



Linking High-Performance Human Resource Management Practices to Employee Readiness for Change: The Roles of Job Satisfaction and Affective Commitment — A Systematic Literature Review

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Article Info:

Article history:

Received: May 07, 2026

Revised: May 25, 2026

Accepted: May 28, 2026

Keywords:

affective commitment; high-performance human resource management practices; high-performance work systems; job satisfaction; mediation; organisational change management

Abstract

Background: High-performance human resource management practices (HPRMPs), also known as high-performance work systems (HPWSs), have been extensively studied as strategic human resource management configurations that improve organizational performance. However, their role in facilitating employee readiness for change, especially through attitudinal mediators, has not been systematically explored.

Objective: This systematic literature review integrates empirical evidence on the relationship between HPRMPs/HPWSs and employee readiness for change, with particular emphasis on the mediating roles of job satisfaction and affective commitment.

Methods: Following the PRISMA 2020 guidelines, a comprehensive search of the Scopus database identified 210 records across five targeted searches. After removing 21 duplicates, 189 records were screened based on titles and abstracts, and 38 articles were selected for full-text review. Thirty-five studies met all eligibility criteria and were included in the final narrative synthesis.

Results: Three main pathways were identified: (1) HPRMPs/HPWSs had a direct positive effect on readiness for change; (2) indirect effects occurred through job satisfaction; and (3) indirect effects were mediated through affective commitment. HPRMPs/HPWSs practices, particularly training and development, employee involvement, and selective staffing, consistently foster positive employee attitudes and motivate employees to embrace organizational change.

Conclusion: HPRMPs/HPWSs enhance readiness for change through both direct and indirect mechanisms. Job satisfaction acts as an emotional bridge, while affective commitment provides a deeper psychological attachment that sustains readiness for change over time. Organizations seeking to manage change effectively should invest in a comprehensive HPRMPs/HPWSs bundle as a proactive strategy for developing change-ready talent.

To cite this article: Nisa, G. H. C., & Safitri, N. (2026). The impact of high-performance HR management practices on change readiness: The mediating role of job satisfaction and affective commitment (A Systematic literature review). *Journal of Business, Social and Technology*, 7 (2), 598-618. <https://doi.org/10.59261/jbt.v7i2.665>

INTRODUCTION

Organizational change is inevitable amid ever-changing environmental conditions. To remain sustainable and competitive, organizations must continuously adapt to technological developments, regulatory changes, and rising stakeholder expectations. In this context, as cited in Weiner (2008) broadly define organizational transformation as any modification in the

composition, structure, or behavior of an organization. Changes can range from small, gradual adjustments to major transformations in the way organizations operate (Christou & Piller, 2024).

One of the most important factors in ensuring the smooth and successful transformation of an organization is the presence of organizational members who are prepared to face change. A number of empirical studies have demonstrated that employee readiness is a key driver of successful transformation Mathur (2023). On the other hand, the failure of a transformation program often stems from an organization's inability to prepare its members before initiating the transformation process (Jones et al., 2005). Employees with a high level of readiness exert greater effort during transformation and demonstrate strong resilience in the face of obstacles and failures (Weiner et al., 2008). Readiness is also associated with high work motivation and better performance (Indriastuti & Fakurnisa, 2021).

Understanding the importance of employee readiness for successful organizational change, researchers in the field of organizational change have examined various variables that influence employee readiness for change (Jones et al., 2005). According to Mathur (2023), readiness for change is strongly influenced not only by individual characteristics but also by the organizational environment and the quality of social relationships in the workplace. In this regard, Mathur (2023) based on previous research, identified several key factors affecting employee readiness for change, including demographic factors, organizational factors, individual psychological factors, and social, situational, and contextual factors.

One of the organizational factors that affects employee readiness for transformation is the implementation of high-performance human resource management practices (HPRMP). HPRMP refers to a combination of HR practices that influence organizational performance (Sun et al., 2007). Research has shown that the integrated implementation of multiple HR practices produces higher performance than the implementation of a single HR practice alone (Arthur, 1994; Huselid, 1995). Some literature refers to HPRMP as a high-performance work system (HPWS) (Lu & Zhu, 2015). The study by Narbariya (2022) demonstrated that HPWS has significant potential to foster readiness for transformation. However, the impact of HPWS is not always directly related to readiness for change because of contextual differences (Narbariya et al., 2022). In this context, HPRMP/HPWS is a construct at the organizational level, whereas readiness for change is a construct at the individual level. Therefore, further investigation is needed to identify how HPRMP/HPWS influences readiness for change through mediating mechanisms.

Empirical evidence positions HPRMP/HPWS as a stronger predictor of employee readiness for change than other isolated organizational factors. Narbariya (2022) showed that the HPWS bundle explained substantially greater variance in employee readiness for change compared with individual demographic variables, job-level characteristics, or isolated leadership interventions. Naseer (2023) also found that when adaptive leadership was modeled as a moderator rather than a primary driver, HPWS retained a dominant role in both direct and indirect predictions.

In addition, Mathur (2023) conducted a multilevel analysis and determined that bundles of HR practices—particularly those related to competencies, motivation, and opportunities simultaneously—accounted for a greater proportion of variability in readiness for change than individual-level factors such as personality traits and perceptions of self-interest. HPRMP/HPWS is superior to single-element organizational interventions because of its systematic nature. Rather than targeting only one aspect of employee psychology, it creates a reinforcing cycle of readiness attitudes by improving employee capabilities, enhancing motivational states, and expanding participation opportunities (Suseno et al., 2022).

Two psychological concepts, job satisfaction and affective commitment, have been identified as potential mediating mechanisms linking HPRMP/HPWS with readiness for change. Job satisfaction is defined as a positive emotional state toward one's work Dorta (2025) and represents an attitudinal response to the working conditions produced by HPRMP/HPWS (Mao et al., 2013; Padamata & Vangapandu, 2024; Wu & Chaturvedi, 2009). Affective commitment, on the other hand, is characterized by emotional attachment to and identification with an organization Allen (1993), reflecting deep psychological bonds formed through positive work experiences.

