THE INFLUENCE OF HUMAN RESOURCE PRACTICES, SOCIAL SUPPORT AND PERSONALITY TRAITS ON AFFECTIVE COMMITMENT: A STUDY ON PRIVATE HIGHER EDUCATION COLLEGES IN OMAN

Thesis submitted to
Othman Yeop Abdullah Graduate School of Business,
Universiti Utara Malaysia,
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for degree in Master of Human Resource Management
PERMISSION TO USE

In presenting this thesis in fulfillment of the requirements for a Post Graduate degree from the University Utara Malaysia (UUM), I agree that the Library of this university may make it freely available for inspection. I further agree that permission for copying this thesis in any manner, in whole or in part, for scholarly purposes may be granted by my supervisor(s) or in their absence, by the Dean of Othman Yeop Abdullah Graduate School of Business where I did my thesis. It is understood that any copying or publication or use of this thesis or parts of it for financial gain shall not be allowed without my written permission. It is also understood that due recognition shall be given to me and to the UUM in any scholarly use which may be made of any material in my thesis.

Request for permission to copy or to make other use of materials in this thesis in whole or in part should be addressed to:

Dean of Othman Yeop Abdullah Graduate School of Business
Universiti Utara Malaysia
06010 UUM Sintok
Kedah Darul Aman
ABSTRACT

The main objective of this study was to determine the factors that influence affective organizational commitment. The research framework contained three independent variables, namely Human Resource Practices (career development and financial incentives), Social Support, and Personality Traits (Conscientiousness and openness to experience). The dependent variable of this study was affective organizational commitment of employees. The targeted sample was the employees of private higher education colleges in Oman. The current research used the survey method. 181 questionnaires were distributed and 140 questionnaires were received back, giving the study a response rate of 77%. The analysis method used was structural equation modelling PLS. The main finding of the study showed that human resource practices, social support, and personality traits had significant influence on affective organizational commitment.

Keywords: affective commitment, human resource practices, social support, personality traits, Oman, private higher education colleges.
ABSTRAK


Kata kunci: komitmen afektif, amalan-amalan sumber manusia, sokongan sosial, ciri-ciri personaliti, Oman, kolej pengajian tinggi swasta.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

‘In the Name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful’

Foremost, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor Assco. Prof. Dr. Mohmad Yazam bin Sharif for the continuous support of my master study and research, for his enthusiasm, motivation, patience, and immense knowledge. His guidance helped me in all the time of research and writing of this thesis.

I am also grateful to Dr. Irene Yong for providing useful suggesting about this thesis. My sincere thanks also go to Dr. Hashed Mabkhot for his teaching and helping a lot in analysis process of thesis data. They are all hard working doctors and I believe their academic achievements will continue to increase.

In addition, I want to express my gratitude to my family members; my beloved uncle Associate Professor Dr. Muselem Al-Wehebi for his continuous guidance and encouragement from the childhood till now, my lovely wife has also shown immense love, caring, kindness, patience and persistent encouragement during the master journey. Indeed it was not easy for her pursuing a Master of Education degree; at the same time effectively making the home, my dear parents, brother, sisters, and brother in law Hamood, who held me throughout the entire procedure so that I never give up, be confident, and be prompted to finish this research report.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

PERMISSION TO USE ................................................................................................................................. i
ABSTRACT .................................................................................................................................................... ii
ABSTRAK ........................................................................................................................................................ iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT ............................................................................................................................... iv
LIST OF TABLES ........................................................................................................................................ viii
LIST OF FIGURES ........................................................................................................................................ viix
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS ....................................................................................................................... x

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION
1.1 Introduction ................................................................................................................................................ 1
1.2 Background of the Study ............................................................................................................................ 1
1.3 Problem Statement .................................................................................................................................... 7
1.4 Research Questions ................................................................................................................................... 10
1.5 Research Objectives .................................................................................................................................. 11
1.6 Significance of the Study ........................................................................................................................ 11
1.7 Scope of the Study ..................................................................................................................................... 13
1.8 Organization of Thesis Chapters ........................................................................................................... 14

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW
2.1 Introduction ................................................................................................................................................ 15
2.2 Definition of Key Variables ...................................................................................................................... 15
  2.2.1 Affective Commitment ...................................................................................................................... 15
  2.2.2 Human Resource Practices .............................................................................................................. 16
  2.2.3 Social Support ................................................................................................................................. 19
  2.2.4 Personality Traits ............................................................................................................................ 20
2.3 Theoretical Background of Affective Commitment ................................................................................. 21
2.4 Theoretical Background of Human Resource Practices .................................................................... 26
  2.4.1 Career Development ....................................................................................................................... 28
  2.4.2 Financial Incentives ........................................................................................................................ 34
2.5 Theoretical Background of Social Support ................................................................. 38
2.6 Theoretical Background of Personality Traits ............................................................ 41
  2.6.1 Conscientiousness ............................................................................................... 44
  2.6.2 Openness to Experience .................................................................................... 45
2.7 Human Resource Practices and Affective Commitment ............................................ 48
  2.7.1 Career Development and Affective Commitment ............................................. 48
  2.7.2 Financial Incentives and Affective Commitment .............................................. 52
2.8 Social Support and Affective Commitment ............................................................. 54
2.9 Personality Traits and Affective Commitment ......................................................... 56
2.10 Underpinning Theory .............................................................................................. 59
2.11 Chapter Summary .................................................................................................. 62

