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## Embedding High Performance Work Based Practices in Academics in India

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### Abstract

*In the growing demand of higher education in India, education industry is evolving and developing. But in comparison to dynamism and adaptability in other industries, education industry is slow to adopt changes. With special reference to human resource management in higher education in India it has been seen that there are very less number of researches. This research is being done at higher educational institutes to identify the relation between high performance work practices followed and its impact on employees' motivation. Discovering the depth of interrelationships among variables affecting high performance work practices is professionally challenging and most relevant for our times. Data is collected from experts through a questionnaire. To develop a relational model among various factors of HPWP, ISM methodology is used. The result establishes the inter-relation of HPWP factors, and also identifies most motivating factors. This model can be used by policy makers at institutes, which may enhance not only the performance of employees but also develop a ground for commitment coupled with an empathetic understanding of complex issues at workplace. This research is based on subjective opinion and results may also be affected by regional biasedness.*

**Keywords:** Commitment, Higher Education, HPWP, Motivation, Policies, Performance.

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### 1. Introduction

With the impetus growth in demand of higher education, education Industry had been revolutionized by introduction of privatization of higher studies. Over the period, the institutes of higher studies have seen lot of competition, challenges and opportunity to grow under the regulation of government.

To spur innovation and quality in academics, higher education institutes keep on leveraging their knowledge and human assets for achieving excellence and higher ranking. As in any other industry, HR intervention is of high importance in academic institutions as well in order to improve overall standard of education management. Along with faculty development, the administrative staff development is also required for smooth functioning of educational institute.

Accreditation and other government regulatory framework is just not enough for strategically improving quality of education in India. Higher education institutions are required to focus strategically on HR practices in order to retain & manage talent with efficient performance for total quality management.

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As employees are company's brand ambassadors, there have been many studies which show direct correlation between HR practices followed by the company and performance of the company. It is a proven fact that company's which are ranked highly by employees can attract the best talent, and may develop happier and more productive employees. But there are only limited studies related to HR practices followed in academics industry and its performance.

High performance work practices include unconventional work policies and practices that help an organization to become a leader through employee's performance and satisfaction. As employees are internal customers of company and brand ambassadors, HPWP help organization in sustenance and effective brand building. In the era of globalization, where employees come from different countries and culture, it has become more important for education industry to follow such practices which can reduce cross cultural gap among employees.

With special reference to high performance work practices at academic institutions and their impact on employee's performance and commitment, this study can help education industry to understand the gap and fill it for overall improvement of standards. Through AMO model we can relate that HPWP has impact on enhancement of Ability, increasing motivation and opportunity which directly impact the overall performance of an employee.

HPWP can also be studied in context of Maslow's hierarchy, where an employee seek following:

- a. Basic physiological needs such as hygienic working condition and basic infrastructure. .
- b. Security needs such as job security, safety standards and group insurance.
- c. Social needs such as more interaction and bonding among employees
- d. Esteem needs: performance based pay, rewards, appreciation and recognition
- e. Self needs: Such as professional development programs, meditation classes, sense of achievement.

## 2. Literature Review

As there is limited HR intervention in academic institution, there is very limited research in academic institutions pertaining to HR practices especially in the context of India. Though there is an extensive research which has been done in context of HPWP in big corporates and small industries too.