The selection of job satisfaction and affective commitment as mediating variables in this

review is based on a systematic review of the existing literature rather than on the author's subjective judgment. These two variables were identified through preliminary mapping of previous empirical studies examining attitudinal mechanisms through which HPHRMP/HPWS is associated with organizational outcomes. Specifically, job satisfaction has been documented as an attitudinal response generated by HPHRMP/HPWS practices in several previous studies and has been identified as a mediator (Mao et al., 2013; Chang et al., 2018; Padamata & Vangapandu, 2024).

Social exchange theory and the AMO framework predict that HPHRMP/HPWS practices should lead to positive evaluations of working conditions (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). On the other hand, affective commitment was selected as the second mediator because previous studies positioned it as a downstream psychological state fostered by HPHRMP/HPWS through organizational identification and perceptions of employee investment (Para-Gonzalez et al., 2019; Pattnaik, S. & Sahu, 2021). The inclusion of both variables as mediators in the same review was further supported by evidence that job satisfaction can precede and strengthen affective commitment Padamata (2024), suggesting a sequential mediation pathway. Therefore, both mediators were identified based on prior empirical evidence rather than at the author's discretion.

Employees who are satisfied with their jobs tend to perceive the positive consequences of change more favorably and are better prepared for change (Azra et al., 2018). Additionally, employees with high affective commitment are more motivated to support organizational change because they believe in the benefits that may result from the change process (Herscovitch & Meyer, 2002). Therefore, these two concepts serve as explanatory pathways through which HPHRMP/HPWS practices enhance readiness for change.

The PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) 2020 framework was deliberately selected for this review rather than alternative methodological approaches because of several key advantages. First, whereas traditional narrative reviews are prone to confirmation bias and often lack transparent search documentation, PRISMA requires explicit reporting of search strings, eligibility criteria, and multistage screening decisions, thereby improving reproducibility and methodological transparency (Page et al., 2021). Second, compared with scoping reviews, which primarily map the breadth of evidence without integrating study quality, or rapid reviews, which prioritize speed at the expense of comprehensiveness, PRISMA-guided systematic reviews offer a more rigorous approach to synthesizing empirical findings related to specific research questions (Moher et al., 2015). Third, PRISMA-guided narrative synthesis is particularly suitable for studies characterized by heterogeneous designs, measurements, and contexts, as is common in the HPHRMP/HPWS literature, compared with meta-analyses that require statistical homogeneity (Turk, 2021). Therefore, the adoption of PRISMA 2020 ensures that the conclusions of this review are based on a comprehensive, transparent, reproducible, and methodologically justified process.

Research Objectives

This study aims to integrate empirical evidence regarding the relationships among high-performance human resource management practices (HPHRMP)/high-performance work systems (HPWS), job satisfaction, affective commitment, and readiness for change. This review addresses the following research questions: 1) How does HPHRMP/HPWS directly affect employee readiness for change. 2) What is the role of job satisfaction in mediating the relationship between HPHRMP/HPWS and readiness for change. 3) What is the role of affective commitment in mediating the relationship between HPHRMP/HPWS and readiness for change. 4) What theoretical frameworks are used to explain these relationships. 5) What are the practical implications of these findings for organizational change management.

Significance of the research

This research offers several important contributions, both theoretically and practically. Theoretically, this study enhances understanding of the psychological mechanisms that explain how HPHRMP/HPWS practices influence employee responses to organizational change. By integrating evidence regarding mediating pathways, this review clarifies the processes through

which HPHRMP/HPWS creates conditions that support the acceptance of change. Practically, these findings provide evidence-based guidance for human resource practitioners and change managers seeking to improve organizational readiness for change through strategic HR investments. The review also identifies gaps in the existing literature and provides directions for future research.

Theoretical review

High-Performance Talent Management Practices

The concept of High-Performance Human Resource Management Practices (HPHRMP) is fundamentally part of strategic human resource management. In this context, strategic HRM combines the alignment of HR management practices with organizational strategy (vertical alignment) and the alignment of different HR management subfunctions to achieve organizational goals (horizontal alignment) (Boxall et al., 2007). The implementation of HPHRMP is also inseparable from the Resource-Based View (RBV) paradigm, which considers human resources as one of the organization's strategic competencies (Boxall et al., 2007). Sun (2007) define HPHRMP as "a combination of individual practices that collectively affect organizational performance." During its development, various terms, such as high-performance work systems (HPWS) and high-engagement work systems, have been used to describe the HPHRMP concept. However, HPHRMP essentially refers to "a group of personnel management practices that can improve organizational performance" (Lu & Zhu, 2015).

Although there is no consensus regarding the exact composition of HPHRMP/HPWS, scholars generally agree that the concept encompasses a wide range of human resource management activities within the AMO (Ability, Motivation, and Opportunity) framework. These include extensive recruitment and selection, training opportunities, performance management, internal promotion, career development, communication, and employee participation in decision-making (Assanti & Jauk, 2026).

Preparing for Transformation

Readiness for change is a multifaceted, multilayered, and dynamic concept (Wang et al., 2023). Readiness for change in this study refers to psychological constructs at the individual level. Armenakis (1993) define readiness for change as "the beliefs, attitudes, and intentions that organizational members hold regarding the need for change and their ability to successfully implement it." Based on this definition, readiness for change essentially consists of a cognitive component (beliefs about the consequences of change), an emotional component (feelings about change), and an intentional component (willingness to support change) (Bouckenooghe et al., 2009). Readiness for change is influenced by various factors, including individuals' beliefs that change is necessary (discrepancy) and that they are capable of implementing change (efficacy); that change is an appropriate response to a particular condition (appropriateness); that the organization provides adequate support (principal support); and that the change will benefit them personally (personal valence) (Armenakis & Harris, 2002). A study by Wang (2023) suggests that individuals' readiness for change is not static but develops over time. This dynamic characteristic makes readiness for change a variable that can be strengthened through HPHRMP/HPWS interventions.

