

Effect of Features of Human Resource Management Processes on Commitment of Staff of Commercial Banks in Kenya: A Survey of Commercial Banks in Kiambu County

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ABSTRACT

In this study, effect of features of HRM processes on commitment of staff of commercial banks in Kiambu County in Kenya was examined. HRM processes that were considered were performance appraisal process, training process and performance-related pay. The features of HRM processes examined were visibility, consistency and organizational justice. Theories underpinning this study were attribution theory, theory of strength of HRM processes and social capital theory. Ten banks were conveniently sampled in order to have a blend of both locally owned and foreign banks. Two thousand non-managerial middle level employees constituted the target population under study. The target population consisted of 2000 employees. The sample consisted of 250 respondents selected through stratified random sampling technique. Data were collected using questionnaires having five-point Likert scale of measurement. Arithmetic mean and standard deviation of the data were computed. In addition, correlation analysis was employed to determine the extent to which the variables under study were inter-related. Simple and multiple regression analysis were used to test the three independent variables against the dependent variable. The study revealed fairly high positive effect of features of HRM processes on employee commitment. Consistency of HRM processes had the highest correlation with employee commitment. Results indicated higher explained variance in employee commitment for the additive model than in the direct model. The study recommended more enhanced clarity of HRM messages, increased internal consistency of HRM processes and improved delivery of procedural and distributive justice in commercial banks.

Key words:

HRM processes, visibility of HRM processes, consistency of HRM processes, organizational justice, employee commitment, commercial banks, Kenya.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The linkage between HRM and performance has been a hotly debated area in research. It is a widely accepted notion that strategic HRM practices contribute to performance through human resource outcomes (HRO) such as employee competence, motivation, engagement and commitment (Huselid, 1995; Richard & Johnson, 2001). However, it is simplistic to relate HRM practices to HROs directly. This direct relation fails to recognize that HRM practices themselves are not responsible for the change in outcomes; rather the practices must be translated by the employees to impact jobs and roles (Becker *et al*, 1996). The presence of HRM practices has dominated research about HRM and organizational commitment. The focus is shifting from individual HRM practices to sets of practices as well as the design, development and effectiveness of HRM implementation. Nowadays the interest of researchers is shifting towards the perceptions of employees about HRM processes (Nishii *et al*, 2008).

Bowen and Ostroff (2004) introduced the concept of HRM system strength in which they integrated the content and process approaches of HRM. For HRM to contribute towards the performance of an organization, the HRM processes should be perceived as strong. A strong HRM process is characterized by features such as high distinctiveness, high consistency and fairness. Distinctiveness means that the HRM process is highly visible, understandable and relevant. Consistency refers to the stability of the cause-effect relationship over modalities and time. Consensus means that individuals agree about the cause-effect relationship. It is argued that the HRM processes are effective when (1) employees perceive clear and unambiguous HRM messages, (2) the HRM messages are consistently communicated throughout the organization and (3) the messages are perceived and interpreted uniformly among employees (Delmotte *et al*, 2011).

Commercial banks have responded to competitive pressures by downsizing, restructuring and transformation. This creates a less secure organizational climate. A growing number of employees feel they are victims of broken promises. A major challenge of the banks involves maintaining employee commitment in the current business environment. According to PWC (2012) annual report, employees expect employers to demonstrate their commitment in terms of providing pleasant working conditions, access to training and development, enabling employees to have a work-life balance and providing them with an egalitarian work environment. In return, the employees would also demonstrate commitment which is an antecedent to banks' operational and financial performance.

1.2 Problem Statement

Commercial banks in Kenya are faced with issues of productivity, competition for customers, efficiency in operation, innovation and high staff turnover (Wanyama & Mutsotso, 2010). These institutions must implement motivational structures that will attract and retain employees. Retention rates of employees are related to how the organization is perceived by the employees. When HRM processes are not visible and relevant to the employees, this perception may lead employees to seeking employment alternatives or if the employees remain in the organization, they may not have total commitment. It would be desirable if employees perceive HRM processes as visible, consistent and relevant. Further, HRM processes should be seen to be delivering organizational justice. This is likely to create a strong situation that encourages the employees to opt to stay in the organization.

Regulatory pressures are also mounting, driving the need for enhanced visibility, consistency, transparency and reporting of HRM processes. There are two major challenges that have to be addressed by any bank that seeks to survive and prosper in the intensely competitive financial service arena: HR-related expenses have to be reduced to meet profitability goals, and workforces need to be equipped and trained to handle value adding initiatives such as personalized customer service and developing new products (Kithinji & Waweru,

2009). In this study, the researcher investigated effect of features of HRM processes on commitment of staff in commercial banks in Kiambu County in Kenya. The features of HRM processes studied were visibility, consistency and organizational justice. These features were identified by Bowen and Ostroff (2004) as critical factors that affected employees' perceptions of HRM processes. HRM processes examined were performance appraisal, training and performance-related pay which were considered as important components of high commitment processes.

