HRM SYSTEMS AND EMPLOYEE AFFECTIVE COMMITMENT:

THE ROLE OF EMPLOYEE GENDER

Duckjung Shin
College of Business & Economics
Chung-Ang University
84-Heukseok-ro
Dongjak-gu, Seoul, 06974, South Korea
djwave@cau.ac.kr

Alaine G. Ochoantesana
Mondragon Unibertsitatea, Spain
agarmendia@mondragon.edu

Muhammad Ali
QUT Business School
Queensland University of Technology, Australia
m3.ali@qut.edu.au

Alison M. Konrad
Ivey Business School
Western University, Canada
akonrad@ivey.ca

Damian Madinabeitia
Mondragon Unibertsitatea, Spain
dmadinabeitia@mondragon.edu

Acknowledgements: This research was supported by the Chung-Ang University Research Grants in 2019. We also acknowledge The Gipuzkoa Provincial Council for the Bateratzen initiative.
HRM systems and employee affective commitment:  
The role of employee gender

Abstract

Purpose – Despite decades of studies on high-involvement human resource management (HRM) systems, questions remain of whether high-involvement HRM systems can increase the commitment of women. This study contributes to the growing body of research on the cross-level effect of HRM systems and practices on employee affective commitment by considering the moderating role of gender.

Design/Methodology – Integrating social exchange theory with gender role theory, this paper proposes that gender responses to HRM practices can be different. The hypotheses were tested using data from 104 small and medium-sized retail enterprises and 6,320 employees from Spain.

Findings – The findings generally support the study’s hypotheses, with women’s affective commitment responding more strongly and positively to employees’ aggregated perceptions of a shop-level high-involvement HRM system. The findings imply that a high-involvement HRM system can promote the affective commitment of women.

Originality/value – This study investigates the impact of both an overall HRM system and function-specific HRM sub-systems (e.g., training, information, participation, and autonomy). By showing that women can be more positively affected by high-involvement HRM systems, this paper suggests that high-involvement HRM systems can be used to encourage involvement and participation of women.

Keywords Human resource management system; Human resource practices; Employee affective commitment; Social exchange theory; Gender role theory

Paper type Research paper
HRM systems and employee affective commitment:
The role of employee gender

Introduction

Human resource management (HRM) researchers have recognized employee-level affective commitment as a key linkage between HRM and organizational outcomes (e.g., Chang and Chen, 2011; Kehoe and Wright, 2013). Literature also provides evidence of an association between HRM and employee commitment, without including organizational outcomes (e.g. Cafferkey et al., 2019; de la Torre-Ruiz et al., 2019; Li et al., 2019). This study contributes to the growing body of the literature by considering the role of gender differences in the relationship between employees’ aggregated perceptions of shop-level HRM systems and employee affective commitment. Since HRM practices aim to influence an organization’s employees, their perceptions of such practices are more important than the mere offering of them (Bowen and Ostroff, 2004). Despite there being an organizational-level perception of HRM practices within an organization (e.g., employees generally perceiving that their organization adopts advanced HRM practices), employee responses to such perceived HRM practices can still depend on certain demographics, like gender (Smeenk et al., 2006). With studies ignoring or only controlling for gender effects (e.g., Bal et al., 2013; Fiorito et al., 2007), little research has done to theorize, test, and explain the differential impact of perceived HRM practices on employee affective commitment for men and for women.

In addition, this study investigates the impact of both an overall HRM system and function-specific HRM sub-systems (e.g., training, information, participation, and autonomy). This study responds to calls for studying the effects of HRM systems and their sub-systems, leading to an examination of the comparative effects of different HRM sub-systems (e.g., Takeuchi et al., 2009). In particular, it is predicted that, in most cases, the strength of the relationship
between perceived HRM sub-systems and employee affective commitment can depend on gender, which is a major social categorization that can be found in almost all societies (Pratto et al., 1997; Sidanius and Pratto, 1999).

Using hierarchical linear modeling for multilevel analyses, the hypotheses were tested in 104 small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Spain, using employee data from 6,320 employees and shop-level data from managers. While most studies on high-involvement HRM systems have done in large-sized firms in US, researchers have suggested and found that adopting high-involvement HRM systems can be also beneficial for SMEs (Harney and Nolan, 2014). The large sample size allows the authors to maintain methodological rigor by randomly selecting half of the employees within each shop to provide shop-level aggregated perceptions of HRM experiences, while utilizing the other half to provide the individual-level affective commitment measure.

**Hypotheses development**

Social exchange theory (SET; Blau, 1964) suggests a norm of reciprocity whereby employees reciprocate offerings from their employers in order to build and maintain valuable interpersonal relationships. When organizations implement HRM practices that invest in employees and provide them with benefits such as development opportunities, advancement, and security, employees reciprocate these offerings with effort, engagement, and positive attitudes toward the organization (Jung and Takeuchi, 2019; Takeuchi et al., 2007).

HRM theories have emphasized the potential value of combining related practices to create integrated HRM systems. The horizontal integration principle suggests that bundling a set of complementary practices, such as skill-enhancing, motivation-enhancing, and opportunity-
enhancing HRM practices (Lepak et al., 2006) creates synergies that strengthen the potential impact of any single type of practice in generating beneficial employee outcomes (Subramony, 2009). Also, such integrated HRM systems create consistency in employee experiences, thereby strengthening the employer’s messaging to employees regarding the organization’s HRM approach (Bowen and Ostroff, 2004).

This study examines employer bundling of four HRM practices commonly associated with high-involvement work systems, namely, training, information, participation, and autonomy (Lawler, 1986; Shin and Konrad, 2017; Vandenberg et al., 1999). When employers provide training, they are investing in employee knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs), which enhance the value added by employees, increasing their earnings, development, and advancement opportunities (Ng et al., 2005; Schneider and Flore, 2019). When employers provide information, they increase employee understanding of the job, how it creates value, and how it fits into workplace operations, which increases motivation and reduces hindrance stressors (LePine et al., 2005). Participation in workplace decision-making provides employees with opportunities to leverage their KSAs to add value, which extends and showcases employee capabilities in ways that may advance their status and careers (Konrad et al., 2016). Autonomy provides employees with areas of authority to determine their own activities, which generates increased workplace motivation (Gagné and Deci, 2005). Together, training, information, participation, and autonomy combine skill and motivation-building with opportunities for engagement in higher-level decision-making, all of which empower employees by building efficacy, meaning, and impact in the workplace (Spreitzer, 1995).