Job satisfaction as a mediator

Robbins (2024) define job satisfaction as "the positive emotions that arise from evaluating job characteristics." According to Spector (2012), job satisfaction is "how a person feels about their job as a whole and about different aspects of their job." There are two main approaches to job satisfaction research: the global approach and the facet approach. The global approach views job satisfaction as a general feeling toward work, whereas the facet approach focuses on specific aspects of the job, such as compensation, supervisors, colleagues, the work environment, and the nature of the work itself.

According to Herzberg's two-factor theory, employees experience high job satisfaction when extrinsic factors, such as salary, job security, workplace relationships, and supervision, are fulfilled, while intrinsic factors include challenging tasks, responsibilities, and recognition

(Ivancevich et al., 2011). Based on this concept, HPHRMP/HPWS is theoretically believed to enhance job satisfaction through the provision of challenging and meaningful work, fair compensation, development opportunities, and a supportive work environment. In addition, employees who are satisfied with their work tend to perceive change positively and are better prepared to deal with it (Azra et al., 2018).

Affective commitment as a mediator

Affective commitment is fundamentally a form of organizational commitment. Meyer (1997) classify organizational commitment into three main components based on underlying psychological characteristics: affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment. Affective commitment refers to “an employee’s emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in the organization.” Unlike continuance or normative commitment, affective commitment reflects employees’ emotional attachment and desire to remain within the organization. HPHRMP practices, such as training, participation, and empowerment, increase employee engagement, align employees’ interests with organizational goals, strengthen organizational identification, and foster affective commitment. Employees with high affective commitment are more likely to support organizational change because they believe in the potential benefits that can be gained from the change process (Herscovitch & Meyer, 2002).

Theoretical framework

Several theoretical frameworks form the basis for understanding the relationships examined in this review.

1. Social Exchange Theory

Social Exchange Theory describes the relationship between employees and parties within the organizational environment (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Based on this theoretical perspective, employees who perceive HPHRMP/HPWS as organizational support will respond through positive attitudes and behaviors, including openness to change.

2. Ability, Motivation, and Opportunity (AMO) Framework

Although there is no consensus regarding which HR management practices fall under the HPHRMP/HPWS umbrella, practices associated with HPWS essentially represent the interaction of various dimensions within the AMO framework (Delery & Lumpi, 2017). Employee ability can be enhanced through intensive training, compensation, and teamwork. Motivation can be strengthened through performance-based compensation and job security, while opportunities can be expanded through empowerment and participative practices.

3. Resource Conservation Theory

Conservation of Resources Theory is based on the principle that individuals seek to acquire, maintain, protect, and preserve resources they value (Chen et al., 2015). From this perspective, HPHRMP/HPWS serves as an important resource that helps employees cope with job demands (Dorta-Afonso et al., 2025). During periods of organizational change, the availability of such resources provides psychological security and helps employees adapt more effectively (Adnan et al., 2024).

4. Organizational Support Theory

Organizational Support Theory refers to employees’ beliefs that the organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being. In line with the norm of reciprocity, strong organizational support tends to create a sense of obligation among employees to contribute to organizational goals (Mumtaz et al., 2024). Based on this theoretical perspective, HPHRMP/HPWS, when perceived as a form of organizational support, encourages employees to develop a sense of shared responsibility, particularly in supporting organizational change.

METHOD

Search strategy

This study used a systematic literature review methodology to identify, evaluate, and integrate relevant research findings related to a specific research topic (Turk, 2021). A systematic review was conducted in several phases to select and critically evaluate high-quality empirical and theoretical studies addressing the role of high-performance HRM practices in readiness for

change, including the mediating roles of job satisfaction and affective commitment. These phases included formulating research questions, establishing inclusion and exclusion criteria, conducting literature searches and reviews, and synthesizing findings related to the role of high-performance HRM practices in readiness for change.

This systematic literature review was conducted in accordance with the PRISMA 2020 guidelines to ensure transparency and reproducibility. The literature search was conducted comprehensively using Scopus, one of the largest databases of peer-reviewed literature. The search strategy employed Boolean keywords associated with the main constructs:

1. HPHRMP/HPWS: "High-Performance Human Resource Management," "High-Performance Work System," "High-Performance Work Practices," "HPHRMP," "HPWS," and "HPWP."
2. Readiness for Change: "Readiness for Change," "Change Readiness," and "Employee Readiness for Change."
3. Mediators: "Job Satisfaction," "Affective Commitment," and "Organizational Affective Commitment."

Combining all variables into a single search string significantly limited the results; therefore, a staged search strategy was adopted. Accordingly, the search process continued using combinations of partial keywords to identify relevant literature more comprehensively. Five reference files were retrieved from the Scopus search results, yielding a total of 210 documents. No publication-year limitation was applied to maintain a comprehensive scope of the literature.

To ensure clarity and reproducibility, the Scopus search process was conducted through five independent searches rather than a single combined query. Each search was performed separately using Boolean operators (AND/OR) in the TITLE-ABS-KEY field in Scopus. The specific keywords used in each search were as follows:

1. Search 1 (HPHRMP/HPWS + Readiness for Change): TITLE-ABS-KEY ("High-Performance Human Resource Management" OR "High-Performance Work System" OR "High-Performance Work Practices" OR "HPHRMP" OR "HPWS" OR "HPWP") AND ("Readiness for Change" OR "Change Readiness").
2. Search 2 (Readiness for Change + Job Satisfaction): TITLE-ABS-KEY ("Readiness for Change" OR "Change Readiness" OR "Employee Readiness for Change") AND ("Job Satisfaction").
3. Search 3 (Readiness for Change + Affective Commitment): TITLE-ABS-KEY ("Readiness for Change" OR "Change Readiness") AND ("Affective Commitment" OR "Organizational Affective Commitment").
4. Search 4 (HPWS + Job Satisfaction): TITLE-ABS-KEY ("High-Performance Work System" OR "HPWS" OR "HPHRMP") AND ("Job Satisfaction").
5. Search 5 (HPWS + Affective Commitment): TITLE-ABS-KEY ("High-Performance Work System" OR "HPWS" OR "HPHRMP") AND ("Affective Commitment").

