
An Assessment of High-Performance Work System Theory towards Academic Development, Work Environment and Promotion in Higher Education: A Thailand and International Comparison

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Abstract:

Purpose: To examine High-Performance Work Systems (HPWS) as a framework for academic development, work environment, and promotion among faculty in higher education.

Design/methodology/approach: A mixed-methods approach that employed both quantitative tools with an administered survey and qualitative interactions using the interview process was used. Participants were recruited using a systematic and random sampling approach of faculty in Thailand and selected international institutions.

Findings: Four hundred and sixty-three participants, including 236 from Thailand and 227 from international institutions, completed the survey with 20 participants from each of Thailand and international institutions involved in interviews. HPWS as a theoretical framework in the academic environment was associated with academic development and promotion ($p < 0.001$). Differences were identified in the performance indicators and promotion criteria between Thailand and international participants. Social inequality, disproportionate administrative decision-making, and wellness towards promoting a healthy work and life balance emerged as central themes.

Practical implications: Study findings consistent through comparative literature, statistical testing, and saturation of interview responses revealed that HPWS as a theoretical framework in human resource management applies to academic development and promotion experiences in higher education.

Originality/value: The paper could continue the evaluation and application of HPWS as a human resource framework towards the mutual benefit of performance and promotion of faculty and higher education institutions.

Keywords: High-Performance, work systems, higher education, human resource management, academic development, work environment, promotion.

Paper type: Research article.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Academic institutions include a performance-based appraisal process to guide faculty towards meeting performance standards and administration to evaluate and reward performance towards promotion. Faculty in higher education continue to be incentivized and challenged through the promotion process in academic institutions and across countries.

Organizations have continued to prioritize promoting productivity in the workforce leading to strategic human resource management practices to achieve more significant performance outcomes and economic benefits (Kramar, 2014). Human resource management practices have further evolved towards the development and implementation of HPWS to provide the environment for productivity and reward with promotion. The domain of an HPWS offers a theoretical framework to examine academic development, work environment, and promotion among faculty in higher education.

1.2 Significance

For faculty in higher education, performance and promotion represent a linear dynamic through a continued professional development experience aligned with promotion. Faculty engage in the performance and promotion process, and higher educational institutions are expected to provide the policies, procedures, support, and rewards for the performance-linked promotion pathway.

Faculty roles in higher education in which performance and promotion are related include teaching, research, service, and administration. Within the dynamic of performance and promotion across academic ranks in higher institutions, there are incentives to encourage and challenges to limit faculty's experience in promotion and the continued growth and development of the institution.

1.3 Study Objectives

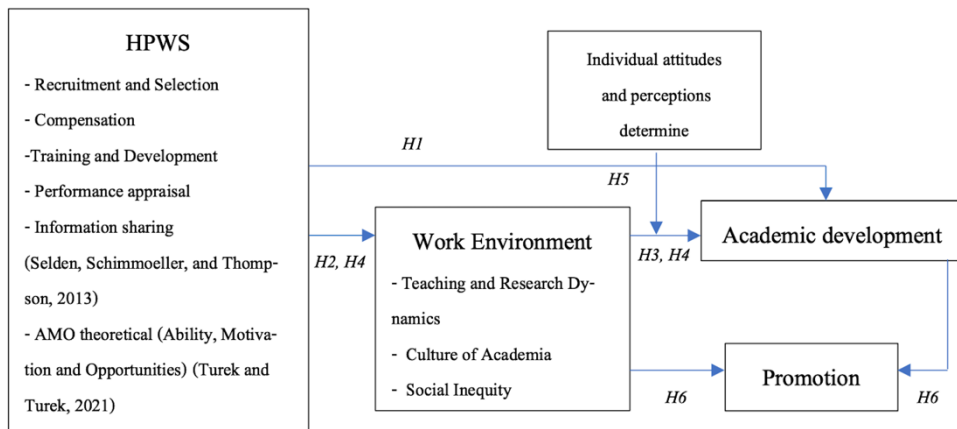
This study explored the context of faculty at higher education institutions in Thailand and international countries related to their experiences in performance and promotion. HPWS, which served as the theoretical framework of the study, is grounded on an analysis of the policies, procedures, incentives, and challenges of performance-based promotion.

Study objectives included 1) applying and evaluating HPWS as a theoretical framework for understanding academic development, work environment, and promotion in higher education, 2) assessing the relationship between academic development, work environment, and promotion in higher education, and 3)

determining variations in standards of academic de-velopment, work environment, and academic promotion among countries.

