

**Original citation:**

Mostafa, Ahmed. (2017) High-performance HR practices, positive affect and employee outcomes. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 32 (2). pp. 163-176.

**Permanent WRAP URL:**

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# High-Performance HR Practices, Positive Affect and Employee Outcomes

## Abstract

**Purpose** – The purpose of this paper is to provide insight into the affective or emotional mechanisms that underlie the relationship between high-performance HR practices (HPHRP) and employee attitudes and behaviours. Drawing on affective events theory (AET), this paper examines a mediation model in which HPHRP influence positive affect which in turn affects job satisfaction and organizational citizenship behaviours (OCBs).

**Design/methodology/approach** – Two-wave data was collected from a sample of local government workers in Wales ( $N= 362$ ). HPHRP were measured together with job satisfaction and OCBs at Time 1 and six months later, job satisfaction and OCBs were measured again together with positive affect. Structural equation modelling (SEM) was used to test the study hypotheses.

**Findings** – The results revealed that HPHRP induced positive affect which, in turn, led to increased job satisfaction and OCBs. Furthermore, positive affect fully mediated the relationships between HPHRP and both job satisfaction and OCBs.

**Research limitations/implications** – All data were collected from public sector employees in the government of Wales, which makes the generalizability of the findings unknown. More work is needed using different samples to determine whether the study results are replicable.

**Practical implications** – Managers should endeavour to ensure that enough resources are assigned to the implementation of HPHRP and other work features that help evoke affective reactions, as these reactions are an important determinant of employees' attitudes and behaviours.

**Originality/value** – This is one of the first studies to empirically examine the mediating role of positive affect on the relationship between HPHRP and employee attitudes and behaviours.

**Keywords:** Affective events theory; High-performance HR practices; job satisfaction; organizational citizenship behaviours; positive affect

## **Introduction**

High-performance HR practices (HPHRP) have been defined as systems of HR practices designed to increase organizational effectiveness through creating conditions that help employees become highly involved in the organization and work hard to accomplish its goals (Whitener, 2001). HPHRP include, for example, training, performance appraisal, information sharing, and involvement and participation (Messersmith et al., 2011; Rabl et al., 2014; Jiang et al., 2015). Over the past decade, many studies have been devoted to the relationship between HPHRP and different types of employee outcomes such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment and citizenship behaviours (e.g. Boon et al., 2011; Messersmith et al., 2011; Alfes et al., 2013; Mostafa and Gould-Williams, 2014). On the basis of the accumulated research evidence, there can now be little disagreement that HPHRP are related to desirable employee outcomes.

Given the evidence of their effectiveness, an important subsequent step in the study of HPHRP is to examine *why* they evoke positive outcomes (Boon and Kalshoven, 2014; Mostafa et al., 2015). In doing so, prior research has mainly focused on mechanisms such as employees' perceptions of their organizations' culture and climate (e.g. perceptions of organizational support and person-organization fit; Boon et al., 2011; Mostafa and Gould-Williams, 2014) and their attitudes towards them (e.g. trust; Innocenti et al. 2011; Alfes et al., 2012). However, even though affect permeates "every aspect of organizational life" and is viewed as an important precursor to employee attitudes and behaviours (Barsade and Gibson, 2007; 51), very little is known about the affective or emotional mechanisms that underlie the HPHRP-employee outcomes relationship. The present study seeks to address this research gap by examining the links between HPHRP, job satisfaction, citizenship behaviours, and employees' affective responses to workplace events as a mediator. The inclusion of affective reactions in the relationship between HPHRP, job satisfaction and citizenship behaviours is important

because much of the variation in employee attitudes and behaviours is believed to be due to variation in affect (Judge and Ilies, 2004).

Numerous theoretical frameworks such as social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), AMO theory (Appelbaum et al., 2000) and self-determination theory (Deci and Ryan, 2000) have been used by scholars to explain the relationship between HPHRP and employee attitudes and behaviours. However, even though HPHRP are believed to lead to positive affective experiences (White and Bryson, 2013; Boon et al., 2014), very little attention has been given to affect-based theories as a framework for understanding the link between HPHRP and employee outcomes. This study aims to fill this gap by introducing affective events theory (AET) as a theoretical framework that could explain this relationship.