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY
3.1 Introduction ............................................................................................................. 63
3.2 Research Framework ............................................................................................... 63
3.3 Hypotheses Development ....................................................................................... 64
3.4 Research Design ..................................................................................................... 65
3.5 Operational Definition ........................................................................................... 67
3.6 Instrument Development ......................................................................................... 73
3.7 Population and Sampling ....................................................................................... 74
3.8 Pilot Test ............................................................................................................... 75
  3.8.1 Validity Test ...................................................................................................... 76
  3.8.2 Reliability Test ................................................................................................. 76
3.9 Data Collection ....................................................................................................... 77
3.10 Procedures of Data Collection .............................................................................. 78
3.11 Techniques of Data Analysis ................................................................................. 78
3.12 Chapter Summary .................................................................................................. 79

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS AND FINDINGS
4.1 Introduction ............................................................................................................. 81
4.2 Response Rate ....................................................................................................... 81
4.3 Data Screening and Initial Analysis ....................................................................... 82
# LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME OF TABLE</th>
<th>PAGE NUMBER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Table 2.1 LR on Career Development and Affective Commitment</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 2.2 LR on Financial Incentives and Affective Commitment</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 2.3 LR on Social Support and Affective Commitment</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 2.4 LR on Personality Traits and Affective Commitment</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 2.5 Three component model of commitment</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 3.1 Research Hypotheses</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 3.2 Survey Items Related to Affective Commitment</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 3.3 Survey Items Related to Career Development</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 3.4 Survey Items Related to Financial Incentives</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 3.5 Survey Items Related to Social Support</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 3.6 Survey Items Related to Personality Traits</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 3.7 Description of Survey’s Section</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 3.8 Variables’ Reliability Statistics of pilot study</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.1 Response Rate of the questionnaire</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.2 The ratio of missing values</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.3 Tolerance and Variance Inflation Factors (VIF)</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.4 Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.5 Level of Agreement</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.6 the result of variables’ level</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.7 Descriptive Statistics for Latent Variables</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.8 Loadings, Composite Reliability and Average Variance Extracted</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.9 Latent Constructs Correlations and Square Roots of (AVE)</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.10 Cross Loading</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.11 Structural Model Assessment</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.12 Variance Explained in the Endogenous Latent Variables</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.13 Hypotheses Testing Result</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FIGURE NAME</th>
<th>PAGE NUMBER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Figure 3.1 Research Framework</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4.1 Histogram</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4.2 P-P Plot</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4.3 A Two-Step Process of PLS Path Model Assessment</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4.4 Measurement Model</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4.5 Structural Model</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AC</td>
<td>Affective Commitment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AVE</td>
<td>Average Variance Extracted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CD</td>
<td>Career Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DV</td>
<td>Dependent Variable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FI</td>
<td>Financial Incentives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GoF</td>
<td>Goodness-of-Fit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H1</td>
<td>First Hypothesis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H2</td>
<td>Second Hypothesis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H3</td>
<td>Third Hypothesis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HRP</td>
<td>Human Resource Practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>Independent Variable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LR</td>
<td>Literature Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OC</td>
<td>Organizational commitment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLS</td>
<td>Partial Least Squares</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PT</td>
<td>Personality Traits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTC</td>
<td>Personality trait Conscientiousness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTO</td>
<td>Personality Trait Openness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEM</td>
<td>Structural Equation Modelling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPSS</td>
<td>Statistical Package of Social Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SS</td>
<td>Social Support</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The chapter contains seven main sections. They are focusing on the study background, the statement of research problem, questions about research, objectives of the study, the scope of the research, the research significance, lastly organization of this thesis. The main purpose of this part is to represent the structure of the study and the context of this research.

This chapter describes the general idea of the study that was investigated. Moreover, it debates about the human factors which interrelated Human Resource Practices, Social Support, Personality Traits, and its influence on Affective Commitment, that commitment is an essential feature which influence the organizational performance.

1.2 Background of the Study

Nowadays, the competitiveness in the business world is based on behaviour and attitude of human resources in workplace. If employers assume their employees as a valuable resource in organization, employees will become satisfied, relaxed. As a result, they will attach emotionally and perceive the concept of organizational commitment as a real practicing in the workplace (Shumaila, Aslam, Sadaqat, Maqsood, & Nazir, 2012). Commitment is the major issue that has been and would always be of great significance for organizations to boost the productivity and decline cost tolerate of employee turnover (Saputra, 2014). In addition, organizations strive for the committed human resource in order to fulfil its strategic goal (Riaz, Haider, & Open, 2010). Moreover, organization
The contents of the thesis is for internal user only
REFERENCES


Lawler, E. E. (2003). Treat people right. How Organizations and Employees can Create a Win Win Relationship to Achieve High Performance at All Levels, San Francisco/CA.