The primary research question queried if HPWS applies to academic development, work environment, and promotion in higher education? Additionally, hypotheses were tested and reported in the results.

Figure 1. *Conceptual Model*



Source: Own study.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Thailand Context

An analysis of 8 universities in Thailand, reported on critical factors that influence the productivity of the institutions, which include resources, goal, work environment, managerial process, organizational structure, government support, organizational culture and vision, and leader factor (Supapawawisit *et al.*, 2018). Their analysis suggests that multiple variables can impact the productivity outcome of faculty and higher education institutions.

An additional element of performance and promotion in Thailand offers inclusion and exclusion practices by which faculty can be favorably considered or not in the promotion pathway. The unconventional approach to objective evaluation of performance and promotion in Thailand may impact the ability to produce tangible outcomes for the institution and the society, which is the premise of Thailand institutions.

The experience of academic promotion in Thailand universities was described as "discretionary," as distinct categories of academics are provided with the resources and support to achieve the performance and promotion outcomes (Burford *et al.*,

2021). The role of bias in the performance and promotion is reported for higher education institutions and constitutes a moral question and a professional one.

The new policy of Thailand 4.0 adopted by the Royal Thai Government seeks to address gaps in the higher education system for stakeholders to realize the concept of a creative society. The concept of a creative society found in the goals of Thailand 4.0 aims to foster creativity, innovation, inclusivity, and sustainability. The Thailand 4.0 policy is welcomed towards providing the determinants of the work environment, managerial and organizational culture, and framework and support for its successful implementation.

Progress toward the Thailand 4.0 policy required that critical factors such as socio-cultural and mindset are given attention (Buasuwan, 2018). Creativity and innovation have become vital for the competitiveness and survival of higher education institutions as knowledge-based creative thinkers generating novel and useful ideas are changing societies today. Performance and promotion criteria and assessment for Thailand will need to align with the Thailand 4.0 policy and reflect the work roles and responsibilities together with the environment to meet the ambition but vital vision of the policy.

2.2 International Context

Traditionally, universities did not include students, so the dissemination of information was to society rather than the certifying and credentialing of students. The foundational premise of universities is considered the site of scientific discovery and the reason why universities did not have students (Newman, 1907). A century after Newman's initial work, the developing the role of universities included knowledge production and dissemination (Robbins, 1963). The knowledge production component is research and dissemination, referring to teaching and learning involving both faculty and students. Universities have built research and teaching into their mission statements, operations, services, and the roles of faculty and products of students and graduates.

For example, the University of Cambridge has a mission statement, "to contribute to society through the pursuit of education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence." (University of Cambridge, 2022). New York University similarly includes a mission statement, "to be an international center of scholarship, teaching, and research defined by a culture of academic excellence and innovation." (New York University, 2022). These referenced mission statements position teaching and research as central missions for universities and, by extension, the work of faculty.

The performance management literature for higher education advocates for the alignment of an institution's performance measures should be aligned with its strategic objectives and overall mission (Choi *et al.*, 2013). The performance and

promotion guidelines and standards should reflect the balance between teaching and research for performance measures.

The traditional and cultural roles of faculty also highlighted the tenure and promotion process of teaching excellence, service requirements, and rituals of meetings and committees (Greer and Shuck, 2020). Modern traditional expectations are changing together with new practices such as accessing external funding, building, and maintaining an online presence, and non-defined time of work.

Recent evidence suggests that the contributions faculty make to community development and formal partnerships with institutions and international agencies are the expectations for faculty. The generalization of faculty should also be re-viewed in the context of different faculty across different disciplines, varying institutions, and international countries.

The one size does not fit all approach across many spheres should also apply to higher education as institutional purposes differ, multiple levels of socio-economic development exist, and communities that are served have diverse needs and expectations. Differences in faculty nature and the challenges of existing systems in place, which limits faculty towards creating their own space and developing their success was also reported (Ghosh *et al.*, 2019).

The implications of the diversity of cultural norms in a structured academic system can potentially create a clash of cultures and systems and an unproductive performance and promotion experience (Byrd, 2018). Cultural sensitivity is critical for policies and procedures for faculty in higher education towards promoting their potential and that of the institution collectively.