Employer efforts to build high-involvement HRM systems vary in effectiveness due to differences in the strength of the link between bundles of formalized practices and employee workplace experiences (Baird et al., 2018; Sanders and Yang, 2016). Differences across
organizational units in HRM implementation generate variation in employee experiences of HRM within the same organization (Dello Russo et al., 2018). For this reason, employee affective outcomes are more proximally associated with their workplace experiences than with formalized practices intended to generate a particular work environment (Jiang et al., 2013). Aggregated perceptions of HRM practices among employees in the same shop indicate the strength of the experienced employment relationship via the HRM system (Bowen and Ostroff, 2004; Ostroff and Bowen, 2016). Hence, it is hypothesized that employees’ aggregated perceptions of shop-level high-involvement HRM systems predict employee affective commitment at the employee level:

**Hypothesis 1 (H1): Aggregated perceptions of shop-level high-involvement HRM systems are positively associated with employee affective commitment.**

This paper seeks to extend the SET perspective by integrating it with gender role theory to predict that women are likely to respond more strongly than men to high-involvement HRM systems. Gender role theory (Eagly, 1987) offers a theoretical framework explaining how women and men experience systematically different patterns of rewards and sanctions throughout the course of their lives. These gendered systems generate gender differences in attitudes, values, and behavior that manifest across social settings, including the workplace. For instance, due to pressures to fulfill the traditionally masculine role of breadwinner, men more than women pursue occupations providing high levels of earnings and earnings growth (Ochsenfeld, 2014). Due to pressures to fulfill the expectations of stereotypical femininity (Fiske et al., 2002), women more than men value working with people and helping others in the workplace (Konrad et al., 2000).

It is argued here that socialized gender differences in work attitudes, values, and behavior have discouraged women from committing to organizational life. Thus, when organizations adopt
practices encouraging employees to become involved in workplace initiatives, women can more positively respond to such practices. Traditionally, men have been tasked with the responsibility of providing financial support for their families, while women have been assigned the roles of homemaker and caretaker (Eagly, 1987; Wood and Eagly, 2012). Despite decades of pressure to dismantle the restrictions of traditional gender roles (Grunow et al., 2018; Pepin and Cotter, 2018), these roles persist in family role enactment because of ongoing pressures on adults to undertake the duties ascribed to their gender (Endendijk et al., 2018). For instance, men who are fathers work longer hours (Biggart and O’Brien, 2012) and enjoy a fatherhood wage premium (Prince Cooke and Fuller, 2018). When children arrive in a family, women shoulder the bulk of childcare hours (Hofäcker et al., 2013; Yavorsky et al., 2015). In dual-earner couples, women rather than men scale back their careers in order to accommodate caretaking needs when children are young (Becker and Moen, 1999; Young and Schieman, 2018). Nationwide trends in the United States (Weeden et al., 2016) show that roughly 80% of fathers and 60% of mothers work for pay, and almost 20% of fathers but fewer than 5% of mothers work long (50+) hours per week. Jobs with long hours have been shown to have sharply rising hourly wages over time, contributing to rising gender gaps in wages among parents, motherhood wage penalties, and fatherhood wage premiums (Weeden et al., 2016). These statistics document the continued impact of traditional gender role assignments on workplace behavior and outcomes.

Given the pressures on men to serve as breadwinners for the family, women have more of a tendency to withdraw from a paid work role should the employment relationship become unrewarding or onerous. Women are less likely than men to be judged as failing to fulfill their employment responsibilities if they decide to reduce their work hours or withdraw from the labor force to fulfill their family responsibilities, and instead are judged on their fulfillment of the
motherhood role (Kaufman and Uhlenberg, 2000). Indeed, the norms of ‘intensive parenting’ pressure the women in dual-earner couples to reduce their paid work hours (Cha, 2010; Grunow et al., 2018). By comparison, economic stability often determines men’s ‘marriageability,’ and men who fail to provide financially for their children are likely to face social sanctioning (Bridges and Boyd, 2016). In sum, feminine gender role tends to pull women away from employment, leading them to experience less pressure to stay in an unrewarding job. As such, female employees are likely to show reduced affective commitment to employers adopting a low-investment approach to HRM. Because masculine gender roles tend to tie men to paid employment, such that they may experience sanctioning if they decide to leave a paid job, this paper argues that men’s affective commitment levels are less likely to be affected by a low-investment HRM system.

Gender role dynamics are also likely to figure into men’s and women’s responses to high-involvement HRM practices. Due to the pull factors drawing women away from the workplace, employers must be more explicitly supportive of women in order to build and maintain high levels of their affective commitment. It is also argued that pressures to fulfill stereotypical expectations of females are likely to make women more responsive to the reciprocity norm inherent in social exchange (Ayman and Korabik, 2010; Fiske et al., 2002). Starting in childhood and continuing throughout adulthood, women are expected to tend to relationships within the family and across societal institutions, including the workplace (Fletcher, 1999). Women may internalize these expectations as values or may comply with these expectations in order to garner rewards and avoid sanctioning (Konrad et al., 2000). Regardless of the causal mechanism, it is expected that relational pressures are more salient to women than to men such that women are more strongly impacted by and reactive to the reciprocity norm. For these reasons, it is predicted that women’s affective
commitment is more strongly positively associated with employer provisions of high-involvement HRM systems.

By comparison, men are subjected to the demands of masculine gender stereotypes, with the result that they are more responsive to opportunities to enhance personal status (Zhan et al., 2015) and independence (Konrad et al., 2000). For these reasons, gender role theory predicts that men are thought to be instrumental/agentic (i.e., dominant, competitive, and fighting to achieve their independence and self-interest), whereas women are regarded as communal (i.e., friendly, concerned with others, unselfish, and willing to sacrifice). Due to the lower salience of relational factors for men, this paper predicts that men’s affective commitment is less strongly positively related to employer provisions of high-involvement HRM systems:

Hypothesis 2 (H2): Gender moderates the relationship between shared perception of high-involvement HRM systems and employee affective commitment such that employee affective commitment is more strongly positively related to high-involvement HRM systems for women than for men.

While this study expects HRM practices to operate as systems, it is also anticipated that women and men will respond differently to individual practices associated with gender roles and stereotypes. Meta-analytic evidence has shown that women more than men value working with people and helping others at work (Konrad et al., 2000). As this paper has argued, women’s values make them more likely to reciprocate investments, such as training, due to the salience of relational pressures for reciprocity. Participation creates social interactions, strengthening workplace relationships (Gahlawat and Kundu, 2019). Because women are more likely to value workplace relationships, participation experiences are likely to be more strongly related to women’s affective
commitment. Because the feminine gender role tends to pull women away from onerous workplace experiences, the provision of information that reduces hindrance stressors (LePine et al., 2005), making the job easier and more motivating, is likely to be more important to women’s than to men’s affective commitment levels. As such, it is hypothesized:

Hypothesis 3 (H3): Gender moderates the relationship between employee experiences of high-involvement HRM practices and employee affective commitment such that employee affective commitment is more strongly positively related for women than men to the provision of (a) training, (b) participation, and (c) information.