AET is a framework that explains the causes and consequences of affective experiences at work. According to AET, employees' affective or emotional responses to workplace events largely determine work-related outcomes (Weiss and Cropanzano, 1996). HPHRP are regarded as an important aspect of the work environment that could influence affective experiences (Boon et al., 2014). By integrating HRM theory and AET, this paper hypothesizes that positive affect mediates the HPHRP-employee outcomes relationship.

Positive affect describes an individual's tendency to be cheerful, energetic and experience positive moods and emotions across different situations (Barsade and Gibson, 2007). Many studies have examined the consequences of positive affect and the findings revealed that it is "critical to explaining outcomes that concern managers in organizations" (Barsade and Gibson, 2007, 51). However, very few have examined its causes or antecedents, especially in the organizational context (Saavedra and Kwun, 2000). Therefore, by examining the influence of HPHRP on positive affect, this study contributes to understanding more about the possible sources of affect within organizations.

The choice of the outcome variables in this study was motivated by three considerations. First, job satisfaction, the most important employee attitude from the viewpoints of both research and practice (Saari and Judge, 2004), and OCBs, which are voluntary behaviours that result in favourable outcomes for organizations and their members (Eatough et al., 2011), were specifically identified by AET as outcomes that result from an individual's affective experiences. Second, both outcome variables have been frequently studied in the HRM and positive affect literatures and have been found to be significantly related to both variables (Mostafa and Gould-Williams, 2014; Barsade and Gibson, 2007). Finally, since organizations are under constant pressure to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of services, understanding the factors that are related to job satisfaction and OCBs is vital as these outcomes are viewed as essential to improving organizational delivery of services (Taylor, 2013).

The focus in this study is on employee perceptions of HPHRP rather than managerial reports of these practices. Employees vary in their values, experiences and expectations and, therefore, can vary in their assessments of HPHRP (Nishii and Wright, 2008). Moreover, perceptions of HPHRP by employees are more predictive of their outcomes than are the managerial reports (Kehoe and Wright (2013). Therefore, researchers have argued that, to achieve a better understanding of the relationship between HPHRP and employees attitudinal and behavioural outcomes, the focus should be on employee perceptions (Boon and Kalshoven, 2014; Boon et al., 2014; Kehoe and Wright, 2013; Nishii and Wright, 2008).

This paper is structured as follows. On the basis of AET, the literature review will link HPHRP, positive affect, job satisfaction and citizenship behaviours. Then, following a description of the methodology used to collect two-wave data from a sample of 362 local government workers in Wales, the structural equation modelling (SEM) results will be presented. Finally, the implications of the findings for theory and practice will be discussed.

## **HPHRP and Positive Affect**

Positive affect reflects a person's level of pleasurable engagement with the environment (Watson, 1988). People with high positive affect are enthusiastic, active and alert (Watson et al., 1988). They are also likely to experience positive moods and emotions across different times and situations (Watson and Clarke, 1984; Watson and Tellegen, 1985).

Weiss and Cropanzano's (1996) Affective Events Theory (AET) helps explain the relationship between HPHRP and positive affect. AET is a framework concerned with the "causes and consequences of affective experiences at work" (Weiss and Cropanzano, 1996, 11). Even though this framework was developed in the mid-1990s, empirical examinations of its main assumptions are comparatively rare (Wegge et al., 2006). The framework suggests that work environment features influence the occurrence of certain events. These events stimulate different affective reactions which, in turn, influence employee attitudes and behaviours (Weiss and Cropanzano, 1996).

AET does not state which features of the work environment or work events might be related to positive affective reactions, but the literature provides several clues with respect to this issue. For instance, Fisher (2002) argued that the most common events to which employees attribute positive affective reactions involve achievement, recognition, advancement/growth and feedback. Basch and Fisher (2000) also found that events representing goal-achievement, involvement in decision making and recognition by colleagues and supervisors engendered positive affective responses. Furthermore, Wegge et al. (2006) reported a positive relationship between employees' perceptions of organizational policies and practices (i.e. opportunities for participation, supervisory support and concern for welfare) and positive affective reactions. Consistent with AET, it can be assumed that the well-established relationship between HPHRP

and employee attitudes and behaviours is based on the experience of positive affective reactions.