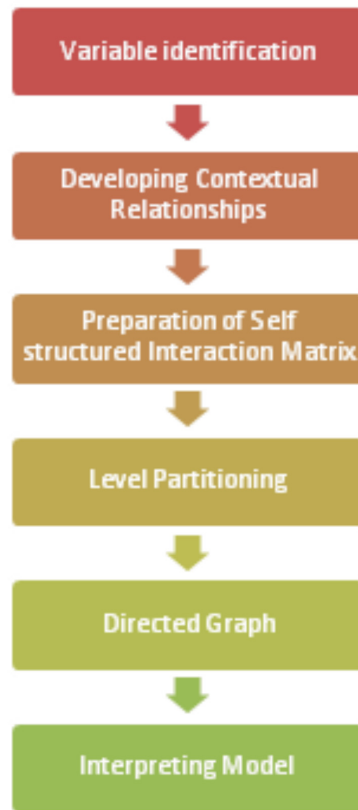
Huselid (1995) through empirical research established a link between HPWP and corporate performance factors such as turnover productivity and financial performance. He researched data representing 3452 firms in US and found that the magnitude for the return on investment in High Performance work practice environment was substantial. He defined HPWP with reference to the elements such as rewards and incentives, system management and employee involvement. Delaney and Huselid (1996) on research in 590 firms, found positive relation between HPWP such as training, staffing selectivity and perceptual performance measures of firm. Osterman (1996) examined the relationship between skill, training and organization in US firms. It was evident that so called high performance organization focused more on training than do other organizations. He also found there was trend of upskilling in work. Skill was the criteria of hiring in professional and technical jobs whereas behavioural traits were main criteria for hiring blue collar workers. He also stated that firms with more "humanistic" values train more. Frazis et al., (1997), used employer-employee data for the United States, found a positive relationship between

HPWP (employee participation, job rotation, quality circles and self-directed teams) and training. (Berg, 1999) He aims to study the different high performance work practices and how these HPWP impact the job satisfaction of employees as well as the organizational performance. The study mainly targeted 13 US steel plants studied a sample of 1,355 hourly workers. The research reveals that work life balance (balance of work and family responsibilities) which can be highlighted through various HPWP practices like- job role and responsibilities, positive employee-management relations triggers job satisfaction among workers.(Thomas Bailey, 2001) Through his extensive research, he surveyed minimum 45 establishments and gathered the data that there is a positive relationship between high performance practices and increase in earnings in various industries. The various variables of high performance practices like- self-directed teams, offline teams' portrayed a positive impact on the earnings of many establishments.

(James Combs, 2006), explained the impact of high performance work practices on organizational performance and for this he used meta-analysis as a basis to understand the effect or the impact concerning- HPWP versus individual practices, Operational versus financial performance measures and manufacturing versus service organizations.(Roberto Luna-Arocas, 2007), They analyzed labour turnover as one of the major problem in businesses nowadays and how employee commitment and satisfaction can be the strategies to address such turnover issues in the businesses or the organizations. They carried on their extensive research by taking a sample of 198 workers and it was concluded that salary and job enrichment strategies have a positive impact on employee satisfaction and job enrichment and job stability strategies have a positive impact on the employee commitment. Thus, this employee satisfaction and commitment will reduce the labour turnovers in the businesses.(Bodnarchuk, 2012)In his study found that organization's current job description are not flexible to use actively. He concluded his research by establishing a positive relationship between flexible job description and employee performance.(Mishra & Smyth, 2012) Examined the correlation between HPWP and workplace training by using a unique matched employee-employer dataset from shanghai. The study suggested that a part considered of HPWP is positively correlated with the key barometer of workplace training. Boselie, P (2010) conducted a empirical study in the Dutch health care sector. In his study he indicated that HR intervention like employee involvement in recruitment and selection plays a crucial role in High Performance Work Climate of any organization (Mkamwa, 2010) focused on the relationship between employee level performance and High Performance Work System (HPWS) in organizations.

### **3. Research Methodology**

This is an exploratory research; data is collected through a subjective questionnaire from the employees of higher educational institutes in India. To analyze the data and modeling ISM methodology is used. Interpretive structural modeling is a prominent method to identify& model the relationship between complex issues. It was first propounded by J. Warfield in 1973. It is regularly used to provide fundamental understanding of various enablers, barriers & critical success factors to resolve critical issues through modeling of variables so identified. In this case, the technique is used to predict the issues related to human behavior. The following steps explain the process of ISM:



### 3.1 Formation of SSIM

Exploring literature review & obtaining expert view in the process of idea generation, contextual relationship among the elements was identified which can determine drivers of high performance practices. Mentioned below are the four symbols that have been used for developing SSIM to denote the direction of relationship between I & J:

Symbol used	Contextual relationships
V	Variable I is more important than variable J in evaluating high performance work practices
A	Variable J is more important than variable I in evaluating high performance work practices
X	Variable I is and variable J are equally important in evaluating high performance work practices
O	Variable I and variable J are not related in evaluating high performance work practices

SSIM has been developed on the basis of contextual relationship (Table 1). Factor 1 leads to factor 11; therefore symbol V is used in the cell. Factor 10 leads to factor 1, & hence symbol 'A' is used. Both factors 2 & 5 are equal in their influencing HPBP; therefore X has been assigned in Cell (2, 5). Factor 4 & 8 are unrelated, therefore 'O' has been assigned in Cell (4, 8)

**Table 1: VAXO Matrix**

Element	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2
1	V	A	A	A	A	V	V	V	A	X
2	V	A	A	V	V	A	X	X	A	
3	V	X	X	O	A	V	X	A		
4	V	X	A	O	X	V	V			
5	V	O	V	V	V	A				
6	V	A	A	A	A					
7	X	X	X	X						
8	V	X	O							
9	V	X								
10	V									

### 3.2 Reachability Matrix

SSIM obtained in previous section is converted into initial reachability matrix, which is binary method of replacing V, A, X, O into 0s and 1s using the following rules:

- If (i,j) value in SSIM is V, then (i,j) value in reachability matrix is 1 and (j,i) value is 0
- If (i,j) value in SSIM is A, then (i,j) value in reachability matrix is 0 and (j,i) value is 1
- If (i,j) value in SSIM is X, then (i,j) value in reachability matrix is 1 and (j,i) value will also be 1
- If (i, j) value in SSIM is O, then (i, j) value and (j, i) value in reachability matrix will be 0.

**Table 2: Initial Reachability Matrix**

Element	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	1
2	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	1
3	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	1
4	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1
5	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	1
6	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1
7	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1
8	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	1
9	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	1
10	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	0
11	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1

The final reachability matrix is obtained by inculcating the process of transitivity

**Table 3: Final Reachability Matrix**

Element	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	1*	0	0	1
2	1	1	0	1	1	1*	1	1	0	0	1
3	1	1	1	1*	1	1	0	0	1	1	1
4	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1
5	1*	1	1	1*	1	1*	1	1	1	0	1
6	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1
7	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1
8	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	1
9	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	1
10	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1*
11	0	0	0	0	1*	0	1	0	0	1	1

### 3.3 Level Partitioning

The next step is to obtain the levels. The reachability set and antecedent set is obtained. Intersection set is obtained by finding the variables common to reachability set and antecedent set. The variables whose intersection set and reachability set are same, they are assigned levels in ascending order.

This iterative procedure is repeated till the level of each factor is found. An example of iterations has been shown in the following tables:

**Table 4: Iteration-1**

Elements	Reachability Set	Antecedent Set	Intersection Set	Level
1	1,2,4,5,6,8,11	1,2,3,5,7,8,9,10	1,2,5,8	
2	1,2,4,5,6,7,8,11	1,2,3,4,5,6,9,10	1,2,4,5,6	
3	1,2,3,4,5,6,9,10,11	3,4,5,7,9,10	3,4,5,9,10	
4	2,3,4,5,6,9,10,11	1,2,4,5,7,9,10	2,3,4,5,7,10	
5	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,11	1,2,3,4,5,6	1,2,3,4,5,6	
6	2,5,6,11	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11	2,5,6,11	I
7	1,3,4,6,7,8,9,10,11	2,4,5,7,8,9,10,11	4,7,8,9,10,11	
8	1,6,7,8,10,11	1,2,5,7,8,10	1,7,8,10	
9	1,2,3,4,6,7,9,11	3,5,7,9,10	3,7,9	
10	1,2,3,4,6,7,8,9,10,11	3,4,7,8,10,11	3,4,7,8,10,11	
11	6,7,10,11	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11	6,7,10,11	I

We have identified 6 levels of iterations in our study. Harmonized holiday entitlement and multisource feedback have been identified as top level factors. These are considered as strategic factors.