1.3 Objectives

The general objective of the study was to examine effect of features of PRP, training and PA processes on commitment of staff of commercial banks in Kiambu County.

Specifically, the study aimed at achieving the following objectives:

- i. To examine effect of visibility of PRP, training and PA processes on commitment of staff of commercial banks in Kiambu County.
- ii. To examine effect of consistency of PRP, training and PA processes on commitment of staff of commercial banks in Kiambu County.
- iii. To examine effect of organizational justice delivered through PRP, training and PA processes on commitment of staff of commercial banks in Kiambu County.

1.4 Scope of the Study

Three HRM processes were drawn from Armstrong's (2011) and Waiganjo's (2012) combinations of high-commitment work practices and served as anchor points in this research. Training process, PA process and reward management were the areas of concern. The features of these processes that were examined were visibility of HRM processes, consistency of HRM processes and organizational justice. A two-component conceptualization of employee commitment was adopted in this study. The forms of commitment employed were affective and continuance commitment. Other components of the HRM system such as leadership styles and characteristics of human capital were not considered in this study. Similarly other causes of employee perceptions of HRM system such as personality were not considered in this study. The study was based on the period 2011 – 2013 inclusive.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Framework

The influence of features of HRM processes on commitment of employees to an organization has been based on various models and theories. In this section, models and theories linking features of PRP, training and PA processes and employee commitment were discussed with more emphasis being laid on their relevance in this research.

2.1.1 Kristof-Brown Model

According to Kristof and Brown (2001), employees' evaluation of HRM processes can affect their perceptions of employee-organization linkages. Employees' attributes of HRM processes influence person-organization (P-O) fit. The processes of training, performance appraisal and compensation can influence employees' assessment of their degree of fit with their organizations. More precisely, when the HRM practices are designed, administered and implemented in such a way as to facilitate the P-O fit, the employees will feel that they fit in well with their organization's values and goals. It is more logical to consider that HRM processes can change an employee's assessment of actual fit with the organization, which

eventually influences emotional aspects of organizational attitudes such as employee commitment (Sanders *et al*, 2008).

2.1.2 Social Capital Theory

Social capital is defined as the norms and networks that enable people to act collectively. Social capital is most frequently defined in terms of the groups, networks, norms and trust that people have for productive purposes. Internal social capital is defined in terms of both the structure and the content of relationships among actors within a system (Fiske & Tyler, 1991). There are three facets of internal social capital: structural, relational, and cognitive. The structural aspect of social capital refers to the connections among actors, that is, with whom and with what frequency they share information and tacit knowledge. Fluidity of information flows creates competitive advantage by enhancing the organization's ability to absorb and assimilate knowledge. The relational facet of social capital may generate trust while cognitive facet may enhance conception of the organization's mission (Lochner *et al*, 1999).

When HRM processes are distinctively visible, relevant and understandable, the employees develop shared perceptions, and an organizational climate emerges. The notion of strong or weak climates focuses on the extent to which employees interpret the situation similarly, thereby producing low variance in perceptions about the situation. Developing shared perceptions about behaviors expected and rewarded by the management may lead to reduced injustice perceptions among employees. An organizational climate that acts as a strong situation fosters employee commitment (Schneider *et al*, 2002).

2.1.3 Kelly's Attribution Theory

The main thing of the attribution theory is to understand people's perceptions of causality. Kelley theorized that people need specific information to reach a valid judgment about a cause and its effect. In this theory, Kelley distinguished three characteristics: the entity, the person and time. If responses from the same person to different stimuli are different, there is high distinctiveness and the behavior is attributed to the situation, but when the responses are the same over time, distinctiveness is low and attributed to the person. An individual can make confident attributions about cause-effect relationships in situations depending on the degree of: (1) distinctiveness (the event-effect is significantly visible), (2) consistency (the event-effect presents itself the same way across modalities and time) and (3) consensus, implying that there is agreement among individuals' views of the event-effect relationship (Kassin *et al*, 2008).

Since HRM practices serve as communication mechanisms to employees, these communications must be interpreted through each employee's personal lens (Wright & Nishii, 2006). In order for employees to identify key features that allow HR messages to be received and interpreted uniformly, the message-based persuasion of the attribution theory becomes useful. Employees infer cause-effect attributions from HR communications to determine which attitudes and behaviors are expected in the organization. Understanding attributions is critical, because employees' interpretations of HR messages determine their attitudes and behaviors.