A main assumption in the HRM literature is that HPHRP, which are also referred to as “soft” HRM practices, underscore the importance of treating workers as valued individuals and place much emphasis on their well-being (Storey, 1995). Therefore, such practices are highly favoured by employees and are likely to engender positive outcomes. According to White and Bryson (2013, 391), HPHRP such as training, performance appraisal, information sharing, team working and involvement and participation are likely to result in “an integrative experience of positive affect”. HPHRP, as a collection of management practices, are widely believed to help communicate organizational values, such as caring for employees and regarding their opinions as important. They signal an organization’s intention to establish long-term exchange relationships with employees. Such organizational concern is more likely to make employees feel pleased and display desirable outcomes (White and Bryson, 2013; Boon et al., 2014). HPHRP have a tendency to promote positive affective reactions by creating favourable events such as positive social interactions with supervisors and colleagues, receiving praise and reward and from others, and sharing good information and news (Judge and Ilies, 2004; Gable et al., 2004). Accordingly, it is hypothesized that:

*Hypothesis 1: HPHRP will be positively related to positive affect.*

### **Positive Affect as a Mediator of the HPHRP-Employee Attitudes and Behaviours Relationship**

A central assumption of AET relates to the consequences of affective experiences. According to AET, “the consequences of affective experiences are both attitudinal and behavioural” (Weiss and Cropanzano, 1996, 12).

Positive affect differs from job attitudes such as job satisfaction and work engagement (Weiss, 2002; Barsade and Gibson, 2007). In contrast to positive affect, which only involves an affective or emotional component, job attitudes also include a cognitive component. Job attitudes are concerned with how an employee thinks and feels about work, whereas positive affect is concerned with how an employee feels in general and his 'emotional approach to life' (Barsade and Gibson, 2007, 43). Furthermore, positive affect is a relatively stable variable, whereas job attitudes are more dynamic and fluid, varying on the basis of everyday work experiences (Yoon and Lim, 1999; Xanthopoulou et al., 2012). Nonetheless, positive affect is not resistant to managerial influences and therefore has state-like characteristics (Barsade and Gibson, 2007). Scholars postulate that positive affect should result in desirable attitudes and behaviours, and therefore, positive affect has been considered an antecedent of variables such as job satisfaction, intention to stay with the organization, performance and prosocial behaviour (Weiss and Cropanzano, 1996; Barsade and Gibson, 2007). As mentioned before, the focus in this study will be on two outcomes: job satisfaction and OCBs.

***Job satisfaction.*** AET was developed based on prior research showing that positive affect is a direct predictor of job satisfaction (Carlson et al., 2011). The theory defines job satisfaction as an evaluative judgement of a person's job. According to AET, even though affective reactions and job satisfaction are related, they are distinct constructs that should not be used interchangeably. The theory further postulates that "affective experiences at work influence overall judgments about satisfaction with one's job" (Weiss and Cropanzano, 1996, p. 46). More specifically, AET suggests that features of the work environment influence job satisfaction both directly, via cognitive evaluations of the degree to which these features are desirable and indirectly, via affective reactions such as positive affect. Thus, features of work might impact judgements of job satisfaction via both a 'cognitive route' and an 'affective route' (Wegge et al., 2006; 240). Consistent with this proposition, prior research has shown that the



experience of positive affect fosters job satisfaction (Judge and Ilies, 2004). Therefore, this study proposes that positive affect will mediate the relationship between HPHRP and job satisfaction.

*Hypothesis 2: Positive affect will mediate the relationship between HPHRP and job satisfaction.*

**OCBs.** AET groups behaviours into two categories: judgement driven and affect driven behaviours. Judgement driven behaviours, according to the theory, are mediated by job satisfaction. They are the results of decision processes in which an individual's evaluation of his job is part of the decision matrix. Affect driven behaviours, on the other hand, come directly after affective experiences and are not mediated by attitudes. According to AET, citizenship behaviours are "affect-driven" (Weiss and Cropanzano, 1996; 52).