Each search was conducted independently, and the results were exported as separate reference files. The five files were subsequently merged, resulting in a total of 210 documents before the deduplication process. This step-by-step approach was selected to maximize search comprehensiveness, as a single search string combining all variables initially returned fewer than 15 relevant results.

Eligibility Criteria

In this study, inclusion and exclusion criteria were developed to ensure that the analyzed articles aligned with the research focus and met standards of quality and theoretical relevance. The inclusion and exclusion criteria used in this study are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Participation criteria and exclusions

Criteria	Description
Includes	1. Population: Employees in various industries and sectors within the organization. 2. Independent Exposure/Variable: High-Performance Human Resource Management Practices or High-Performance Work Systems as an integrated or systematic approach. Result/dependent variable: Indicates

readiness for change (or related components such as openness to change or acceptance of change) as a result variable. 4. Mediator: Utilizing job satisfaction and/or affective commitment as a mediation mechanism. 5. Study design: Quantitative empirical research using mediated analysis or structural equation modeling (SEM). 6. Type of Publication: Peer-reviewed journal articles with research topics in business, management, and accounting; Psychology; Social Sciences.

Exceptions 1. A study that examines individual human practices, rather than HPHRMP/HPWS integrated bundles. 2. Research that does not position readiness for change as an outcome variable. 3. Research that does not verify the mediation mechanism. 4. Conceptual papers, literature reviews, or qualitative research. 5. Non-peer-reviewed papers.

Screening Process

Screening process was carried out in several stages, as shown in Figure 1. When 210 documents were imported from five Scopus sources, 21 duplicate documents were identified and removed, leaving 189 unique articles for screening. A total of 189 documents were reviewed based on their titles and abstracts. Documents that did not consider HPHRMP/HPWS as an integrated practice ($n = 78$), did not include readiness for change as an outcome variable ($n = 45$), or did not examine mediation mechanisms ($n = 28$) were excluded. At this stage, 38 articles advanced to the full-text evaluation phase. All 38 articles underwent a comprehensive full-text review. During this stage, three articles were excluded for specific reasons. Following the detailed review, two articles did not meet the mediation criteria, and one did not focus on the designated mediator. Thus, the final qualitative synthesis included 35 studies.

Data from the 35 included studies were systematically extracted using the following standardized extraction form: (1) study characteristics (author, year, journal, and country/region); (2) sample characteristics; (3) study design and analytical methods; (4) validated HPHRMP/HPWS practices; (5) the theoretical framework used; and (6) the results of the mediation analysis and key findings.

Considering the heterogeneity of the research designs, measurement methods, and research contexts, a narrative synthesis method was used instead of a meta-analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Study Selection

Figure 1 shows the PRISMA 2020 flowchart illustrating the study selection process. A systematic search identified 210 documents from Scopus. After removing 21 duplicate documents, 189 unique articles were reviewed based on their titles and abstracts. During this initial screening phase, 151 documents were excluded, and 38 papers were subjected to full-text evaluation. A total of three articles were excluded during the full-text review. Thus, the final synthesis included 35 studies.

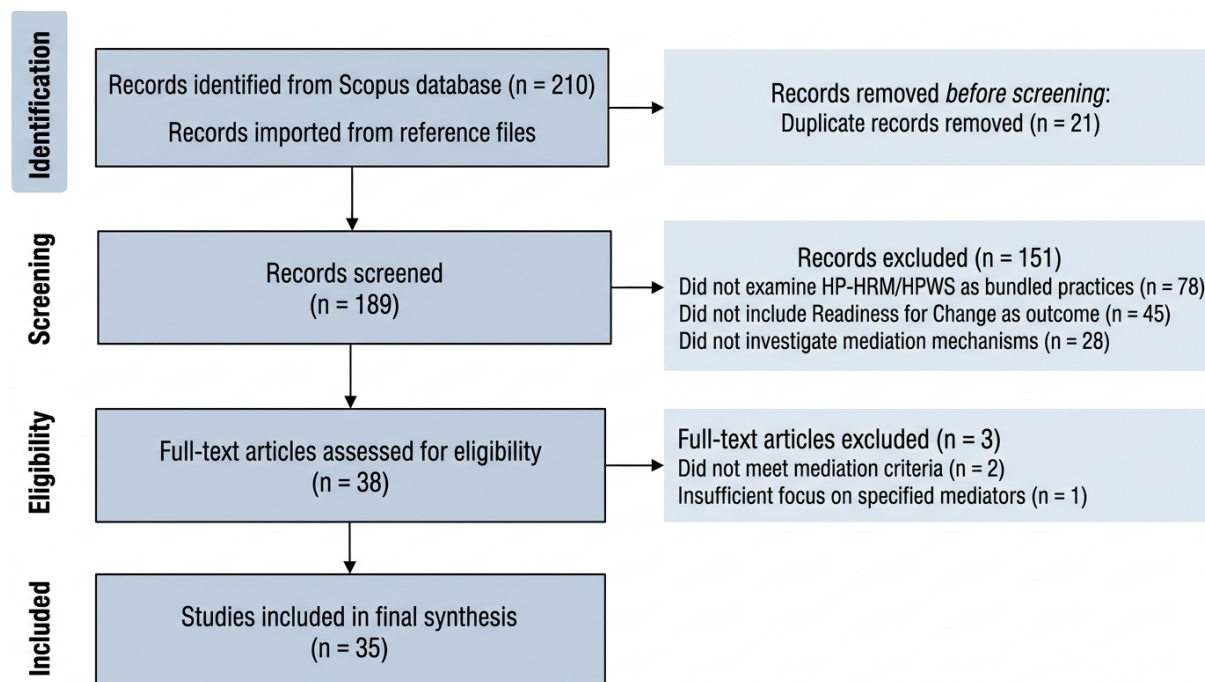


Figure 1. PRISMA Flowchart 2020

Included study features

The 35 studies covered diverse organizational contexts, geographic regions, and methodological approaches, with key features summarized in Table 2. The characteristics of the 35 studies shown in Table 2 have important implications for the generalization and application of the results of this review. Geographically, the studies covered several continents: Asia-Pacific (Jordan, India, Pakistan, China, South Korea, Vietnam, Malaysia, and Australia), Europe (Spain, Switzerland, Croatia, Greece, Cyprus, Northern Cyprus, and a pan-European study covering 34 countries), and North America (the United States). This geographic diversity suggests that the positive relationship among HPHRMP/HPWS, job satisfaction, affective commitment, and readiness for change is not confined to a specific cultural framework but rather reflects broader organizational dynamics across different national and institutional contexts. By sector, the studies included banking, healthcare, hospitality, manufacturing, education (high schools and universities), government agencies, information technology, construction, and nonprofit organizations.