2.3 High-Performance Working System (HPWS)

HPWS is a measure of organizational quality related to employee perception and behavior through knowledge sharing (Carda *et al.*, 2020) and organizational support, which in turn promotes employee creativity. Moreover, the devolved management positively moderates the relationship between perceived organizational support and employee creativity (Tang *et al.*, 2017).

Strong HPWS practice enhances organizational performance (Shih *et al.*, 2006; Zhai and Tian, 2020) and positive outcomes for the organization (economic, cultural, political, legal, and technological) (Dayarathna *et al.*, 2020) and employees (Abugre and Nasere, 2020). On the other hand, HPWS results in work intensification, increased health harm, and challenges to workplace well-being (Chillakuri and Vanka, 2021).

However, flextime work, home-based work, teleworking and compressed working week, benefits, and trade union representation increased HPWS (Mariappanadar and Kramar, 2014) and employee trust and motivation (Kundu and Gahlawat, 2016).

HPWS has a relationship between HR practices and employee performance. HR practices (training and development, compensation, and reward) have a significant and positive effect on employee performance (Abugre and Nasere, 2020). A social identification develops the relationship between HPWS and affective commitment. Also, it mediates the relationship between HPWS and job satisfaction (Young *et al.*, 2010), and HPWS is used as a measuring tool for organizational systems (Edgar *et al.*, 2020).

2.4 HPWS Conceptual Framework

HPWS includes factors like recruitment and selection, compensation, training and development, performance appraisal, information sharing (Selden *et al.*, 2013) or selective staffing, comprehensive training, developmental appraisal, equitable reward systems (Katou, 2022), and ability, motivation, and opportunities (AMO) measures (Turek and Turek, 2021; Fabi *et al.*, 2015; Rasheed *et al.*, 2017). (See Figure 1 on HPWS Conceptual Model).

Measurement of HPWS related to recruitment was reported as job design, training, compensation, formal grievances procedure, information sharing, teams, promotion, performance management, and employee participation (Rasool and Nouman, 2013). While the use of Pfeffer's seven HPWS factors, including employment security, selective hiring, extensive training, teams, decentralized decision making, reduced status distinctions, information sharing, and contingent compensation (Young *et al.*, 2010).

3. Materials and Methods

3.1 Study Design

A mixed-methods approach was used, employing both quantitative tools to administer a survey-based questionnaire, and qualitative interaction was achieved using in-depth interview procedures. Participants included full-time faculty at higher education academic institutions in two categories of study sites.

They were stratified into 1) institutions in Thailand and 2) International institutions across participating countries. Participants were systematically identified from faculty listing on the institution's website and randomly selected to participate based on generating a list of random numbers. Invited participants were included if they had a minimum of 3 years of full-time employment in higher education and have applied for academic promotion (whether successful or not).

3.2 Data Collection

Data collection included a survey and a semi-structured list of questions for the in-depth interview. The first part included a survey that was administered online during the period August 2021 to February 2022, which was based on a combined and modified version of the CRANET survey (Cranet Survey, 2006) and the Graduate Examination Review (GRE) survey on faculty performance (Centra, 1977). The second part included in-depth interviews conducted as video conferences during the period March and April 2022.

Survey data was collected into an MS Excel file for both descriptive and analytic statistical analysis and reporting. Survey data were analyzed with IBM SPSS for Windows, Version 28.0, Armonk, NY: IBM Corp. Analyses included reporting frequencies and proportions of responses and chi-square, likelihood ratio, and linear by linear associations for hypotheses testing. A qualitative review of interview transcripts was assessed for consistency of themes and trends that emerged from participants' responses and interactions.

3.3 Ethical Review

This study was approved by both the Institutional Review Board at St. George's University, Grenada (IRB-21011) and the Research Ethics Committee at Kasetsart University (COA64/035) Applications for review included a detailed study proposal and responses to issues of confidentiality, liability, conflicts of interest, as well as sensitivity and protection of participant's information to be used as data for the study. Informed consent for survey participation was received as part of submitted survey responses and written consent was received prior to each interview.

4. Research Results

4.1 Demographic Comparison

The study sample size of 463 included 236 from Thailand and 227 from international responses. The median age range was 41 to 50 years in both samples (no statistically significant difference), but the international sample had more participants 60 years of age or older (Thailand = 3%, International = 18%, statistically significant difference, $p < 0.001$). Gender profile was similar in both samples, with Thailand = 54% Female and International = 50% Female (no statistically significant difference).