As mentioned before, OCBs are employee discretionary behaviours that benefit the organization. These behaviours involve employees performing tasks that go beyond formal role requirements, such as getting more involved in the activities of the organization and encouraging a positive work environment (Kehoe and Wright, 2013). OCBs are widely viewed as important for enhancing organizational efficiency and effectiveness (Kehoe and Wright, 2013; Mostafa and Gould-Williams, 2014).

Three reasons help explain why positive affect leads to OCBs. First, high positive affect individuals perceive things in a positive light and are, therefore, more likely to feel positive towards their organization and co-workers and will try to help them when the opportunity arises. Second, positive affect fosters creativity, and therefore, individuals with high levels of positive affect are more likely to offer innovative solutions which would benefit the organization (Ilies et al., 2006). Third, positive affect is accompanied with empathy (Nezlek et al., 2001), and employees are more likely to help the organization and its members when they

feel empathetic towards them (Ilies et al., 2006). For these reasons, in addition to support from prior research demonstrating a positive relationship between positive affect and citizenship behaviours (Ilies et al., 2006), this study proposes the following hypothesis:

*Hypothesis 3: Positive affect will mediate the relationship between HPHRP and OCBs.*

## **Method**

### ***Sample and Procedures***

The organizational context of this study is local government authorities in Wales. The survey was based on a sample of employees in eight service departments: Education, Leisure, Housing Management, Revenue and Benefits, HR, Social Services, Planning, and Housing Management. These departments cover the usual range of occupational types in local government work. A survey facilitator was nominated by the HR director in each of the participating authorities. The facilitator and his team were given instructions on how to randomly distribute the questionnaires across different departments. Participation in the study was voluntary and no incentives were offered for participation. All completed questionnaires were returned directly to the university in sealed, prepaid envelopes. HPHRP were measured together with job satisfaction and OCBs at Time 1. Six months later (i.e. at Time 2), the second-phase of the survey was conducted in which job satisfaction and OCBs were measured again together with positive affect. This design was chosen for two main reasons. First, it helps provide some evidence that could support the proposal that HPHRP has a “causal” influence on positive affect and employee outcomes (Molix and Bettencourt, 2010). Second, it enables testing for mediation in a more rigorous way than do cross-sectional studies, because mediation is a process that is engendered as time elapses and cross-sectional designs do not take this into account (Cole and Maxwell, 2003; Moreno et al., 2013).

At Time 1, 1755 employees (i.e. 27% response rate) chose to participate in the initial survey. At Time 2, the 1755 Time 1 respondents were asked to participate in the follow-up survey, and 629 employees agreed to do so. Of these, a total of 362 responses (i.e. 21% response rate) were received for the second phase of the study. Non-respondents at Time 2 did not differ from Time 1 respondents demographically (gender, age, or tenure with the department). In this sample, the average respondent was 41 years old, and 65 per cent were male. On average, respondents had worked in the department and authority for 8 and 10 years respectively. Ninety per cent of the sample had permanent contracts and 20 per cent were employed full-time. Non-managerial workers constituted 60 per cent of this sample.

## **Measures**

Responses to questionnaire items were measured on seven-point Likert scales where 1 = “strongly disagree” and 7 = “strongly agree”, with the exception of OCBs which were measured on five-point Likert scales where 1 = “not at all” and 5 = “at every available opportunity”.

## ***HPHRP***

The focus in this study is on the influence of a group of interrelated rather than single HR practices, where the effectiveness of individual practices is generally believed to be reliant on complementary HR practices. This approach is in line with the recommendations of HRM scholars who argue that coherent systems of HPHRP that reinforce each other are more likely to support employee performance outcomes than individual practices (Kehoe and Wright, 2013; Sun et al., 2007).

The high-performance practices used in this study were training, information sharing, team working, involvement in decision making, communication, career management, promotion, and performance feedback and appraisal. Nine items taken from previous research were used (Truss, 1999; Gould-Williams and Davies, 2005). The items are: “I receive the

training I need to do my job” (training), “This department keeps me informed about business issues and about how well it’s doing” (information sharing), “Team working is strongly encouraged in our department” (team working), “Management involve people when they make decisions that affect them” (involvement in decision making), “Communication within this department is good” (communication), “Career management is given a high priority in this department” (career management), “I have the opportunities I want to be promoted” (promotion), “The appraisal system provides me with an accurate assessment of my strengths and weaknesses” (appraisal), “I am given meaningful feedback regarding my performance at least once a year” (performance feedback). Cronbach’s alpha for the HPHRP scale was 0.90.