While women can exhibit stronger responses to most progressive HRM practices (as predicted in H3), the gender stereotype predicts that men with higher autonomous motivation may strongly respond to autonomy practices. Meta-analytic evidence has shown that men more than women value autonomy at work (Konrad et al., 2000). As such, HRM practices providing autonomy are likely to be particularly important to men’s affective commitment, and this study suspects that the link between autonomy and affective commitment may not be stronger among women than among men. Gender role theory suggests differences in motivation between the genders: while women are more likely to hold communally-oriented motivation, men report self-esteem-oriented motivation (Good and Sanchez, 2010). Studies have reported that men have a greater tendency to prefer autonomy, independence, responsibility, and monetary compensation while women are more likely to be motivated by working in a supportive and friendly work environment (Buelens and Van den Broeck, 2007; Gentile et al., 2009; Schwalbe and Staples, 1991). Therefore, it is argued here that HRM practices that fit with men’s motivation, such as autonomy and performance-based pay, can enhance the affective commitment of men more so
than that of women. As autonomy fits more closely with stereotypical male values, men’s responses to autonomy practices can be stronger than women’s responses to autonomy practices. Thus, this study expects autonomy to be more strongly related to employee affective commitment for men than for women:

**Hypothesis 4 (H4):** The moderating effect of gender on the relationship between HRM practices and employee affective commitment will be stronger for men than for women in the case of employee experiences of autonomy.

In summary, the conceptual model with hypothesized relationships is presented in Figure 1.

**[INSERT FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE]**

**Methods**

**Sample and data collection**

This study concentrated on 104 SMEs in the retail sector of the Basque Country (northern Spain). Women’s employment in Spain is largely in SMEs and lower level positions, but gender issues in Spain still remain as an under-researched area (Ruiz and Lucio, 2010). The study used the data that were collected from surveys in July 2011. A total of 6,320 employees completed the survey voluntarily at the individual level. Employees reported on their gender, tenure, perceptions about their organization’s HRM system, and employee affective commitment towards the organization. The final sample comprised the following characteristics. With regards to gender, 80% of respondents were women. Related to tenure, 17% of the staff had been working for the company for less than five years, 64% between five and 10 years, and the residual 19% had been working
for the company for more than 10 years. The average response rate of the shops was 63%. The respondents’ profiles are summarized in Table 1.

[INSERT TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE]

The managers were asked to report on organizational-level (shop-level) variables, such as the company type and the company size, in terms of number of employees. With regards to the company type, 23% of the shops were cooperative shops. The survey was conducted in the Basque Country (northern Spain) area, where one of the world largest co-operative group is located. Within this cooperative context, employees are members, and profit sharing is mandatory for them. The average size of the shops was 96.27 people. In order to minimize common method bias in multilevel analyses, the study adopted a split design by randomly dividing the sample into the individual level and the shop level (Ostroff et al., 2002). The first half of the responses were used to measure HRM practices while the other half were used to measure employee affective commitment.

Measures

**HRM system.** The HRM system was measured using four HRM sub-systems: training, information, participation in decision-making, and autonomy. The study included the variables of participation in decision-making, information, and training levels based on practices that serve to enhance the Ability–Motivation–Opportunity (AMO) dimensions (Appelbaum et al., 2000; Arthur 1994). Training seeks to enhance employee ability, both participation in decision-making and information are related to employee motivation, and autonomy is related to employee opportunity. The responses were based on a Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree) to capture employees’ level of perception about the practices being implemented. Research has
demonstrated that employee perceptions about high-involvement HRM systems are stronger predictors of employee behavior than the rated practices of managers (Elorza et al., 2011).

The training dimension alludes to the development of abilities and the talent of employees through the learning process ($\alpha = .92$). A sample item is ‘I feel that the company dedicates sufficient resources to foster my professional development.’ The information dimension refers to the information that workers receive from the organization, such as financial and economic results, profitability, costs, etc. ($\alpha = .77$). In this analysis, the information dimension was made up of three items, including ‘I have enough information to do my job properly.’ Participation in decision-making was measured using three items ($\alpha = .86$). A sample item is ‘I participate in the definition of the annual targets for my department/section.’ To measure autonomy three items were used on work methods autonomy from Morgeson and Humphrey (2006) ($\alpha = .93$). A sample item is ‘The job gives me considerable opportunity for independence and freedom in how I do the work.’ See Appendix A for item details of the variables.

Employee affective commitment. Employee affective commitment was measured at the employee-level using four items based on several authors (Cook, 1981; Meyer et al., 1993). Among components of organizational commitment, we focus on employee affective commitment, which is known as the most prevalent component that deals with emotional attachment to and identification with the organization (Allen and Meyer, 1990). In addition, affective commitment is positively related to desirable outcomes, whereas normative commitment and continuance commitment are sometimes negatively associated with desirable outcomes (Boselie, 2010; Meyer et al., 2002). Employee affective commitment is an attitude towards and attachment to the organization ($\alpha = .85$). Respondents were asked to report on a 6-point scale (ranging from 1= ‘strongly disagree’ to 6 ‘strongly agree’).
Female. Respondents were asked to report their gender, and the variable was coded as 1 if female and 0 if male.

Controls. Control variables were categorized into two different levels: (i) the individual level or level 1, and (ii) the shop level or level 2. Three different levels of tenure were distinguished for each employee (1 = less than 5 years in the organization, 2 = between 5 and 10 years in the organization, and 3 = more than a dichotomous variable). Information on company size and cooperatives was obtained from shop managers. With regards to the shop level, a dichotomous variable indicated whether or not the shop was a cooperative (0 = not cooperative, 1 = cooperative). Distinguishing between cooperative and non-cooperative shops is critical since the way people are managed at each differs significantly. Moreover, company size is one of the most widely used control variables, considering that in large firms the implementation of HRM practices is more likely due to economies of scale (Shin and Konrad, 2017). In this study, firm size was based on the number of employees per firm. Since the effect of gender on the relationship between the HRM system and employee affective commitment was tested, the study further controlled the female ratio in the workplace. The female ratio was calculated by dividing the number of female responses by the number of employee responses in a shop.

