; consequently, H_{1c} is supported.

5.3. Discussion

This research adds to the HPWS and engagement literature by proposing and empirically testing an analytical framework that investigates the effect of HPWS on work engagement in commercial banks in Jordan. The results revealed that the HPWS had a statistically significant impact on work engagement and its dimensions. Improving practices for career management, performance management and rewards, training and development, and communication and involvement would thus improve employee engagement, which is consistent with previous research results, and underscores the importance of HPWS for work engagement (Almadana et al., 2022; Karadas and Karatepe, 2019; Huang et al., 2018).

The findings suggest that the various HPWS practices have distinct impacts on work engagement and its subdivisions. Performance management, rewards, development and training appear to increase dedication and absorption but not vigor. Similarly, communication, involvement, and career management appear to positively influence vigor.

6. CONCLUSION

6.1. Theoretical Implications

This study makes several contributions to existing literature. First, it demonstrates that the engagement and HPWS literatures founded in Western cultures are applicable to Arab cultures in Middle East. Second, it contributes to the HPWS and work engagement fields and literature by using a non-Western country and a non-industry context. Therefore, results offer a further understanding of the association between HPWS practices and work engagement in an Arab setting and in commercial bank samples. Third, it contributes to the current body of knowledge by examining the effects of HPWS on engagement and its sub-dimensions. This study provides evidence that various HPWS practices have different effects on work engagement subdivisions.

6.2. Practical Implications

The results have several practical implications. The results revealed moderate levels of HPWS represented by the practices included in this study. Therefore, banks should focus on employee views when designing and implementing HPWS bundles. Commercial banks with ineffective HPWS practices may have employees with low levels of motivation and lack of skills and abilities.

Moreover, the results showed that employees reported moderate levels of engagement. Commercial banks may suffer from employees with low engagement due to the rapport between disengagement and individual and organizational outcomes. The confirmed association between HPWS practices and engagement in commercial banks highlights the critical effects of such practices in influencing behaviors and attitudes that subsequently shape

performance; therefore, decision makers in commercial banks should consider the fact that engagement is a result of employees' feelings about their bank practices. Therefore, the outcomes of this study can be used to enhance banks' ability to achieve work engagement by improving their HPWS practices.

6.3. Limitations and Future Studies

This study had two main limitations. First, using a cross-sectional questionnaire, we collected data from employees at a single point in time. Second, it was conducted in the commercial banks in Jordan; thus, the findings may not be generalizable to alternative banking sectors (e.g., Islamic banks) or across borders. Future studies should employ longitudinal studies to investigate this relationship and validate the findings across a protracted period. Furthermore, future research should investigate the mechanisms by which HPWS affects engagement.

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