This cross-sector representation indicates that HPHRMP/HPWS bundles are effective across organizations that vary considerably in structure and employee composition. Methodologically, many studies combined mediation analyses using structural equation modeling (SEM) and regression analysis with quantitative survey data, allowing for comparisons of findings across similar analytical paradigms. While the samples primarily consisted of regular employees, some studies involved professional groups such as nurses, physicians, teachers, lecturers, and human resource managers, thereby increasing the relevance of the review for both managerial and frontline employee populations. Collectively, these diverse characteristics reinforce the external validity of the integrated evidence and affirm that the impact of HPHRMP/HPWS on readiness for change is robust across diverse real-world organizational environments.

Table 2. Included study features

Researcher	Country/ Region	Organizational Background	Samp	Key Focus
Alqudah (2022)	Jordan	Banking industry	Employees	HPHRMP → Readiness → Affective Commitment to Change

Assanti (2026)	Switzerland	Government Agencies	Employees	HPWS→ HR Attribution → Affective Commitment
Benítez (2024)	Spanish	Hospitality Industry	Employees	HPWS → Stress That Hinders Job Satisfaction→
Chang (2018)	Theon Kok	Jobs in the manufacturing and service industries	HR Managers and Employees	The impact of HPWS on job satisfaction
Chilenski (2015)	United States	Cooperative expansion system	Employees	Organizational context → readiness for change
Choudhary (2025)	India	Real Estate Industry	Employees	The impact of HPWS on affective commitment
Cizrelioğullari (2022)	Northern Cyprus	Hospitality Industry	Employees	HPWS→ Psychological Capital → Job Satisfaction
Claiborne (2013)	United States	Non-Profit Organizations	Child welfare worker	Job satisfaction → preparation for change
Dorta (2025)	Spanish	Hospitality Industry	Employees	HPWS→ Work-Life Balance → Job Satisfaction
Faisal (2025)	Pakistan	Medical Institutions (General Hospitals)	Doctors and nurses	HPWS→ Affiliation Commitment
Fatima (2020)	Pakistan	Finance, Media & Telecommunications	Executive-level employees	Self-efficacy→ readiness for change→ commitment to change
Garcia (2016)	Spanish	Various industries	HR Manager & Engineer	HPWS→ POS Job Satisfaction→
Haffar (2022)	Jordan	State University	Teacher	Cultural → readiness for change → affective commitment to change
Harrison (2022)	Australia	Hospitals	Healthcare Professionals	Affective commitment → preparation for change
Kim (2024)	Korean Spout	Hospitals	Nurse	HPWS→ HR Attribution → Affective Commitment

Ly (2026)	Vietnam	Educational Organizations	Teachers and School Administrators	Culture, job satisfaction → readiness for change
Mansour (2022)	Jordan	Banking industry	Employees	Training → Readiness for Change → Affective Commitment
Moric (2022)	Croatia	Construction Companies	Employees	Organizational commitment, job satisfaction → readiness for change
Narbariya (2022)	India	Information Technology Industry	Employees	HPWS → Managing Change → Job Satisfaction → Recognizing Readiness for Change
Naseer (2023)	Pakistan	Pharmaceutical, Automotive, Telecommunications, Banking	Employees	HPWS → Transformation Preparation → Affective Commitment to Change
Nikolova (2025)	Unani	High School	Teacher	Job satisfaction → preparation for change
Padamata (2024)	India	Hospitals	Nurse	HPWS → Job Satisfaction → Affective Commitment
González (2019)	Spanish	Manufacturing	Employees	HPWS → Commitment → Affective Performance
Pat (2021)	India	Business Organization	Employees	HPWS → Commitment → Affective Performance
Rawashde (2025)	Jordan	Banking industry	Employees	HPWS → Organizational Performance → Affective Commitment
Ronda (2016)	34 countries in Europe	Various organizations	Employees of working spouses	HPWS → Job Satisfaction → Work-Family Balance
Suseno (2022)	Theon Kok	Various organizations	HR Manager	HPWS Adjusts Transformation

				Readiness for AI Adoption
Teo (2020)	United States	Hospitality Industry	Employees	HPWS → Work Engagement → Affective Commitment
Thien (2019)	Malaysia	High School	Teacher	Leadership → Readiness for change → Affective commitment to change
Waisy (2020)	Kurdistan	University	Lecturer	Leadership → Readiness for change → Affective commitment to change
Wu (2009)	Taiwan, Singapore, and Tiong Kok	Manufacturing and service industries	Employees	HPWS → Procedural Justice → Affective Commitment and Job Satisfaction
Xian (2019)	Theon Kok	National railway companies	Employees	Kansai → HPWS → Job Satisfaction
Yang (2024)	Theon Kok	General hospitals	Doctor	Motivation → job satisfaction → readiness for change in public service
Young (2010)	Australia	Hospitals	Employees and managers	HPWS → Social Identity → Job Satisfaction, Affective Commitment

Note: HPHRMP = High-Performance Human Resource Management Practices; HPWS = High Performance Work System; POS = Recognition of Organizational Support.

HPHRMP/HPWS practice validated

Of the 23 studies that explicitly addressed HPHRMP/HPWS practices, the most frequently examined practices were: (1) training and development in 21 studies (91%); (2) employee participation, employee voice, and empowerment in 19 studies (83%); (3) selective staffing in 16 studies (70%); (4) performance-based compensation in 16 studies (70%); and (5) performance appraisal in 14 studies (61%). Some studies also examined work design, autonomy, teamwork design, job security, career development, and flexible work-life balance or work arrangements as components of the HPHRMP/HPWS bundle.