Results

Means, standard deviations, and correlations among variables are reported in Table 2. Hypotheses were tested with hierarchical linear modeling (HLM) using the HLM program (Raudenbush and Bryk, 2002). Ordinary least squares (OLS) regression can result in inaccurate estimates when individuals are nested within organizational groups (Cohen et al., 2003). The application of HLM allows us to partition variance across the two levels of analysis: variance at the individual level
and variance at the shop level (Raudenbush and Bryk, 2002). The hypotheses were tested following the random coefficient regression procedure in the HLM program. Following Hofmann and Gavin’s (1998) recommendations for multilevel modeling, the study adopted the grand mean centering approach in random coefficient regressions. Before testing the hypotheses, a null model was conducted to check the variance at the shop level. The result showed significant variance in employee affective commitment, suggesting that there is considerable residual variance to be explained by the shop level. The intraclass correlation coefficient (ICC) was significant (ICC=.14; Chi-square test $p<.001$), indicating the possibility for a multilevel model.

H1 predicted that high-involvement HRM systems are positively associated with employee affective commitment. As expected, high-involvement HRM systems were positively and significantly associated with employee affective commitment, supporting H1 (standard coefficient= .55; $p<.001$) (see Table 3). H2 predicts the moderation effect of gender on the relationship between high-involvement HRM systems and employee affective commitment. The interaction between gender and high-involvement HRM systems was significantly related to employee affective commitment ($p<.05$) (see Table 4). The effect of HRM system on employee affective commitment was higher among female employees than among male employees. Thus, H2 was supported. The relationship between HRM system, gender, and employee affective commitment is plotted in Figure 2. H3 predicted that gender moderates the relationship between individual HRM practices ((a) training, (b) participation, and (c) information) and employee affective commitment, such that the HRM practices–affective commitment link is stronger among women than among men. The results shown in Tables 5, 6, and 7 indicate that gender moderates the relationship between training and employee affective commitment ($p<.05$, see Table 5) and the
relationship between participation and employee affective commitment ($p<.05$, see Table 6). The relationship between information and employee affective commitment was marginally moderated by gender ($p=.05$, see Table 7). Figures 3, 4, and 5 show that the practices–affective commitment relationships were stronger for women than for men. Therefore, H3 was supported. Based on gender role theory, gender differences in autonomy were expected: communally-motivated women and self-esteem-oriented men (Good and Sanchez, 2010). The moderation effect of gender on the relationship between autonomy and employee affective commitment was not significant ($p>.10$, see Table 8). Therefore, H4 was supported.

Discussion

The findings pertaining to a positive relationship between the perceived HRM system and employee affective commitment are consistent with past studies (e.g., Elorza et al., 2011; Kehoe and Wright, 2013). These results support SET and the arguments that employees demonstrate affective commitment in exchange for a high-involvement HRM system from the employer (Blau, 1964; Homans, 1958). Moreover, the pioneering results regarding the moderating effects of gender support gender role theory and the arguments that, in comparison to men, women’s employee affective commitment levels are higher in the present of high-involvement HRM systems (Eagly, 1987). These findings support the arguments that women are both more likely than men to reciprocate employer offerings of supportive HRM and more likely than men to withhold commitment when the work environment is unsupportive.

This study also considers that HRM practices that are a better fit with men’s motivation can particularly appeal to men, enhancing their affective commitment. However, a moderating
effect of gender on the relationship between autonomy practices and employee affective commitment was not found. Although it is recognized that men place relatively higher value on workplace autonomy than women do (Konrad et al., 2000), women’s affective commitment can also be influenced by autonomy practices. Thus, autonomy practices should be equally provided to women and men.

To the best of the authors’ knowledge, only two other studies explicitly hypothesized and tested the moderating effect of gender on the relationship between high-involvement HRM systems and employee affective commitment (Andersén and Andersén, 2019; Qiao et al., 2009). There are notable differences between this study and each of the two studies. For instance, Qiao et al. (2009) collected data from six medium- to large-sized manufacturing firms, whereas the current data were collected from 104 SMEs. Moreover, their study measured HRM practices by asking employees to estimate the percentage of employees in the firm covered by each of the 18 practices, while this study asked employees about their personal experiences with specific HRM practices. Furthermore, Qiao et al. (2009) measured all variables in a single survey at the individual level of analysis. The national cultural differences may also influence the role of gender in the relationship between HRM practices and employee affective commitment (Gerhart and Fang, 2005; Hofstede, 2001). Last but not least, their measure included a large portion of HRM practices that fit with men’s motivation (e.g., internal promotions, performance-based promotions, skill-based pay, group-based pay, and employee stock ownership). As this study proposed that gender responses to HRM practices can depend on each function-specific practice, investigating the issue by each function-specific practice is desirable in future studies (Mahmood et al., 2019). For instance, it is expected that HRM practices that fit with men’s motivation (e.g., pay per performance, promotions, and autonomy) might have less stronger effects among women than
HRM practices that fit better with women’s motivation (e.g., social relationships, reduced status, distinction, and a friendly work environment).

Theoretical contributions and research implications

This study makes several theoretical contributions. It provides direct support to SET through testing an exchange relationship between employer and employees (Blau, 1964; Homans, 1958). The findings suggest that employees reciprocate high-involvement HRM systems with employee affective commitment (e.g., Elorza et al., 2011; Kehoe and Wright, 2013). Moreover, this study theorizes the significance of horizontal integration of training, information, participation, and autonomy practices in determining employee affective commitment (Shin and Konrad, 2017). It presents theoretical arguments for the benefits each set of function-specific practices provide to employees: KSAs in the case of training practices (Ng et al., 2005), reduced stress in the case of information practices (e.g., LePine et al., 2005), employee capabilities in the case of participation practices (Konrad et al., 2016), and motivation in the case of autonomy practices (Gagné and Deci, 2005). It then theorizes an integration of these practices into a system that fetches high employee affective commitment, through the above-mentioned support of employee empowerment (Spreitzer, 1995). Future research could add value with a more refined test of SET that also measures these benefits as processes of the exchange between the employer and employees. Also, researchers may explicitly test the roles of different work values and motivation between men and women in the relationship between HRM practices and employee affective commitment.

