

Human Resource Management Practices & Organizational Commitment: A Study of Science & Technology Professionals in Indian Context

by

Daljit Singh Bedi

Department of Humanities & Social Sciences

Submitted

**In fulfillment of the requirement of the degree of
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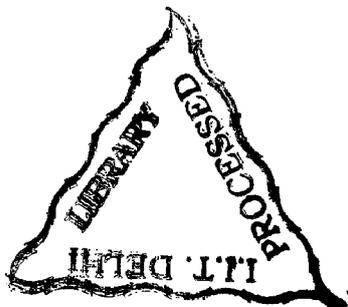


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Certificate

It is certified that the thesis titled, '*Human Resource Management Practices & Organizational Commitment: A Study of Science & Technology Professionals in the Indian Context*' being submitted by Mr. Daljit Singh Bedi to the Indian Institute of Technology Delhi, New Delhi, for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, is a record of bonafide research work carried out by him under my guidance and supervision.

The results presented in this thesis have not been submitted to any other university or institute for the award of a doctoral degree or diploma.



30 June 2004

Prof. (Dr.) Anuradha Sharma
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi
New Delhi-110 016, India

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(Daljit Singh Bedi)

Abstract

Organizational commitment (OC) is a well-studied concept in management science today. It has been viewed as *employees' loyalty* to their organization. There has also been consistent pattern in the research findings about the consequences of OC in that the committed employees are less likely to leave the organization, have fewer days of absenteeism, and are more productive. All these attributes are strategically important for the effectiveness of any organization. It therefore becomes strategically important for the practitioners to be aware of how OC is related to HR variables.

Research worldwide has indicated that the HR practices do have the potential to influence employee's commitment. In fact, during the last decade, the desire for employee commitment has been supported by several HRM writers, who have argued that the concept is a central part of HR models. Several other studies have focused on specific HR practices to determine their impact on OC. The results of these research works have demonstrated links between commitment and HR practices related to recruitment and selection, orientation (socialization), training, performance appraisal, promotion, pay and compensation, and benefits. However, the research has also suggested that this relationship will depend upon the perception of the employees about these practices, i.e., the relationship between HR practices and organizational commitment is not necessarily *unconditional*. Thus, for an effective use of HR practices to influence OC, it becomes important to understand the mechanisms by which the HR practices exert their influence on the various forms of commitment. As noted above, the HR practices have their maximum impact on affective commitment when the employees believed that their organization is motivated by their desire to create a climate of concern and to be fair in its dealings with employees. These mechanisms correspond closely to two variables: Organizational support and organizational justice.

Today, there is a consensus that OC is a multidimensional construct and can take different forms. However, there has been an imbalance in the attention given to all the forms an OC can take. Besides, the role of different forms of commitment may differ in different cultures existing across the world. Also, it has become very important to know that what the practitioners can do to positively influence the commitment amongst their employees. The research findings have suggested a link between HR practices and commitment, but the data are limited. Furthermore, for any management practice to produce desirable impact on the commitment amongst employees, it is important to know the mechanisms involved in the formation of commitment.

The present research study attempted to bridge these research gaps by (i) Examining relationship of the HR practices with *three distinguishable forms of commitment*, viz., affective, continuance and normative; (ii) *Testing the potential mediating effects* of two variables identified above, namely, procedural justice and organizational support; by surveying science and technology professionals *in this part of the world working in four different categories of organizations*. Population in this study comprised science and technology professionals in four major categories of organizations, including two categories of public sector undertakings, a Government of

India R&D organization operating at the national level, and a non-governmental organization. These organizations were selected on purposive basis. The respondents (256 numbers) were selected by simple random sampling method. The data were collected by using standard empirically established questionnaires for all variables. Univariate, bivariate, and multivariate statistical techniques were applied to compute and analyze the data. The specific hypotheses of this research are:

Hypothesis 1

There will be a positive relationship between all identified *HR* and all the three distinguishable forms of OC, namely affective, continuance and normative OC amongst science and technology professionals in Indian organizations.

There are seven corollaries of this hypothesis.

Hypothesis 2 & 2a

There will be a positive relationship between individual HR practices as well as integrated HR practices as a whole and the three distinguishable forms of OC amongst science and technology professionals in *four distinguishable groups of organizations in India and the relationship will vary with each category of organizations.*

Hypothesis 3

Individual HR practices would predict all three distinguishable forms of OC, namely affective, continuance, and normative OC amongst science and technology professionals in Indian organizations.

There are seven corollaries of this hypothesis.

Hypothesis 4

The organizational support will mediate the relationship between individual HR practices and all three distinguishable forms of OC, namely affective, continuance, and normative OC amongst science and technology professionals in Indian organizations.

Hypothesis 5

The organizational (procedural) justice will mediate the relationship between individual HR practices and all three distinguishable forms of OC, namely affective, continuance, and normative OC amongst science and technology professionals in Indian organizations.

Hypothesis 6

There will be positive relationship between *background variables like age, gender, education, job and organizational tenure, marital status, change in organizations and organizational level* and three distinguishable forms of OC. The background variables would also predict all three distinguishable forms of OC, namely affective, continuance, and normative OC amongst science and technology professionals in Indian organizations.

In general, the research findings are consistent with the earlier findings introduced in this study and are therefore supportive to our hypotheses. The findings will go a long way in enhancing the understanding of commitment, how it develops, and it can be managed to optimize its contribution to improving the organizational outcomes. The findings have strongly indicated that HR practices can be one organizational tool to manage the development of commitment amongst employees by way of demonstrating their support for them and in turn inculcate attachment amongst employees as a natural reciprocation. Also, the findings have indicated that the relationship between HR practices and OC is mediated by organizational support and organizational justice. Of the two variables hypothesized as mediators in the relationship between HR practices and OC, the strongest evidence for mediation was obtained for organizational justice suggesting that procedural justice might be an important factor in shaping employees' perception of support and ultimately their commitment.

Overall, the study has important implications for strategic human resource management for any organization to achieve competitive advantage in today's global environment.

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