### ***Positive affect***

A three-item scale adopted from Watson et al. (1987) was used to measure positive affect. An item from this scale is “I live a very interesting life”. Cronbach’s alpha for this scale was 0.70.

### ***Job satisfaction***

Employees’ overall job satisfaction was measured using three items developed by Spector (1997). A sample item is “In general, I like working here”. Cronbach’s alpha for the job satisfaction scale was 0.89 at both Time 1 and Time 2.

### ***OCBs***

OCBs were measured with three items from the scale developed by Smith et al. (1983). An item from this scale is “I often suggest ways to improve service quality”. The Cronbach’s alpha for this measure was 0.80 at both Time 1 and Time 2.

### ***Controls***

Employees’ gender, department and tenure were controlled for in the analysis. Research has shown that women are likely to display higher levels of job satisfaction because they have lower job expectations than men and are therefore satisfied with less (Furnham, 2012). Furthermore, women participate more often in citizenship behaviours than men because they

are usually more sensitive and understanding of the social environment and the needs of others (Lin, 2008). With regards to department, employees' positive assessment of different aspects of the department climate such as interpersonal or social relations and work processes has been found to be an important determinant of job satisfaction and OCBs (Callister, 2006; Kahya, 2007). Finally, as regards to tenure, research suggests that longer tenured employees are usually more satisfied with their jobs because they usually get what they want out of their work such as higher pay, promotion and enhanced feelings of control (Bedeian et al., 1992). They also display higher levels of OCBs because their job security and career success depend on the success of their organization (Ng and Feldman, 2010).

### **Analysis**

SEM was undertaken with AMOS 21. Maximum likelihood estimation (MLE), which is the most commonly used method of estimation in SEM, was used. MLE has been found to be quite robust against violations of the multivariate normality assumption (Iacobucci 2009). Anderson and Gerbing's (1988) two-step approach was followed. This approach involves estimating the measurement model before considering the structural model.

### ***Measurement validation***

The study constructs (i.e. HPHRP, positive affect, and Time 1 and Time 2 job satisfaction and OCBs) were entered in a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to assess their psychometric properties. Three indices were used to assess model fit: the Comparative Fit Index (CFI), the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) and the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA). CFI and TLI values of 0.90 or above indicate satisfactory fit, whereas RMSEA values of 0.08 or less indicate an acceptable fit (Hoyle, 1995; Hu and Bentler, 1999).

Results revealed that the measurement model provided a satisfactory fit to the data ( $\chi^2_{291} = 730.917$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ; CFI=0.910, TLI=0.891, RMSEA=0.065) with all loadings

significant ( $p < 0.01$ ). For each latent variable, composite reliability was greater than 0.70 and average variance extracted exceeded 0.50, indicating that each construct possessed high internal consistency. In addition, all constructs achieved discriminant validity based on Fornell and Larcker's (1981) approach, as the square root of their average variance extracted estimates exceeded their corresponding inter-construct correlations (Table 1).

[TABLE 1 HERE]

### ***Common method variance***

Defined as artificial correlation among the constructs due to the measurement method employed (Podsakoff et al. 2003), common method variance (CMV) can potentially bias survey-based results. Since all variables were collected from the same respondents, the effects of CMV were assessed using the latent method factor approach (Chang et al. 2010). In this approach, each item loaded on its theoretical construct and the latent common method factor (Podsakoff et al. 2003). The model with the common factor exhibited a good fit ( $\chi^2_{267} = 631.317$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ; CFI=0.925, TLI=0.902, RMSEA=0.061). More importantly, the average variance extracted by the common method factor was 0.22, well below the 0.50 threshold Fornell and Larcker (1981) associated with a substantive construct. Thus, common method bias was not problematic.