This study responds to research calls, advancing the employee affective commitment field and setting directions for future research. Employees are the ultimate recipients of HRM practices and thus their perceptions of HRM practices and the subsequent effects of those perceptions on
work processes and outcomes are important (Farndale et al., 2010). This research responded to calls for conducting additional employee-level research (Kooij et al., 2010). It went a step further by predicting and testing the effects of both an HRM system and function-specific HRM practices on employee affective commitment. Past research has examined either an HRM system (one overall bundle across different functions; e.g., Boon and Kalshoven, 2014; Kehoe and Wright, 2013; Qiao et al., 2009; Taylor et al., 2008) or function-specific practices (sub-systems such as selection, training, and work design; e.g., Bal et al., 2013; Kooij et al., 2010; Rode et al., 2016; Smeenk et al., 2006). Research in this direction can benefit from proposing and testing comparative effects of various sub-systems. Moreover, this research provides insights into the HRM practices–employee processes relationship black box (Elorza et al., 2011; Wright and Gardner, 2003). Future research can not only advance the field by testing the effects on additional employee processes, but also extend this relationship by including various employee-level outcomes, treating employee affective commitment and other processes as mediators (e.g., Chang and Chen, 2011, p. 19, p. 22, p. 30; Takeuchi et al., 2007).

This study presents employee gender as a moderator of the HRM practices–affective commitment relationship, derived from the integration of SET (Blau, 1964; Homans, 1958) and gender role theory (Eagly, 1987). Findings suggest that women can be more responsive than men, in terms of affective commitment, to employer choices of high-involvement HRM systems. The differential impact found for men and women suggests the value of testing additional demographic moderators on the HRM–affective commitment relationship. Research in this direction can also benefit from testing these moderating effects at both stage 1 (HRM practices–employee processes) and stage 2 (employee processes–outcomes) of the mediation models. A test of an integrated
multilevel model capturing effects at both the employee level and the organizational level will provide significant insights (Ehnert, 2009; Martín-Alcázar et al., 2005; Paauwe, 2004).

Practical implication

The findings of this study present several practical implications. First, they provide additional evidence for the positive impact of high-involvement HRM systems on employee affective commitment (e.g., Elorza et al., 2011; Kehoe and Wright, 2013). Strong evidence based on a body of literature can help human resource managers obtain affective commitment from top management to offer high-involvement human resource systems (Pak and Chung, 2013). Although the evidence from studies focusing on the distal financial effects of HRM systems is robust (Jiang et al., 2012), a lack of research evidence of how HRM systems improve financial performance may weaken the business case (Jiang et al., 2013; Wright and Gardner, 2003). Second, the findings suggest that organizations should focus on offering a horizontally integrated set of HRM systems comprising training, participation, information, and autonomy practices. The synergies generated by these practices across function areas produce high levels of employee affective commitment as an exchange (Martín-Alcázar et al., 2005). Over time, human resource managers should continue to work on improvements and refinements of these practices and their cross-function complementarities (Chadwick, 2010; Koster, 2011).

Third, managers should also engage with micro-managing perceptions of high-involvement HRM practices. The findings provide novel insights that female employees show higher levels of affective commitment exchanged for perceived HRM systems and three function-specific practices: training, participation, and information. Thus, gender-focused HRM can help managers fully capitalize on the benefits of HRM systems and practices (Ali, 2016). Working with
line managers (Sikora and Ferris, 2014), human resource managers should highlight the significance of high-involvement practices to male employees to achieve greater levels of affective commitment. For female employees, organizations should ensure the continuation of HRM systems and practices.

**Limitations**

Despite the many strengths of this study there are also some limitations. First, employee-level data on variables used for testing hypotheses were obtained from the same source. Common method bias was minimized by separating the sample into two groups (firm level and individual level). While a split design cannot eliminate common method bias, it helps in reducing such bias in multilevel modeling (Ostroff *et al.*, 2002). As common method bias is likely to reduce the power to detect interaction effects (Erdogan and Bauer, 2009; Evans, 1985), thus obtaining multilevel data from separate sources is desirable in future studies.

Second, the dataset included four HRM sub-systems (i.e., training, participation, information, and autonomy), but did not include compensation related HRM practices. Gender differences in responding to performance-based pay are considered to be an interesting future research area. Also interesting can be a study on the three way interaction between gender, high-involvement HRM, and family-friendly HRM practices (e.g., child care benefits, on-site day care center, and flexible working hours).

Third, this study provides only an indirect test of gender role theory used to derive moderating hypotheses (Eagly, 1987). A direct test would require measuring the different value male and female employees place on the HRM system and function-specific practices;
subsequently, it may be necessary to examine how gender differences in work values influence employee affective commitment.

Fourth, among components of organizational commitment, our study focus on employee affective commitment, which is the most prevalent component of organizational commitment (Allen and Meyer, 1990). Future studies can further investigate how gender can influence on the associations between HRM practices and other components of organizational commitment (e.g., normative commitment and continuance commitment).

Fifth, this study was conducted on SMEs in Spain. While Ruiz and Lucio (2010) reported that HRM in Spanish firms is being globalized (or assimilated the American HRM model), they pointed out that distinctive socio-economic contexts in Spain should be noted as well. Thus, findings need to be generalized in other industries and cultural backgrounds. Particularly, since the data were obtained from low-paid and mostly female retail workers, future studies may investigate the role of gender in the HRM–employee affective commitment relationship in male-dominated professions.

**Conclusion**

This study investigates the moderation effect of gender on the relationship between high-involvement HRM systems and employee affective commitment. By showing that women can be more positively affected by high-involvement HRM systems, this paper proposed that high-involvement HRM systems can be used to encourage involvement and participation of women. The authors hope to see whether and how high-involvement HRM systems can influence the affective commitment of other minority groups in future studies.
References
Ali, M. (2016), "Impact of gender-focused human resource management on performance: the mediating effects of gender diversity", Australian Journal of Management, Vol. 41 No. 2, pp. 376-397.
Allen, N.J. and Meyer, J.P. (1990), "The measurement and antecedents of affective, continuance and normative commitment to the organization", Journal of Occupational Psychology, Vol. 63 No. 1, pp.1-18.
Andersén, J. and Andersén, A. (2019), "Are high-performance work systems (HPWS) appreciated by everyone? The role of management position and gender on the relationship between HPWS and affective commitment", Employee Relations, Vol. 41 No. 5, pp. 1046-1064.
Appelbaum, E., Bailey, T., Berg, P. and Kalleberg, A.L. (2000), Manufacturing Advantage: Why High-Performance Work Systems Pay Off, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, NY.
Arthur, J.B. (1994), "Effects of human resource systems on manufacturing performance and turnover", The Academy of Management Journal, Vol. 37 No. 3, pp. 670-687.
Ayman, R. and Korabik, K. (2010), "Leadership: why gender and culture matter", American Psychologist, Vol. 65 No. 3, pp. 157-170.
Baird, K., Su, S. and Munir, R. (2018), "The relationship between the enabling use of controls, employee empowerment, and performance", Personnel Review, Vol. 47 No. 1, pp. 257-274.
Bal, P.M., Kooij, D.T. and De Jong, S.B. (2013), "How do developmental and accommodative HRM enhance employee engagement and commitment? The role of psychological contract and SOC strategies", Journal of Management Studies, Vol. 50 No. 4, pp. 545-572.
Becker, P.E. and Moen, P. (1999), "Scaling back: dual-earning couples' work-family strategies", *Journal of Marriage & Family*, Vol. 61 No. 4, pp. 995-1007.

