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## EMERGING CONCEPTUAL SCHOLARSHIP

# High Performance Work Systems and Flexible Work Processes

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In this issue, the Emerging Conceptual Scholarship section presents an innovative framework for understanding the impact of high performance work systems (HPWS) on flexible work processes. W. Randy Evans and Walter D. Davis, in their article “High-Performance Work Systems as an Initiator of Employee Proactivity and Flexible Work Processes,” provide a multi-level model to analyze the impact of HPWS on employee motivation to improve work process within the context of social relationships.

The authors consider the concept of how HPWS (such as staffing, training, and compensation policies) may impact flexible work processes, that is, employee exploration and modification of current processes. The assumption is that the HR policies impact the individual motivation and opportunities, to potentially exploit and explore opportunities for task improvement. In addition, they theorize that motivation and opportunity may be enhanced (or constrained) by the overall social context, in particular, by the network ties, norms of reciprocity, and/or shared mental models.

Although scholars have demonstrated the impact of various human resource practices on organizational performance, understanding how and why practices impact performance is still largely unexplored. The interesting elements of the article are the inclusion of employee proactivity (motivation) and routine social structure (social context) into the model to better explain why and how HPWS impact performance. The multi-level model (looking at both organizational practices and individual behaviors) provides a more robust framework for understanding and potentially testing the success and understanding the failure of best practices in human resource management within the organizational context.

In the continuing discussion regarding best practices, the article provides an interesting perspective and a unique insight contributing to a greater understanding of the complexity of employee and organizational performance for the benefit of practitioners as well as future scholars.

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