### ***Structural model***

Figure 1 shows the results of testing the structural model. In this model, Time 1 HPHRP have both direct and indirect effects (via Time 2 positive affect) on Time 2 job satisfaction and Time 2 OCBs while controlling for temporal stability (i.e. controlling for Time 1 job satisfaction and Time 1 OCBs). The error terms of Time 1 job satisfaction and OCBs were allowed to covary with their corresponding Time 2 indicators (Cole and Maxwell, 2003; Little et al., 2007).

Furthermore, to account for the relation between job satisfaction and OCBs, the residual errors of both variables were allowed to correlate (Im and Workman, 2004). The proposed structural model provided a satisfactory fit to the data ( $\chi^2_{342} = 778.628, p < 0.01$ ; CFI=0.901, TLI=0.882, RMSEA=0.067). In this model, HPHRP accounted for only 3 percent of the variance in positive affect ( $R^2 = 0.03$ ). The predictor variables explained 48.5 percent of the variance in job satisfaction and 37.4 percent in OCBs.

With regard to the individual paths, HPHRP had a positive and significant relationship with positive affect ( $\beta = 0.177, p < 0.01$ ), suggesting that HPHRP stimulate positive affective reactions, in support of hypothesis 1. Positive affect, in turn, had a significant positive relationship with job satisfaction ( $\beta = 0.161, p < 0.01$ ) and OCBs ( $\beta = 0.140, p < 0.01$ ). Together, this indicates that positive affect acts as a mediator between HPHRP and both job satisfaction and OCBs. The direct path from HPHRP to both job satisfaction and OCBs was not significant, which suggests that positive affect fully mediated the relationship between HPHRP and both outcomes.

[FIGURE 1 HERE]

Next, mediation tests of the indirect relationship between HPHRP and each employee outcome were conducted using the Sobel test. The coefficient associated with the indirect path is labelled  $a \times b$ , where  $a$  is the standardized path coefficient from HPHRP to positive affect, and  $b$  is the standardized path from positive affect to both job satisfaction and OCBs. For instance, the indirect effect of HPHRP via positive affect to job satisfaction was 0.028 ( $0.177 \times 0.161$ ). It was significantly different from zero ('Sobel' test=2.134,  $p < 0.05$ ). Thus, positive affect mediated the HPHRP and job satisfaction relationship, in support of hypothesis 2. Repeating the test for OCBs ( $\beta = 0.025$ ; 'Sobel' test=2.42,  $p < 0.05$ ) revealed a similar conclusion, in

support of hypothesis 3. As mentioned before, the direct path from HPHRP to both job satisfaction and OCBs was not significant after accounting for positive affect, which indicated that positive affect acted as a full-mediator of the HPHRP-job satisfaction and HPHRP-OCBs relationships.

## **Discussion**

Even though the relationship between HPHRP and employee attitudes and behaviours is well established, less is known about the affective or emotional mechanisms that underlie this relationship. This paper sought to address this issue by proposing that the relationship between HPHRP, job satisfaction and OCBs would be mediated by positive affect. In examining the proposed relationships, this article relied on AET, a framework that explains the causes and consequences of affective experiences. As predicted, results revealed that HPHRP induced positive affect which, in turn, led to increased job satisfaction and OCBs.

The direct positive relationship between HPHRP and positive affect is consistent with AET, which suggests that specific work features stimulate different affective reactions. This confirms that HPHRP promote positive affect by creating favourable events such as positive social interactions with supervisors and colleagues, receiving praise and reward from others, and sharing good information and news. However, the effect size of HPHRP on positive affect is small ( $R^2$  value was 0.03). Therefore, although HPHRP is a significant predictor of positive affect, the low  $R^2$  value shows it is by no means the main predictor. The low  $R^2$  value could be mainly because HPHRP constitute only one of many possible work environment features that may help arouse positive affective responses. Therefore, it is anticipated that the influence of HPHRP in combination with other work features, such as job characteristics and supervisor and co-worker support, will be more substantial (Saavedra and Kwun, 2000; Wegge et al., 2006).



Consistent with prior research, the findings demonstrate that positive affect has a positive influence on employee attitudes and behaviours (Barsade and Gibson, 2007; Ilies et al., 2006; Judge and Ilies, 2004). When employees experience positive moods and emotions, they are more likely to be satisfied with their jobs and engage in OCBs. This is also consistent with AET which suggests that employees' affective reactions are likely to influence work-related outcomes (Weiss and Cropanzano, 1996).