Theoretical framework used

The theoretical frameworks used in the reviewed studies are shown in Table 3.

It should be noted that the total frequency of theoretical frameworks presented in Table 3 (16 + 9 + 5 + 4 + 3 + 1 + 1 = 39) exceeded the number of included studies (35). This is because the frequency count represents the number of times specific theoretical frameworks were applied

across studies, whereas individual studies could employ multiple theoretical perspectives simultaneously. For example, some studies integrated social exchange theory and organizational support theory to explain how HPHRMP/HPWS practices shape employee attitudes and reciprocal organizational commitment.

Similarly, several studies combined the Ability–Motivation–Opportunity (AMO) framework with conservation of resources theory to explain the mechanisms of capability development and resource provision. This multi-framework approach reflects the theoretical complexity of HPHRMP/HPWS research, as no single theory can fully explain all the pathways through which HR practices influence employees' psychological states and behavioral outcomes. Each study was coded according to all theoretical frameworks explicitly referenced in the theoretical background and hypothesis development sections, and the cumulative frequencies presented in Table 3 were subsequently calculated. This theoretical coding approach is consistent with systematic review practices in organizational behavior research (Turk, 2021).

Table 3. Theoretical framework used

Theoretical framework	Overview	Frequency
Social Exchange Theory	Linkages between organizations and employees	16 studies
AMO Framework	Competencies, Motivations, and Opportunity Models in Human Resource Management Practice	9 Studies
Organizational Commitment Theory	Affective, normative and sustainable commitment	5 studies
Organizational Support Theory	Seeing organizational support as a work attitude mechanism	4 Studies
Resource Conservation Theory	Acquisition and protection of labor and psychological resources	3 Studies
Affective Events Theory	Events at work → emotional reactions → work attitudes	One study
Theory of self-determination	Intrinsic motivation, autonomy, and psychological needs	One study

Analysis

The Direct Impact of HPHRMP/HPWS on Change Readiness

Based on 35 studies, we found evidence of a direct positive relationship between HPHRMP/HPWS and change readiness. Studies by Narbariya (2022), Naseer (2023), and Suseno (2022) demonstrated that the comprehensive implementation of HPHRMP/HPWS is associated with a significant increase in employee readiness for change, even after controlling for individual and organizational factors that may affect outcomes. Similarly, the study by Alqudah (2022) showed that several HPHRMP practices, such as communication, clear job descriptions, and training, positively influence change readiness.

Several pathways are believed to explain this direct relationship mechanism. First, based on the AMO framework, HPHRMP/HPWS comprises a set of practices that enhance employee competence, motivation, opportunities, and empowerment (Dereilly & Lumpi, 2017). These practices can improve employee self-efficacy through developmental support, enabling employees to respond effectively to change (Fatima et al., 2020). Second, based on Conservation of Resources (COR) theory, HPHRMP/HPWS creates a sense of security through the provision of resources (Dorta-Afonso et al., 2025). This reduces employee anxiety regarding change. Third, HPWS promotes collective learning, builds commitment, and helps employees embrace change (Dorta-Afonso et al., 2025).

The role of mediating job satisfaction

The mediating role of job satisfaction in the relationship between HPHRMP/HPWS and change readiness is supported by several studies. In this context, the mediation mechanism suggests that HPWS practices create favorable working conditions, thereby increasing job satisfaction. As a result, satisfied employees are more likely to perceive organizational change positively, which affects their readiness to accept and implement change. Job satisfaction is

defined as a positive feeling about one’s job that enhances employees’ commitment to the organization, strengthens their organizational identity, and ultimately increases their willingness to embrace change (Yang et al., 2024).

Studies by Cizreliogullari (2022) showed that HPWS increases job satisfaction by enhancing employees’ psychological capital, including optimism, hope, self-efficacy, and resilience. The study by García (2014) suggested that HPWS practices improve job satisfaction through employees’ recognition of organizational support. Similarly, a study by Narbariya (2022) found that HPWS practices perceived as managerial support increase employee job satisfaction, which subsequently influences organizational change readiness. Research by Nikolova (2025) also demonstrated that job satisfaction is positively and significantly correlated with readiness for change. Furthermore, Claiborne (2013) reported that satisfaction with communication has a significant impact on readiness for organizational change. This evidence suggests that job satisfaction acts as a mediator through employees’ direct emotional responses to HPHRMP/HPWS practices, consequently influencing attitudes and behaviors associated with change.

The mediating role of affective commitment

The role of affective commitment in the relationship between HPHRMP/HPWS and readiness for change has also been supported by several studies. Employees respond to HPWS practices by developing empathy toward the organization and experiencing a sense of belonging and value, which encourages positive employee behavior toward the organization (Para-González et al., 2019). The study by Kim (2024) found that the implementation of HPWS fostered the perception that organizations value employee well-being, thereby increasing employee loyalty and affective commitment. Similarly, Teo (2020) demonstrated that HPWS positively affects employee well-being, leading to stronger emotional bonds between employees and the organization.

High affective commitment is known to contribute to various outcomes, including improved performance and readiness for change. Studies by Pattnaik (2021) and Rawashdeh (2025) showed that HPWS practices predict affective commitment, which positively affects organizational performance. The study by Harrison (2022) demonstrated that affective commitment plays a significant role in shaping an individual’s readiness for change. Similarly, Alqudah (2022) suggested that affective commitment is positively related to readiness for change. These findings indicate that employees with high affective commitment are willing to go the extra mile for the benefit of the organization and are especially willing to support transformation efforts. The overall relationships among the variables identified in this review are summarized in Table 4.