#### 4. Results and Findings

##### ISM Based Model Formation- Diagraph

On the basis of levels identified, structural model is generated by vertices and edges. Out of 11 factors, 2 factors are lying at the top and 3 factors are lying at the bottom level. Rests of the factors are lying between the top and bottom level. These are linkage variables. The model is represented in the form of a diagraph as shown below:

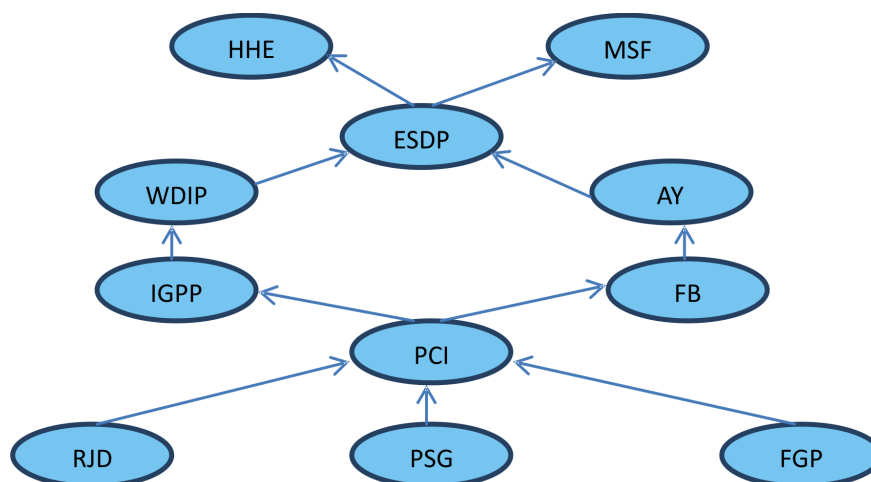


Figure 1: Diagraph Depicting Factors Influencing High Performance Practices

The table below depicts the connotation used in the diagraph

Abbreviation	Terminology
HHE	Harmonized Holiday Entitlement
MSF	Multi Source Feedback on Performance
ESDP	Extensive Skill Development Programme
WDIP	Well Developed Induction Training
AY	Autonomy in Decision Making
IGPP	Individual and group based performance pay
FB	Flexible Hours
PCI	Performance related incentive
RJD	Realistic job description
PSG	Presence of problem solving group
FGP	Formal grievance procedure

## 5. Discussion

Using interpretive modeling technique, it has been realized that harmonized holiday entitlement and multisource feedback are at the core of high performance work practices. A new culture of work life balance should be promoted. Because of lack of consistency, there lies a confusion in which HR practices should be considered in promoting high performance in organization. Some suggests that practices might be additive. Exploring these factors will not only help in making the work environment dynamic but also it can suggest policy modification concerning recruitment and retention. It can also be suggested that the variables at the top of the diagraph will act as motivators for employees at workplace and the variables lying in the bottom side of the diagraph will act as hygiene factors comprising HPWP. Modeling these practices can give an indication to top managers on managing quality life of employees. It can further improve employee commitment and loyalty. The ultimate purpose of this modeling is to reflect organizational citizenship behavior. The resource based view of the firm suggests that internal resources of the firm can be used as unique propositions of the firm. Therefore, efforts should be made to create, nurture and deploy these internal resources. The diagraph presented above represents the hierarchy of factors which can be taken into consideration at workplace to promote not only high performance practices but also developing a ground for commitment coupled with an empathetic understanding of complex issues at workplace. Discovering the depth of interrelationships among variables affecting high performance work practices is professionally challenging and most relevant for our times.

## 2. Conclusion

The study indicates that high performance practices depends on factors such as harmonized holiday entitlement, realistic job previews, problem solving group, skill development program etc. These factors can be categorized as strategic factors, linkage factors and operational factors. Whereas operational factors can be considered as hygiene factors, strategic factors fall under the purview of motivational factors. Middle level variables act as linkage between hygiene and motivational factors. This study will help managers to identify and implement strategies to achieve high performance work practices. These factors offer strong capability to manager to condition workplace behavior and improve work performance.

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