Positive affect seemed to play a key role in the relationship between HPHRP and both job satisfaction and OCBs, as it fully mediated the relationship between HPHRP and both outcomes. Thus, HPHRP are linked to employee outcomes because they have an influence on employee emotional responses. It is noteworthy that the correlation of HPHRP with job satisfaction ( $r = 0.437$ ) was much stronger than the correlation of HPHRP with positive affect ( $r = 0.175$ ). The fact that HPHRP explain more variation in job satisfaction than in positive affect is in line with AET. AET states that work features can have an influence on judgements of job satisfaction through two routes: a 'non-affective' route and an 'affective route'. Hence, work features should be more strongly associated to job satisfaction than to affective experiences (Wegge et al., 2006). Another assumption of AET relates to the distinction between affect-based and cognitive-based behaviours. OCBs were found to be more strongly correlated with positive affect than with job satisfaction. This suggests that OCBs are indeed affect-driven which is again in support of AET.

### **Theoretical Contributions**

This study makes several contributions to the literature. First, the study responds to calls for more research on the processes through which HPHRP affect employee outcomes (Boon and Kalshoven, 2014; Mostafa et al., 2015). The study adds to the literature as the findings suggest that HPHRP stimulate positive affective reactions which, in turn, result in increased job satisfaction and OCBs. Second, this study introduced AET as an alternative theoretical lens

through which the relationship between HPHRP and employee outcomes could be explained, where most of prior research has mainly focused on other theoretical frameworks such as social exchange theory, AMO theory and self-determination theory. The study also contributes to the literature by examining the influence of HPHRP on positive affect. The examination of this relationship addresses calls for research on the sources of affect within organizations (Saavedra and Kwun, 2000). Finally, this study responds to calls for more research on the HPHRP-employee outcomes link in the public sector, where most of the existing research on this relationship has been focused in private sector organizations (Messersmith et al., 2011; Mostafa, 2016).

### **Practical Implications**

The findings of this study have implications for managers. The study found that HPHRP give rise to positive affective reactions which in turn lead to desirable employee outcomes. This suggests that managers should endeavour to ensure that enough resources are assigned to the implementation of HPHRP, as investments in such practices lead to ‘an integrative experience of positive affect’ (White and Bryson, 2013, 391). Managers should also focus on other work features, such as job characteristics (Saavedra and Kwun, 2000), that help evoke affective reactions, as these reactions are an important determinant of employees’ attitudes and behaviours. More specifically, managers should focus on the management of employee emotions and the development of an emotionally healthy organizational environment. For this to be achieved, Ashkanasy and Daus (2002) suggested a number of techniques. They distinguished in particular between *preventive* techniques such as the selection of employees based on their emotional outlook and attitudes, and the evaluation of the emotional influence of different jobs, and *restorative* techniques such as training, job redesign and culture change.

## **Limitations and Future Directions**

This study has several limitations that should be addressed in future research. First, even though the half-longitudinal design employed in this study is better than cross sectional designs, a full longitudinal design would have helped provide more valid assessments of causality. Second, OCBs were considered as a single, unidimensional factor. Williams and Anderson (1991) differentiated between citizenship behaviours that benefit the organization and citizenship behaviours that benefit employees. It is argued that behaviours that benefit employees have a stronger affective underpinning than those that benefit the organization (Williams and Anderson, 1991). Future research may wish to consider the mediating role of positive affect on the relationship between HPHRP and OCBs that benefit both the organization and employees. Third, OCBs were measured using self-reports. Even though this is consistent with recent HRM and general management research (e.g. Mostafa et al., 2015; Taylor 2013), it may have inflated observed correlations. Evaluating citizenship behaviours by supervisors would help alleviate the problems associated with the use of single-source, self-reported data. Fourth, the high-performance practices included in this study may not be fully representative of all the practices used by organizations. Nevertheless, these practices were consistent with the core practices that have been identified as elements of high-performance systems in previous research in this area. Another limitation is the low response rate and the related dropout rate over time. However, since there were no significant differences between Time 1 and Time 2 respondents and dropouts, panel loss may not be a serious concern. Finally, all data were collected from public sector employees in the government of Wales, which calls generalizability into question. More work is needed using different samples so as to determine whether the results of this study are replicable.