Table 4. Summary of Variable Relationship Discovery

Relationship path	Supported Research
HPHRMP/HPWS → RFC (<i>Passthrough</i>)	(Alqudah et al., 2022; Narbariya et al., 2022; Naseer et al., 2023; Suseno et al., 2022)
HPHRMP/HPWS → JS → RFC	(Claiborne et al., 2013; Dorta Afonso et al., 2025; Garcia et al., 2014; Narbariya et al., 2022; Nikolova & Tsoni, 2025; Padamata & Vangapandu, 2024; Yang et al., 2024; Young et al., 2010)
HPHRMP/HPWS → AC → RFC	(Alqudah et al., 2022; Gonzalez et al., 2019; Harrison et al., 2022; Kim et al., 2024; Padamata & Vangapandu, 2024; Pattnaik, 2021; Rawashdeh et al., 2025; Teo et al., 2020; Young et al., 2010)

Discussion

Discovery integration

Overall, 35 empirical studies have shown that high-performance human resource management practices (HPHRMP/HPWS) systematically improve employee readiness for change through direct and indirect mechanisms. This practical pathway demonstrates how HPHRMP/HPWS creates a work environment that supports change by empowering and motivating employees, leading to increased self-efficacy (Fatima et al., 2020). In addition, it can improve psychological safety, reduce anxiety about change, and foster collective learning and

employee engagement (Dorta-Afonso et al., 2025).

The integration of findings from 35 studies creates a more complex theoretical narrative than individual studies alone. Converging evidence reveals a dual-mechanism model in which HPHRMP/HPWS builds employee readiness for change through two complementary psychological pathways. The first pathway is affective. HPHRMP/HPWS creates positive working conditions that result in job satisfaction as an immediate emotional state through training, participation, fair evaluation, and selective staffing. This emotional response is rooted in social exchange theory and represents employees' direct psychological response to the organization's perceived investment in them.

The second pathway is relational. In the long term, HPHRMP/HPWS practices foster affective commitment, a deeper emotional attachment rooted in organizational identity, which serves as a foundation for more sustainable motivation to support change (Harrison et al., 2022; Alqudah et al., 2022). Importantly, these two pathways are not oppositional but continuously interact with one another. Job satisfaction tends to precede affective commitment Padamata (2024), suggesting that short-term emotional enhancement (satisfaction) is gradually integrated into long-term relational attachment (commitment), with both independently channeling the influence of HPHRMP/HPWS into readiness for transformation. This synthesis advances a temporally structured model; in other words, HPHRMP/HPWS investment → increased immediate job satisfaction → the progressive development of affective commitment → sustained readiness for change.

This integrated model has not yet been empirically validated in the primary studies identified in this review, highlighting an important gap for future longitudinal research. In addition, contextual moderators (organizational culture, sector, and leadership quality) shape these pathways differently. Hierarchical culture is thought to strengthen the effect of HPHRMP on affective commitment Alqudah (2022), while high-engagement leadership strengthens the relationship between HPHRMP and job satisfaction (Narbariya et al., 2022; Naseer et al., 2023). This indicates that both pathways are context-dependent, and organizations cannot assume a uniform HPHRMP/HPWS effect without considering their cultural and structural environments.

On the other hand, indirect pathways through job satisfaction and affective commitment reveal an attitudinal mechanism that explains how organization-level HPHRMP/HPWS translates into individual-level pro-change behavior. The finding that job satisfaction mediates the relationship between HPHRMP/HPWS and readiness for change is consistent with previous research showing that positive work attitudes influence various psychological outcomes. Satisfied employees demonstrate higher levels of optimism, hope, confidence, and resilience (Cizreliogullari, 2022), making them better able to respond to organizational change. Job satisfaction also shapes employees' affective commitment, as satisfied employees tend to be more empathetic toward organizational actions and more willing to embrace change (Yang et al., 2024). Employees with a strong emotional attachment to the organization are intrinsically motivated to support initiatives that benefit the organization, including transformation programs (Alqudah et al., 2022).

Theoretical implications

The findings of this study show that the reciprocal mechanisms generated by HPHRMP/HPWS practices operate not only in enhancing performance but also in the context of change management, thereby expanding the scope of social exchange theory. When employees perceive HPHRMP/HPWS practices as organizational investment and support, they are more likely to exhibit attitudes and behaviors that support change (Alqudah et al., 2022; Narbariya et al., 2022). Therefore, the application of this theory is no longer limited to performance outcomes but also encompasses the dynamics of readiness and support for organizational change.

The AMO (Ability, Motivation, and Opportunity) framework also receives conceptual reinforcement. HPHRMP/HPWS simultaneously enhances employee competencies, motivation, and opportunities, thereby shaping employees' psychological readiness to face change (Dorta-Afonso et al., 2025; Fatima et al., 2020). HPHRMP/HPWS practices aimed at empowerment contribute to increasing employee confidence in facing change. Practices focused on motivation increase employee compliance, acceptance, and dedication to the transformation process (Naseer

et al., 2023). On the other hand, practices that expand opportunities encourage employees to actively participate in organizational change initiatives (Suseno et al., 2022).

Contextual Considerations

The results of the review show that several key contextual factors shape the relationship between HPHRMP/HPWS and readiness for change, including organizational sector, culture, and leadership quality. For example, studies of the Jordanian banking industry by Alqudah (2022) and Rawashdeh (2025) showed that hierarchical cultures strengthen the impact of HPHRMP on affective commitment. These findings differ from studies conducted in some international organizations, where hierarchical cultures were found not to support emotionally based commitment. In the context of the banking industry, which is characterized by strict standard operating procedures, supervision, and authority structures, as well as Jordan's collectivist culture and high power distance, hierarchical cultures appear to reinforce affective commitment. Leadership quality also emerged as a major moderating factor. A study by Naseer (2023) across various industries in Pakistan showed that adaptive leadership is a critical contingency factor in the relationship between HPWS and readiness for change. Organizations that implement HPWS and are supported by adaptive leaders are more effective in preparing their workforce for change.

Implications for practice and research

Practical impact

The results of this study provide important practical implications for organizations, especially in managing change. First, organizations need to invest in comprehensive HPHRMP/HPWS implementation rather than isolated HR practices. This is because HPHRMP/HPWS is more effective when implemented in an integrated manner that includes employee competence, motivation, and opportunity-enhancing practices. Second, job satisfaction must be prioritized as a key component of successful transformation. Organizations cannot implement major changes effectively unless employees are sufficiently satisfied with their work. Therefore, HR interventions aimed at improving job satisfaction represent an important first step before initiating transformation initiatives.