The marital profile was similar in both samples, with Thailand = 48% Married and International = 50% Married (no statistically significant difference). Thailand participants were at the Assistant Professor rank (53%), while only 23% of international participants were at that rank. Consistent with their older age profile, a more significant proportion of international participants were at Associate Professor or Professor rank (Thailand = 13%, International = 44%, statistically significant

difference, $p < 0.001$). Although the median years of experience for both samples were 11 to 15 years, consistent with their older age profile, a more significant proportion of international participants had 21 or more years of experience (Thailand = 23%, International = 35%, statistically significant difference, $p = 0.005$). Although similar in gender profile and marital status, the international participants tended to be older, more senior in rank, and with more experience than the Thailand participants.

4.2 High-Performance Work Systems Comparison

The Thailand sample was more likely to have written policies and procedures than the international sample (86% compared to 67%, statistically significant difference, $p < 0.001$). While in the Thailand sample, only 10% reported subsequent faculty consultation, over 61% did so in the international sample. In contrast, 79% of the Thailand sample reported no faculty consultation or faculty consultation on implementation, and 32% did so in the international sample (statistically significant difference, $p < 0.001$).

There is no evidence of a difference between the two samples in the amount of one-way or two-way communication about performance and promotion. Concerning personnel decisions about pay and benefits, recruitment and selection, training and development, industrial relations, and workforce size, there was a distinct difference between the samples in the reported involvement of the human resources department. In the Thailand sample, the department head made the decisions 48% of the time without the human resources department's involvement, while that was the case only 5% of the time in the international sample (statistically significant difference, $p < 0.001$).

In contrast, the department head consulted with the human resources department in personnel decisions far more in the international sample than in the Thailand sample (Thailand = 30%, International = 61%, statistically significant difference, $p < 0.001$). In the international sample, 90% of the time, industrial relations decisions were made by the human resources department alone. In comparison, which was the case 8% of the time in the Thailand sample (statistically significant difference, $p < 0.001$). In the Thailand sample, 79% of the participants reported that appraisal input came from the supervisor, the employee, and students.

In comparison, 78% of the participants reported that appraisal input was more limited, with input from the supervisor and some input from peers in the international sample. In the Thailand sample, 81% of the participants reported that the appraisal system was used broadly for human resources planning, training and development, career guidance, pay determination, and institution of work. In contrast, 74% of the participants reported that the appraisal system was used more limitedly only for human resources planning and pay determination in the international sample.

4.3 Work Environment: Teaching and Research

There was no evidence that the two samples were different in the proportions appraised for teaching (20% to 80%), research ($\leq 30\%$), service ($\leq 30\%$), or administration ($\leq 10\%$). The samples were different for evaluation criteria (statistically significant difference, $p < 0.001$). While in the international sample, the participants were in consensus on the importance of a factor but varied widely on factor importance in the Thailand sample. Table 1 below illustrates the responses to the assessed evaluation criteria.

Table 1. Teaching and Research Evaluation Criteria and Factor Level Responses

Classroom teaching	82% of the international notes were a major factor
	40% of the Thailand participants identified it as a major factor, and 34% indicated a critical factor
Number of Publications	56% of the international participants noted it was a major factor
	33% of the Thailand participants identified it as a major factor, and 45% indicated a critical factor
Quality of Publications	61% of the international participants noted it was a minor factor
	14% of the Thailand participants identified it as a minor factor, with 77% indicating a major or critical factor
Non-publication Research	76% of the international participants noted it was a minor factor
	14% of the Thailand participants identified it as a minor factor, with 75% indicating a major or critical factor
Student Supervision	75% of the international participants noted it was a minor factor
	22% of the Thailand participants identified it as a minor factor, with 61% indicating a major or critical factor
Student Advising	77% of the international participants noted it was a minor factor
	21% of the Thailand participants identified it as a minor factor, with 64% indicating a major or critical factor
Committee Work	51% of the international participants noted it was a minor factor
	29% of the Thailand participants identified it as a minor factor, with 60% indicating a major or critical factor
Community Service	72% of the international participants noted it was a minor factor
	30% of the Thailand participants identified it as a minor factor, with 58% indicating a major or critical factor
Competing Job Offers	60% of the international participants noted it was a minor factor
	19% of the Thailand participants identified it as not a factor, with 47% indicated it was a major or critical factor
Consultations	72% of the international participants noted it was a minor factor
	36% of the Thailand participants identified it as a minor factor, with 47% indicated it was a major or critical factor
Personality	46% of the international participants said it was a major factor
	26% of the Thailand participants identified it as a major factor, with 54% indicated was a minor factor or not a factor
Qualifications	83% of the international participants noted it was a major factor
	29% of the Thailand participants identified it as a major factor, with 31% indicated was a critical factor

International participants reported more on the importance of each factor while Thailand participants indicated greater importance on all evaluation criteria, except for personality and qualification.