Biggart, L. and O'Brien, M. (2012), "UK fathers' long work hours: career stage or fatherhood?", *Fathering*, Vol. 8 No. 3, pp. 341-361.

Blau, P.M. (1964), *Exchange and Power in Social Life*, Wiley, New York, NY.

Boon, C. and Kalshoven, K. (2014), "How high-commitment HRM relates to engagement and commitment: the moderating role of task proficiency", *Human Resource Management*, Vol. 53 No. 3, pp. 403-420.

Boselie, P. (2010), "High performance work practices in the health care sector: a Dutch case study", *International Journal of Manpower*, Vol. 31 No. 1, pp.42-58.

Bowen, D.E. and Ostroff, C. (2004), "Understanding HRM-firm performance linkages: the role of the "strength" of the HRM system", *Academy of Management Review*, Vol. 29, pp. 203-221.

Bridges, T. and Boyd, M.L. (2016), "On the marriageability of men", *Sociology Compass*, Vol. 10 No. 1, pp. 48-64.

Buelens, M. and Van den Broeck, H. (2007), "An analysis of differences in work motivation between public and private sector organizations", *Public Administration Review*, Vol. 67 No. 1, pp. 65-74.

Cafferkey, K., Heffernan, M., Harney, B., Dundon, T. and Townsend, K. (2019), "Perceptions of HRM system strength and affective commitment: the role of human relations and internal process climate", *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, Vol. 30 No. 21, pp. 3026-3048.
Cha, Y. (2010), "Reinforcing separate spheres: the effect of spousal overwork on men's and women's employment in dual-earner households", *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 75 No. 2, pp. 303-329.

Chadwick, C. (2010), "Theoretic insights on the nature of performance synergies in human resource systems: toward greater precision", *Human Resource Management Review*, Vol. 20 No. 2, pp. 85-101.

Chang, P.-C. and Chen, S.-J. (2011), "Crossing the level of employee's performance: HPWS, affective commitment, human capital, and employee job performance in professional service organizations", *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, Vol. 22 No. 4, pp. 883-901.

Cohen, J., Cohen, P., West, S. and Aiken, L. (2003), *Applied Multiple Correlation/Regression Analysis for the Behavioral Sciences*, 3rd ed., Erlbaum, Hillsdale, NJ.

Cook, J.D. (1981), *The Experience of Work: A Compendium and Review of 249 Measures and Their Use*, Academic Press, London.

de la Torre-Ruiz, J. M., Vidal-Salazar, M. D. and Cordón-Pozo, E. (2019), "Employees are satisfied with their benefits, but so what? The consequences of benefit satisfaction on employees' organizational commitment and turnover intentions", *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, Vol. 30 No. 13, pp. 2097-2120.

Dello Russo, S., Mascia, D. and Morandi, F. (2018), "Individual perceptions of HR practices, HRM strength and appropriateness of a care: a meso, multi-level approach", *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, Vol. 29 No. 2, pp. 286-310.

Eagly, A.H. (1987), *Sex Differences in Social Behavior: A Social-Role Interpretation*. Erlbaum, Hillsdale, NJ.
Ehnert, I. (2009), *Sustainable Human Resource Management: A Conceptual and Exploratory Analysis from a Paradox Perspective*, Springer, New York.

Elorza, U., Aritzeta, A. and Ayestarán, S. (2011), "Exploring the black box in Spanish firms: the effect of the actual and perceived system on employees' commitment and organizational performance", *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, Vol. 22 No. 7, pp. 1401-1422.

Endendijk, J.J., Derks, B. and Mesman, J. (2018), "Does parenthood change implicit gender-role stereotypes and behaviors?", *Journal of Marriage & Family*, Vol. 80 No. 1, pp. 61-79.

Erdogan, B. and Bauer, T.N. (2009), "Perceived overqualification and its outcomes: the moderating role of empowerment", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 94 No. 2, pp. 557.

Evans, M.G. (1985), "A Monte Carlo study of the effects of correlated method variance in moderated multiple regression analysis", *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, Vol. 36 No. 3, pp. 305-323.

Farndale, E., Hope-Hailey, V. and Kelliher, C. (2010), "High commitment performance management: the roles of justice and trust", *Personnel Review*, Vol. 40 No. 1, pp. 5-23.

Fiorito, J., Bozeman, D.P., Young, A. and Meurs, J.A. (2007), "Organizational commitment, human resource practices, and organizational characteristics", *Journal of Managerial Issues*, Vol. 19 No. 2, pp. 186-207.

Fiske, S.T., Cuddy, A.J.C., Glick, P. and Xu, J. (2002), "A model of (often mixed) stereotype content: competence and warmth respectively follow from perceived status and competition", *Journal of Personality & Social Psychology*, Vol. 82 No. 6, pp. 878-902.

Fletcher, J.K. (1999), *Disappearing Acts: Gender, Power, and Relational Practice*, MIT Press, Cambridge, MA.
Gagné, M. and Deci, E.L. (2005), "Self-determination theory and work motivation", *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, Vol. 26 No. 4, pp. 331-362.

Gentile, B., Grabe, S., Dolan-Pascoe, B., Twenge, J.M., Wells, B.E. and Maitino, A. (2009), "Gender differences in domain-specific self-esteem: a meta-analysis", *Review of General Psychology*, Vol. 13 No. 1, pp. 34-45.

Gerhart, B. and Fang, M. (2005), "National culture and human resource management: assumptions and evidence", *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, Vol. 16 No. 6, pp. 971-986.

Gahlawat, N. and Kundu, S. C. (2019), "Participatory HRM and firm performance: Unlocking the box through organizational climate and employee outcomes", *Employee Relations*, Vol. 41 No. 5, pp. 1098-1119.

Good, J.J. and Sanchez, D.T. (2010), "Doing gender for different reasons: why gender conformity positively and negatively predicts self-esteem", *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, Vol. 34 No. 2, pp. 203-214.