Third, organizations need to build employees' affective commitment as a primary foundation for preparing them for transformation. Employees' emotional attachment to the organization serves as a driving force that makes them more receptive to and supportive of change initiatives. This demonstrates that readiness for change is not solely a technical or structural issue but is also strongly influenced by employees' psychological conditions. Additionally, change managers can leverage existing HPHRMP/HPWS as a strategic resource for the transformation process. Managers should also establish job satisfaction and affective commitment as early indicators for assessing employee readiness for change. Furthermore, transformational communication strategies should be designed with employees' emotional attachment in mind, ensuring that change messages are not only rationally understood but also emotionally accepted.

Implications of the research

This review shows that the relationship between HPHRMP/HPWS and readiness for change is strongly influenced by psychological mechanisms such as job satisfaction and affective commitment. However, many of the reviewed studies only partially validated this relationship and relied on cross-sectional designs, limiting their ability to comprehensively explain causal relationships. Therefore, future research should adopt longitudinal designs to capture the dynamics of these variables over time and better understand the sequence of psychological processes underlying readiness for change. In addition, a multilevel approach is needed to validate that HPHRMP/HPWS has impacts not only at the individual level but also at the organizational level.

These findings also support the importance of contextual factors that affect the effectiveness of HPHRMP/HPWS. Therefore, future research should more systematically examine the role of context, such as organizational culture, industry sector, and leadership style. These factors may strengthen or weaken the relationship between HPHRMP/HPWS and affective commitment and readiness for change. In addition, future studies are encouraged to explore

additional mediating factors such as psychological capital, perceived organizational support, and change-related self-efficacy to deepen understanding of the psychological mechanisms linking HPHRMP/HPWS to readiness for change. Future research should therefore move beyond examining direct relationships between variables and instead illuminate the more complex mechanisms and contextual conditions through which HPHRMP/HPWS effectively promotes employee readiness for change.

Limitations of the study

This review has several limitations. First, the literature search was limited to the Scopus database; therefore, relevant studies indexed in other databases, such as the Web of Science, may not have been included. Second, restricting the review to English-language publications may have introduced linguistic bias, potentially excluding relevant research published in other languages. Third, the use of a narrative synthesis approach, although appropriate given the diversity of the analyzed studies, does not provide precise quantitative estimates comparable to those generated through meta-analysis. Fourth, the included studies operationalized HPHRMP/HPWS, job satisfaction, affective commitment, and readiness for change differently, making direct comparison of findings difficult. Fifth, potential publication bias should also be considered, as studies reporting insignificant findings are less likely to be published, which may make the overall effect reported in the available literature appear stronger than it actually is.

CONCLUSION

This PRISMA-based systematic literature review integrates findings from 35 empirical studies to examine the impact of high-performance human resource management practices (HPHRMPs), or high-performance work systems (HPWSs), on employees' readiness for change, with a particular focus on the mediating roles of job satisfaction and affective commitment. The results of the review demonstrate three main pathways through which HPHRMPs/HPWSs influence readiness for change: direct effects, mediation through job satisfaction, and mediation through affective commitment. The findings generally indicate that HPHRMPs/HPWSs can enhance employees' readiness for change by meeting employee needs, fostering emotional connections with the organization, and building psychological resources to cope with change. Job satisfaction serves as an initial response to HPHRMPs/HPWSs, whereas affective commitment provides a deeper emotional attachment and sustains readiness for change over the long term.

In addition to summarizing the existing evidence, the review yielded several distinctive theoretical contributions that advance the field. First, by integrating mediation pathways across 35 studies, this review proposes a dual-pathway model in which HPHRMPs/HPWSs operate through proximal emotional mechanisms (job satisfaction) and long-term relational mechanisms (affective commitment) to strengthen employees' readiness for change. This comprehensive proposition has not previously been clearly demonstrated within a single empirical study. Second, the review identified important integration gaps. Specifically, no studies validated a sequential mediation model examining the relationship between job satisfaction, affective commitment, and readiness for change within a single structural framework. This finding highlights a critical direction for future empirical research. Third, the cross-contextual synthesis reveals that the effects of HPHRMPs/HPWSs vary according to organizational culture, departmental context, and leadership style, suggesting that practitioners cannot implement a standardized HPHRMP/HPWS bundle without contextual adaptation.

Organizations preparing for large-scale transformations should therefore treat investments in HPHRMPs/HPWSs as proactive pre-change strategies rather than reactive interventions. By fostering job satisfaction and affective commitment before initiating transformation, organizations can reduce the psychological resistance that often hinders change initiatives. Accordingly, HR professionals should systematically audit and strengthen HPHRMP/HPWS bundles, including training and development, employee participation, and performance-based compensation systems, ideally one to two years before planned organizational change to allow sufficient time for attitudinal reinforcement.

Theoretically, these findings extend the application of social exchange theory, the AMO framework, and organizational support theory within the context of change management.

Moreover, the results of this review provide evidence-based guidance for organizations seeking to prepare for transformation through strategic investments in HR practices. The primary recommendation is that organizations should implement comprehensive HPHRMP/HPWS bundles as long-term strategies to build attitudinal foundations that support successful transformation. Future research is encouraged to employ longitudinal, multilevel, and cross-cultural designs to address existing limitations and to better understand the mechanisms and contextual conditions influencing the relationship between HPHRMPs/HPWSs and readiness for change.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

If you have any suggestions, you can express your gratitude here. This section shows the author's appreciation to sponsors, funders, resource persons, or stakeholders who play a key role in the conduct of the research.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

Grandis Harlandi Choirul Nisa contributed to the conceptualization, literature review, data synthesis, analysis, and manuscript drafting. Nurul Safitri contributed to the research design, interpretation of findings, critical revision, and finalization of the manuscript. All authors have read and approved the final version of the manuscript.

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