Source: Own study.

4.4 Academic Development

There was evidence that the samples differed in the importance of performance indicators (statistically significant difference, $p < 0.001$). While in the international sample, the participants were in consensus on the importance of a factor, participants varied widely on factor importance in the Thailand sample. Table 2 below illustrates the factor level responses to criteria for academic development.

Table 2. *Academic Development Criteria and Factor Level Responses*

Student Ratings	85% of the international participants noted it was a major factor
	27% of the Thailand participants identified it as a major factor, and 45% indicated it was a critical factor
Student Opinions	89% of the international participants noted it was a minor factor
	81% of the Thailand participants identified as a major or critical factor
Colleague Ratings	89% of the international participants noted it was a minor factor
	32% of the Thailand participants identified it was not a factor, yet 35% indicated it was a major or even critical factor
Colleague Opinions	93% of the international participants noted it was a minor factor
	28% of the Thailand participants identified it was not a factor, yet 37% indicated it was a major or even critical factor
Student Exam Performance	97% of the international participants noted it was a minor or major factor
	Thailand participants ranged from not a factor to a critical factor
Syllabi and Exams	99% of the international participants noted it was a minor factor
	Thailand participants ranged from not a factor to a critical factor
Chair Evaluation	96% of the international participants noted it was a major or critical factor
	67% of the Thailand participants identified was a major or critical factor
Dean Evaluation	94% of the international participants noted it was a major or critical factor
	68% of the Thailand participants identified was a major or critical factor
Committee Evaluation	84% of the international participants noted it was a major or critical factor
	76% of the Thailand participants identified was a major or critical factor
Self-Evaluation	75% of the international participants noted it was not a factor
	Thailand participants ranged from not a factor to a critical factor
Long-term Student Performance	68% of the international participants noted it was not a factor
	Thailand participants ranged from not a factor to a critical factor

Alumni Opinions	75% of the international participants noted it was not a factor
	Thailand participants ranged from not a factor to a critical factor
Course Popularity	67% of the international participants noted it was a major factor
	Thailand participants ranged from not a factor to a critical factor
Teaching Recording	99% of the international participants noted it was not a factor or was a minor factor
	Thailand participants ranged from not a factor to a critical factor
Teaching Improvements	92% of the international participants noted it was a minor factor
	82% of the Thailand participants ranged from minor, major, or even critical factor

Source: Own study.

International participants saw the importance of all factors, while Thailand participants indicated greater importance placed on student ratings and opinions and colleague ratings and opinions. In contrast, the international participants placed far greater importance on the chair's, dean's, and committee's evaluation than the Thailand participants.

The Thailand participants placed higher importance on teaching and slightly higher importance on student exam performance and course syllabi and exams than the international participants. Although international participants saw teaching improvement as a minor factor, the Thailand participants saw it as having greater importance. Further, the Thailand participants placed greater importance on self-evaluation, long-term student performance, and alumni opinions, while the international participants did not consider these factors.

Table 3. *Number of Papers and Publications and Factor Level Responses*

Journal Publications	58% of the international participants noted it was a major factor
	28% of the Thailand participants identified it as a major factor, and 47% indicated it was a critical factor
Quality Publications	64% of the international participants noted it was a minor factor
	35% of the Thailand participants identified it as a major factor, and 49% indicated it was a critical factor
Unpublished Papers	83% of the international participants noted it was not a factor
	64% of the Thailand participants identified as a minor, major, or even critical factor
Conference Papers	82% of the international participants noted it was a minor factor
	86% of the Thailand participants identified as a minor, major, or even critical factor
Citations	80% of the international participants noted it was a minor factor
	76% of the Thailand participants identified as a minor, major, or even critical factor
Books as Senior Authors	87% of the international participants noted it was a minor factor
	64% of the Thailand participants identified as a minor, major, or even critical factor
Books as Junior Authors	89% of the international participants noted it was a minor factor
	28% of the Thailand participants identified as a minor, major, or even critical factor

	critical factor
Monographs or Chapters	93% of the international participants noted it was a minor factor
	35% of the Thailand participants identified as a minor, major, or even critical factor

Source: Own study.