Grunow, D., Begall, K. and Buchler, S. (2018), "Gender ideologies in Europe: a multidimensional framework", *Journal of Marriage & Family*, Vol. 80 No. 1, pp. 42-60.

Harney, B. and Nolan, C. (2014), "HRM in small and medium-sized firms (SMEs)", in Harney, B. and Monks, K. (Eds.), *Strategic HRM: Research and Practice in Ireland*, Orpen Press, pp. 153-169.

Hofäcker, D., Stoilova, R. and Riebling, J.R. (2013), "The gendered division of paid and unpaid work in different institutional regimes: comparing West Germany, East Germany and Bulgaria", *European Sociological Review*, Vol. 29 No. 2, pp. 192-209.
Hofmann, D.A. and Gavin, M.B. (1998), "Centering decisions in hierarchical linear models: implications for research in organizations", *Journal of Management*, Vol. 24 No. 5, pp. 623-641.

Hofstede, G. (2001), *Culture's Consequences: Comparing Values, Behaviors, Institutions, and Organizations Across Nations*, 2nd ed., Sage, Thousand Oaks, CA.

Homans, G.C. (1958), "Social behavior as exchange", *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 63 No. 6, pp. 597-606.

Jiang, K., Lepak, D.P., Hu, J. and Baer, J.C. (2012), "How does human resource management influence organizational outcomes? A meta-analytic investigation of mediating mechanisms", *Academy of Management Journal*, Vol. 55 No. 6. [https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2011.0088](https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2011.0088)

Jiang, K., Takeuchi, R. and Lepak, D.P. (2013), "Where do we go from here? New perspectives on the black box in strategic human resource management research", *Journal of Management Studies*, Vol. 50 No. 8, pp. 1448-1480.

Jung, Y. and Takeuchi, N. (2019), "Testing mediation effects of social and economic exchange in linking organizational training investment to employee outcomes", *Personnel Review*, Vol. 48 No. 2, pp. 306-323.

Kaufman, G. and Uhlenberg, P. (2000), "The influence of parenthood on the work effort of married men and women", *Social Forces*, Vol. 78 No. 3, pp. 931-947.

Kehoe, R.R. and Wright, P.M. (2013), "The impact of high performance human resource practices on employees' attitudes and behaviors", *Journal of Management*, Vol. 39 No. 2, pp. 366-391.
Konrad, A.M., Ritchie, J.E., Jr., Lieb, P. and Corrigall, E.A. (2000), "Sex differences and similarities in job attribute preferences: a meta-analysis", *Psychological Bulletin*, Vol. 126 No. 4, pp. 593-641.

Konrad, A.M., Yang, Y. and Maurer, C. (2016), "Antecedents and outcomes of diversity and equality management systems: an integrated institutional agency and strategic human resource management approach", *Human Resource Management*, Vol. 55 No. 1, pp. 83-107.

Kooij, D.T., Jansen, P.G., Dikkers, J.S. and De Lange, A.H. (2010), "The influence of age on the associations between HR practices and both affective commitment and job satisfaction: a meta-analysis", *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, Vol. 31 No. 8, pp. 1111-1136.

Koster, F. (2011), "Able, willing, and knowing: the effects of HR practices on commitment and effort in 26 European countries", *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, Vol. 22 No. 14, pp. 2835-2851.

Lawler, E.E. III. (1986), *High-Involvement Management*, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco.

Lepak, D.P., Liao, H., Chung, Y. and Harden, E.E. (2006), "A conceptual review of human resource management systems in strategic human resource management research", *Research in Personnel & Human Resources Management*, Vol. 25, pp. 217-271.

LePine, J.A., Podsakoff, N.P. and Lepine, M.A. (2005), "A meta-analytic test of the challenge stressor-hindrance stressor framework: an explanation for inconsistent relationships among stressors and performance", *Academy of Management Journal*, Vol. 48 No. 5, pp. 764-775.

Li, S., Rees, C. J. and Branine, M. (2019), "Employees' perceptions of human resource management practices and employee outcomes: Empirical evidence from small and medium-sized enterprises in China", *Employee Relations*, Vol. 41 No. 6, pp. 1419-1433.
Mahmood, A., Akhtar, M. N., Talat, U., Shuai, C. and Hyatt, J. C. (2019). "Specific HR practices and employee commitment: The mediating role of job satisfaction", *Employee Relations*, Vol. 41, No. 3, pp. 420-435.

Martín-Alcázar, F., Romero-Fernandez, P.M. and Sánchez-Gardey, G. (2005), "Strategic human resource management: integrating the universalistic, contingent, configurational and contextual perspectives", *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, Vol. 16 No. 5, pp. 633-659.

Meyer, J.P., Allen, N.J. and Smith, C.A. (1993), "Commitment to organizations and occupations: extension and test of a three-component conceptualization", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 78 No. 4, pp. 538-551.

Meyer, J.P., Stanley, D.J., Herscovitch, L. and Topolnytsky, L. (2002), "Affective, continuance, and normative commitment to the organization: A meta-analysis of antecedents, correlates, and consequences", *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, Vol. 61 No. 1, pp. 20-52.

Morgeson, F.P. and Humphrey, S.E. (2006), "The work design questionnaire (WDQ): developing and validating a comprehensive measure for assessing job design and the nature of work", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 91 No. 6. pp. 1321-1339.

Ng, T.W.H., Eby, L.T. Sorensen, K.L. and Feldman, D.C. (2005), "Predictors of objective and subjective career success: a meta-analysis", *Personnel Psychology*, Vol. 58 No. 2, pp. 367-408.

Ochsenfeld, F. (2014), "Why do women's fields of study pay less? A test of devaluation, human capital, and gender role theory", *European Sociological Review*, Vol. 30 No. 4, pp. 536-548.
Ostroff, C. and Bowen, D.E. (2016), "Reflections on the 2014 decade award: is there strength in the construct of HR system strength?" *Academy of Management Review*, Vol 41 No. 2, pp. 196-214. doi:10.5465/amr.2015.0323

Ostroff, C., Kinicki, A.J. and Clark, M.A. (2002), "Substantive and operational issues of response bias across levels of analysis: an example of climate-satisfaction relationships", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 87 No. 2, pp. 355-368.

Paauwe, J. (2004), *HRM and Performance: Achieving Long-Term Viability*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Pak, J. and Chung, G.H. (2013), "Top management commitment to HRM, visibilities, and HRM gap: a qualitative approach", in *Academy of Management Proceedings*, Vol. 1, https://doi.org/10.5465/ambpp.2013.15181abstract.

Pepin, J.R. and Cotter, D.A. (2018), "Separating spheres? Diverging trends in youth's gender attitudes about work and family", *Journal of Marriage & Family*, Vol. 80 No. 1, pp. 7-24.