Despite these limitations, this study has shown that positive affect is an important mechanism through which HPHRP can influence desirable employee attitudes and behaviours.

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Table 1: Inter-Correlations, Reliability Estimates, Means and Standard Deviations

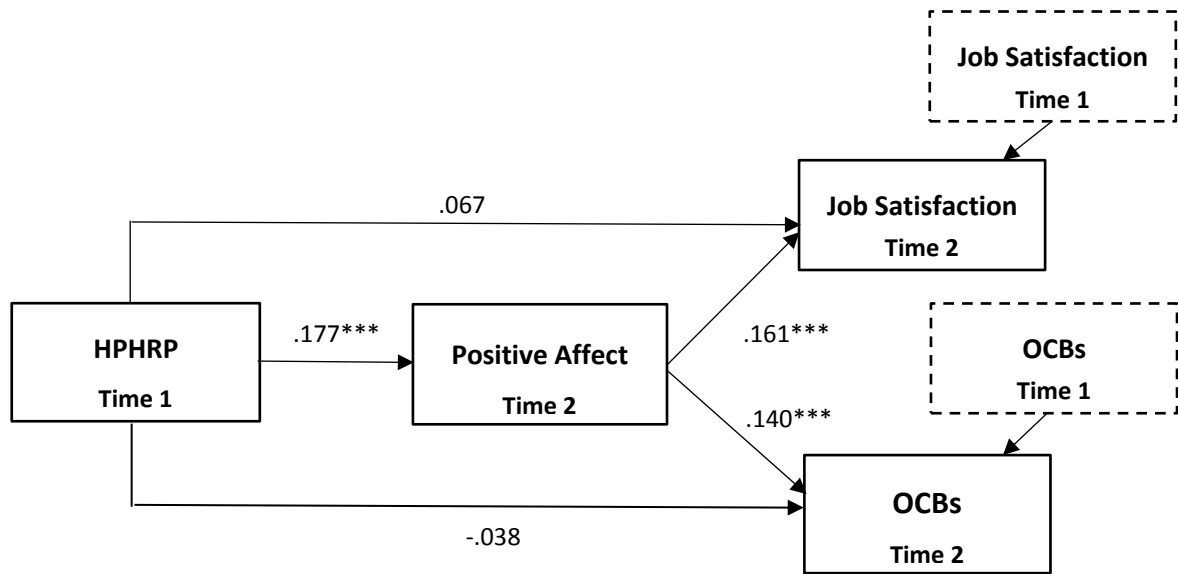
Construct	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Gender (male=0, female=1)	-								
2. Department	-.029	-							
3. Tenure	-.215***	-.048	-						
4. HPHRP (Time 1)	-.016	-.027	.081	.715, (.903)					
5. Positive affect (Time 2)	-.082	.058	-.054	.175***	.718, (.741)				
6. Job satisfaction (Time 1)	-.018	-.102*	.051	.598***	.240***	.856, (.892)			
7. OCBs (Time 1)	-.003	.129**	.106*	.083	.230***	.198***	.787, (.828)		
8. Job satisfaction (Time 2)	.098	-.011	-.009	.437***	.290***	.707***	.092	.860, (.895)	
9. OCBs (Time 2)	-.015	.160***	.130**	.040	.252***	.117**	.631***	.129**	.790, (.829)
Mean	.652	4.513	11.950	3.933	5.170	5.362	3.628	5.536	3.622
SD	.473	2.317	9.508	1.269	1.020	1.388	.912	1.333	0.920

*Notes: Sub-diagonal entries are the latent construct inter-correlations. The diagonal shows the square root of the AVE with composite reliability in parentheses.*

*Department was measured as a multichotomous variable (Planning=1, Social Services=2, Housing Management=3, Education=4, Leisure=5, Waste Management=6, Revenue and Benefits= 7 and HR=8).*

*\*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*  $p < 0.10$*

Figure 1: Structural Model Results (standardized coefficients)



Note:  $***p < 0.01$