4.5 Promotion Criteria

There was evidence that the samples differed in the importance of promotion criteria (statistically significant difference, $p < 0.001$). While in the international sample, the participants were in consensus on the importance of a factor, participants varied widely on factor importance in the Thailand sample. Overall, the Thailand participants indicated a more comprehensive range of factors considered as promotion criteria.

4.6 Attitudes and Perceptions

In both samples, most participants said that the promotion system meets their needs to a small extent (Thailand = 55%, International = 61%, no statistically significant difference). Only about one-third of the participants in both samples said the promotion system meets their needs to a large extent (Thailand = 36%, International = 30%, no statistically significant difference). Most participants perceived the promotion system as only partially meeting their needs in both groups.

Table 4. Hypothesis Testing

H1: HPWS theory is associated with academic development
All measures of testing resulted in a significance level of <0.001 , which resulted in Hypothesis 1 being correct as HPWS was assessed as associated with academic development. Additionally, <0.001 significance levels also resulted when HPWS was assessed for association with teaching and research dynamic, culture of the academic environment, social equity, attitude and perception, and promotion.
H2: HPWS theory is associated with the work environment
Measures of association resulted in a significance level of 0.012 by Pearson Chi-Square, 0.015 as a likelihood ratio, and 0.773 for linear-by-linear association. The analysis suggests that HPWS was associated with the work environment, but the association was a weak one. Additionally, measures for association with the work environment on attitude and perception resulted in a significance level of 0.034 by Pearson Chi-Square, 0.040 as a likelihood ratio, and 0.342 for linear-by-linear association. These measures of association continue to remain on the borderline of the statistically significant level. Furthermore, academic development and the work environment produced significant levels of 0.057 by Pearson Chi-Square, 0.107 as a likelihood ratio, and 0.076 for linear-by-linear association, which was interpreted as not significant. HPWS as a theoretical framework is variably associated with the work environment.
H3: Work environment is associated with academic development
Measures of association resulted in a significance level of 0.057 by Pearson Chi-Square, 0.107 as a likelihood ratio, and 0.076 for linear-by-linear association. The findings of measures of association between work environment and academic development are in

contradiction to hypothesis 3.
H4: HPWS is associated with both academic development and work environment
Significance levels of <0.001 for Pearson Chi-Square, likelihood ratio, and linear by linear association resulted when the HPWS was compared with both academic development and work environment. Therefore, hypothesis 4, which stated that HPWS theoretical framework is associated with academic development and work environment, is valid.
H5: Individual attitudes and perceptions are associated with academic development and the work environment
When measured for association with academic development, attitudes and perceptions resulted in a significance level of <0.001 by Pearson Chi-Square, likelihood ratio, and linear by linear association. When measured for association with the work environment, attitudes and perceptions resulted in a significance level of 0.034 by Pearson Chi-Square, 0.040 as a likelihood ratio, and 0.342 for linear-by-linear association, suggesting a borderline association. Hypothesis 5 is partially valid as it relates to individual attitudes and perceptions of academic development.
H6: Academic development and work environment is associated with the promotion
Both academic development and the work environment were assessed to be associated with promotion producing statistically significant levels of <0.001 by Pearson Chi-Square, 0.002 by likelihood ratio, and 0.005 for linear-by-linear association. Hypothesis 6 is valid as academic development, and the work environment were found to be associated with a promotion.

Source: Own study.

Analysis of study hypotheses revealed that hypotheses 1, 4, 5, and 6 are valid based on noted associations and were therefore accepted. Hypotheses 2 and 3 generated variable measures of association from weak association to no association and, as such, were rejected.

4.7 Interview Data and Thematic Analysis

The following Table 5 shows a comparison of the themes from interviews. Although participant's interviews from both Thailand and international institutions provided the same themes, there were similarities (underlined and italicized) and differences in sub-themes.