Pratto, F., Stallworth, L.M., Sidanius, J. and Siers, B. (1997), "The gender gap in occupational role attainment: a social dominance approach", *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, Vol. 72 No. 1, pp. 37-53.

Prince Cooke, L. and Fuller, S. (2018), "Class differences in establishment pathways to fatherhood wage premiums", *Journal of Marriage & Family*, Vol. 80 No. 3, pp. 737-751.

Qiao, K., Khilji, S.E. and Wang, X. (2009), "High-performance work systems, organizational commitment, and the role of demographic features in the People's Republic of China", *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, Vol. 20 No. 11, pp. 2311-2330.

Raudenbush, S.W. and Bryk, A.S. (2002), *Hierarchical Linear Models: Applications and Data Analysis Methods*, 2nd ed., Sage, Thousand Oaks, CA.
Rode, J.C., Huang, X. and Flynn, B. (2016), "A cross-cultural examination of the relationships among human resource management practices and organisational commitment: an institutional collectivism perspective", Human Resource Management Journal, Vol. 26 No. 4, pp. 471-489.

Ruiz, O.R. and Lucio, M.M. (2010), "The study of HRM in Spain: the Americanization of Spanish research and the politics of denial?", The International Journal of Human Resource Management, Vol. 21, pp. 125-143.

Sanders, K. and Yang, H. (2016), "The HRM process approach: the influence of employees' attribution to explain the HRM-performance relationship", Human Resource Management, Vol. 55 No. 2, pp. 201-217.

Schneider, M. R. and Flore, J. (2019), "Training and commitment in a German manufacturing company during the post-2008 crisis: a case of internal flexicurity", The International Journal of Human Resource Management, Vol. 30, No. 10, pp. 1666-1682.

Schwalbe, M.L. and Staples, C.L. (1991), "Gender differences in sources of self-esteem", Social Psychology Quarterly, Vol. 54 No. 2, pp. 158-168.

Shin, D. and Konrad, A.M. (2017), "Causality between high-performance work systems and organizational performance", Journal of Management, Vol. 43 No. 4, pp. 973-997.

Sidanius, J. and Pratto, F. (1999), Social Dominance: An Intergroup Theory of Social Hierarchy and Oppression, Cambridge University Press, New York, NY.

Sikora, D.M. and Ferris, G.R. (2014), "Strategic human resource practice implementation: the critical role of line management", Human Resource Management Review, Vol. 24 No. 3, pp. 271-281.
Smeenk, S.G., Eisinga, R.N., Teelken, J.C. and Doorewaard, J.A.C.M. (2006), "The effects of HRM practices and antecedents on organizational commitment among university employees", *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, Vol. 17 No. 12, pp. 2035-2054.

Spreitzer, G.M. (1995), "Psychological empowerment in the workplace: dimensions, measurement and validation", *Academy of Management Journal*, Vol. 38 No. 5, pp. 1442-1465.

Subramony, M. (2009), "A meta-analytic investigation of the relationship between HRM bundles and firm performance", *Human Resource Management*, Vol. 48 No. 5, pp. 745-768.

Takeuchi, R., Chen, G. and Lepak, D.P. (2009), "Through the looking glass of a social system: cross-level effects of high-performance work systems on employees' attitudes", *Personnel Psychology*, Vol. 62 No. 1, pp. 1-29. doi:10.1111/j.1744-6570.2008.01127.x

Takeuchi, R., Lepak, D.P., Wang, H. and Takeuchi, K. (2007), "An empirical examination of the mechanisms mediating between high-performance work systems and the performance of Japanese organizations", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 92 No. 4, pp. 1069-1083.

Taylor, S., Levy, O., Boyacigiller, N.A. and Beechler, S. (2008), "Employee commitment in MNCs: impacts of organizational culture, HRM and top management orientations", *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, Vol. 19 No. 4, pp. 501-527.

Vandenberg, R.J., Richardson, H.A. and Eastman, L.J. (1999), "The impact of high involvement work processes on organizational effectiveness: a second-order latent variable approach", *Group & Organization Management*, Vol. 24, pp. 300-339.

Weeden, K.A., Cha, Y. and Bucca, M. (2016), "Long work hours, part-time work, and trends in the gender gap in pay, the motherhood wage penalty, and the fatherhood wage premium",
Wood, W. and Eagly, A.H. (2012), "Chapter two – Biosocial construction of sex difference in behavior", *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, Vol. 46, pp. 55-123.

Wright, P.M. and Gardner, T.M. (2003), "The human resource-firm performance relationship: methodological and theoretical challenges", in Holman, D., Wall, T.D., Clegg, C.W., Sparrow, P. and Howard, A. (Eds.), *The New Workplace: A Guide to the Human Impact of Modern Working Practices*, John Wiley & Sons Ltd., Chichester, UK, pp. 311-328.

Yavorsky, J.E., Kamp Dush, C.M. and Schoppe-Sullivan, S.J. (2015), "The production of inequality: the gender division of labor across the transition to parenthood", *Journal of Marriage & Family*, Vol. 77 No. 3, pp. 662-679.

Young, M.C. and Schieman, S. (2018), "Scaling back and finding flexibility: gender differences in parents' strategies to manage work-family conflict", *Journal of Marriage & Family*, Vol. 80 No. 1, pp. 99-118.

Zhan, Y., Wang, M. and Shi, J. (2015), "Retirees' motivational orientations and bridge employment: testing the moderating role of gender", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 100 No. 5, pp. 1319-1331.

**Appendix A: HRM practices items**

| HRM Practice | Items |
|--------------|-------|
| Training (3 items) | I feel that the company dedicates sufficient resources to foster my professional development. |
| | I feel that the company provides me with enough training to perform my job. |
| Participation in decision-making (3 items) | I think that the company values and promotes my training. |
|------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
|                                          | I participate in the definition of the annual targets for my department/section. |
|                                          | I participate in the definition, control, and monitoring of the business plan on an annual basis. |
|                                          | I have the chance to participate in important decisions about the future of my department/section. |
| Autonomy (3 items)                       | My job allows me a chance to use my personal initiative or judgement in carrying out the work. |
|                                          | The job allows me to make a lot of decisions on my own. |
|                                          | The job provides me with significant autonomy in making decisions. |
| Information (3 items)                    | I have frequently updated information about the performance of my department/section (sales, results, project status, etc.). |
|                                          | I have enough information to do my job properly. |
|                                          | I am informed about our company’s plans for the future (challenges, targets, investments, etc.). |