Table 5. *Comparison of Interview Themes of Institutions in Thailand and International Institutions*

Themes	Institutions in Thailand	International Institutions
Theme 1: Purpose of Career	Work and life balance, Contribute to Community, Previous teaching Experience, Honorable profession, and stable opportunity to work in academia.	Work and life balance, Experience or connection with University, Social Development, Opportunity to work in academia
Theme 2: Career Goals	Self-Development, Organization and	Work-life balance, Promotion and Development,

		Government Policy, Research and Academic Service	Profit, Research, and Service
Theme 3: Expectations		Justice, Standards, Work- Life Balance, Social Acceptance, Opportunities and Support,	Work-Life Balance, Social Acceptance, Opportunities and Support, Independent work environment, Administrative and political organization culture
Theme 4: Academic Roles and Responsibly		Teach, Research, Publication, and Service, Administration	Teach, Research, Publication, and Service, Administration
Theme 5: Promotion Pathway		Process, Opportunities and Challenges, Research	Process, Opportunities and Challenges, Student Evaluations, Research, Partnerships
Theme 6: Promotion Factors		The government's policy, the Policy of the University, Time and resources for Research, Politics, and conflict in the work environment. Employment contract and Publication Criteria	Personal drive, Politics of the organization, and conflict in the work environment (gender, ethnicity, immigration status)
Theme 7: Motivation		Attitude, Reputation, Respect and Acceptability, Policy, Opportunity	Attitude, Incentive and Profit, Student, Respect and Acceptability

Source: Own study.

Themes from interviews focused on the purpose of an academic career, goals for working in higher education, expectations for work and life, academic roles and responsibilities, experience with promotion, factors that determine promotion, and the motivation to pursue promotion.

Participants from Thailand and international institutions were similar in their responses related to the quality of work and life balance, opportunities to gain employment in academia, and roles in teaching, research, and service. Additionally, expectations of work and life balance, opportunities, support for promotion, administrative, social, and political factors that determine promotion, and overall attitude of respect and acceptability were shared as motivation to perform for promotion.

Participants from Thailand and international institutions differed in their responses related to the purpose of an academic career as Thailand participants considered higher education as an honorable and stable profession. In contrast, international participants aligned university work with social development. Career goals for Thailand participants centered on self-development, while profit related to

international participants. Expectations for Thailand participants were based on the premise of justice and standards, while for international participants focused on the independence of work and political experience.

Promotion factors for Thailand participants included employment contracts and publications, while for international participants reflected barriers related to gender, ethnicity, and immigration status. Motivation Thai participants focused on reputation and government policy, while incentive and profit were related to international participants.

5. Discussion

5.1 HPWS in Academic Settings

HPWS is a system that creates an environment that allows employees to increase their productivity and efficiency to help a business succeed. Elements of HPWS include continuous training, sharing of concerns and suggestions, cultural compatibility with the work environment, commitment to performance measures, and growing the organization's reputation. HPWS is implemented strategically in the business environment and has become a human resource model for employee management, evaluation, and remuneration.

Academic institutions, particularly at the higher education level, continue to face challenges of providing education to enrolled students, attracting competent faculty and staff, conducting research and development for funding, scholarly output, and reputation, and managing the overall income and expenditure of the institutions. HPWS principles and criteria for performance provide an applicable mechanism for human resource management in an academic setting.

HPWS has, for over three decades, led the large-scale design and implementation for occupational environments, including manufacturing, banking, airlines, hospitals, and corporate business (Jewell *et al.*, 2022). The formal or perceived application of HPWS in academic higher education institutions remains unreported as the considerable research to practice gap in academia may limit the comparison with noted business enterprises.

However, for the applicability of HPWS in academic settings, relevant research is needed to determine its role and function. An HPWS approach towards criteria for and factors that determine performance and promotion is relevant research on which this study was based. Substantial evidence from the literature has highlighted that HPWS practices are significant predictors and drivers of enhanced performance (Abboh *et al.*, 2022). Also, the functionality of high-performance work practices is context-dependent, including geographical location, public and private nature, and socio-cultural factors.

Quality assurance and high efficiency in higher education depend on the compliance of faculty with requirements of performance standards for promotion and the extent to which the measurable outcomes from teaching, research, service, and administration are met (Furqatovna *et al.*, 2022). Quality of work-life, institutional commitment, and organizational structures and procedures to support performance impacts the behavior of academics in higher education.

Investigating the organizational environment and workplace performance in higher education has been conducted using quantitative correlation models. Studies have reported a strong positive correlation between the quality of work-life and organizational commitment, a moderate positive correlation between the quality of work-life and organizational citizenship behavior, and a moderate positive correlation between organizational commitment and organizational citizenship behavior (Koyuncu and Demirhan, 2021).

The COVID pandemic further provided the opportunity to examine the policies and procedures for academic work and performance in an environment of public health restrictions. The changes and readiness of academia to adapt to technology for distance and online learning and scholarship provided an added variable to performance requirements and expectations.

The use of technology and the engagement of students and colleagues alike within the anxiety and challenges provided another contextual element in this study (Audiana, 2022). Theoretical and practical implications, limitations, and directions for future learning and research also framed the experiences and realities of participants and the overall study.

The study determined that HPWS criteria on performance measures for higher education and factors that determine performance outcomes, including academic development, teaching and research performance, work environment, academic culture, attitudes and perceptions, social norms, and promotions were valid. The application of HPWS criteria for academic institutions in this study is a novel one and shows that the academic industry lag in the rapidly evolving human resource management process.

This study shows the urgency of the academic setting to associate the HPWS standards and criteria with the development of pedagogical competence, scholarly outcomes, and institutional advancement through the performance and promotion process for faculty and staff.

5.2 Study Limitations

The study design was a cross-sectional approach that collected data from both surveys and interviews at a point in time. The single point of data collection limits the analysis conducted on measures of association and strength of association which

would have been possible with multiple data collection points. The study's results and interpretations cannot be generalizable as the findings are specific to the participants and their respective institutions and geographic locations. The study was conducted during the period of the COVID pandemic which may have informed the attitudes, perceptions, and realities specific to the pandemic period and not necessarily from the pre-pandemic experience.

5.3 Recommendations

Implement HPWS: HPWS characteristics, when applied to higher education settings, were found to be associated with academic development and promotion. Human resource management in higher education institutions should formally implement HPWS.

Evaluate Work Environment: A work environment that promotes performance and promotion will significantly benefit all stakeholders in higher education. The reported work environment in higher education was inconsistent with positive performance and promotion experiences and should be evaluated to provide the conditions and incentives for faculty to perform.

Comparable Academic Settings: Higher education in an increasingly globalized world requires students, faculty, and institutions to engage in cross-institutional, trans-border, and multidisciplinary collaborations in teaching exchanges, research collaborations, academic service partnerships, and comparable administrative systems and procedures. The establishment of comparable criteria and assessment processes for teaching, research, service, administration, and performance and promotion standards will allow for the international engagement of stakeholders in higher education.

The study, through responses from and interaction with participants, also identified unequal experiences, including:

- Disproportionate allocation of time and effort among faculty which preferentially favored some and not others to conduct the required work to meet the performance and promotion criteria
- Discrimination faced by participants related to their age, gender, ethnicity, and migration status adversely impacted the ability to perform and attain promotion.
- Differences in decision-making at the administrative level are based on an alignment of faculty at a personal and network-level as opposed to established performance standards.

Equity is a legal, professional, and moral issue that affects higher education institutions. An examination and intervention toward applying the principle of equity in policies, procedures, and decision-making is needed.

Higher education institutions have a human resource management objective towards achieving the maximum performance and outcomes from individuals and collectively as an organization. Faculty in higher education are highly trained and skilled professionals and have experience in their professional roles. Work in higher education progress with the rigor of academic scholarship and promotion.

Faculty, however, are also at various stages of their personal development and responsibilities, ranging from family life to social life and personal health and development. The work and life balance are essential for faculty to function both at a professional and personal level.

Therefore, higher education institutions need to invest time and resources towards promoting wellness in their community, which will be repaid in the personal satisfaction and professional performance that benefit all in higher education.

6. Conclusions

The study conclusions are based on triangulated data from the literature, quantitative survey analysis, and qualitative in-depth interviews analysis. The findings that were consistent through comparative literature review, statistical testing, and saturation of interview re-sponses revealed:

- HPWS is a theoretical framework in human resource management that applies to higher education academic performance and promotion experiences.
- Personal and social determinants were influential in the choice of academic career, motivation for performance, and outcomes of the promotion process.
- The work environment was not identified as associated with academic performance and promotion.
- Differences exist across institutions and countries on standards of performance and criteria for the promotion.

Additional and significant findings from the study included:

- Higher education is impacted by social inequality and disproportionate professional decision-making.
- Wellness is an area for concern and attention among faculty towards promoting a healthy work and life balance.

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