2.1.4 Theory of Strength of HRM Process

The main renewal in Bowen and Ostroff's (2004) theory is that it shifts focus from the content of HRM to the processes of HRM. The processes of HRM are about how messages sent by management are perceived by employees. Bowen and Ostroff propose that the goal of HR department is to create a strong situation of HRM, wherein employees share the same interpretations of events, behaving in a desired and consistent way towards organizational goals and desired standards of performance. The HR department needs to communicate messages regarding appropriate behavior to employees in a clear, consistent and unambiguous way (Delmotte, 2008). When the messages are visible and understandable, this can help stage how HRM

processes influence employee attributes such as employees' organizational commitment. In addition, the messages should be consistent across modalities and time, and should promote organizational justice.

Bowen and Ostroff elucidate various features of HRM processes that build distinctiveness, consistency and organizational justice, thereby creating a strong situation in which employees share constructions of the situation. They also focus on features that establish consistent relationships over people, time and contexts, that is, instrumentality, validity and stability HRM messages. Organizational justice of the HRM processes is a composite of employees' perceptions of whether the processes adhere to the principles of delivering distributive, procedural, and interactional justice.

2.2 Conceptual Framework

The purpose of this study was to examine effect of salient features of HRM processes on commitment of staff of commercial banks. Visibility and consistency of PRP, training and PA processes and OJ delivered through the said processes were the independent variables. Both independent and additive effects of these variables on employee commitment were examined.

2.2.1 Employee Commitment

While the concept of commitment has a long history within the organizational literature, commitment is inconsistently defined both within and across the various workplace commitments. This can be traced to several factors such as the different perspectives (e.g. behavioral or psychological) from which researchers have studied commitment and the fact that several early writers defined commitment in multiple ways, as having multiple bases, or as being characterized by multiple indicators. For instance, Meyer *et al* (2004) defined organizational commitment as the strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organization. Further, he stated that commitment was characterized by three factors: (1) a belief in and acceptance of goals and values, (2) a willingness to exert effort, and (3) a strong desire to maintain organizational membership.

An employee who comes from a positive previous work experience might interpret the same programs as an altruistic way in which the firm wants to share its success with employees. There is a significant association between commitment and the extent to which employees believe their organization has their interests at heart. Organizations that are able to provide employee support are likely to elicit citizenship behavior. According to Riet (2006), the relationship between features of HRM processes (as perceived by employees) and commitment is therefore a subject for future research endeavor.

2.2.2 Visibility of PRP, Training and PA Processes

Visibility of HRM processes refers to the degree to which these processes are salient and readily observable. This is a basic prerequisite for interpretation involving whether an HRM practice and its component parts are disclosed to employees, affording them the opportunity for sense making. Visibility has long been identified as an important characteristic in determining whether people attend to information and how they cognitively organize it and make cause-effect attributions. The creation of a strong organizational situation requires that situational characteristics be salient and visible throughout much of employees' daily work routines and activities (Bomans, 2013).

When the HRM system includes a wide spectrum of HRM practices, and they are implemented more frequently that affect a large number of employees, visibility of HRM processes is likely to be higher. Increasing the number and expanding the range of practices should enhance visibility, because it increases complexity and allows for the set of practices to be more figural relative to other stimuli, both of which are principles of salience (Fiske & Taylor, 1991). If employees are satisfied with HR practices and they want to

reciprocate, they are likely to organize their attention on those activities which they think are valuable to and appreciated by the organization.

2.2.3 Consistency of PRP, Training and PA Processes

Consistency generally refers to establishing an effect over time and modalities whereby the effect occurs each time the entity is present. Consistency among PRP, training and PA processes seems to be an important feature because if HR practices reinforce one another synergistically, they are more likely to be viewed as a causal bundle having distinctive effects ultimately attributable to management across contexts and time (Sanders *et al.*, 2011). Bowen and Ostroff (2004) further posit that for a correct interpretation and influence on behavior, consistency is needed. When an HRM process is perceived as high on consistency, it is likely that this will contribute to employee commitment.

Validity of PRP, training and PA processes is important because message recipients attempt to determine the validity of a message in making attributions (Fiske & Taylor, 1991). HRM processes must display consistency between what they purport to do and what they actually do in order for them to help create a strong situation. Validity also makes a symbolic contribution by signaling to employees what KSAs are valued in a setting and by adding more employees with specified skills to the workforce. Further, when a practice is implemented and advertised to have certain effects, and then does not do what it was intended to do, the message sent to employees is contradictory, and employees are left to develop their own idiosyncratic interpretations.

In addition to this, PRP, training and PA processes should also send consistent HRM messages that convey compatible and stable signals. Lack of consistency in double-bind communication can lead to particularly intense cognitive dissonance. Double-bind communication occurs when a person is faced with significant communication involving two separate messages. Consequences of inconsistency can be severe. Inconsistency is a difference between what has been termed espoused values and inferred values. For example, managers may espouse a value of risk taking, but employees may infer that performance appraisal and reward system practices reinforce playing it safe (Bomans, 2013).

A second requirement for avoiding double-bind communication is internal consistency or internal fit among PRP, training and PA processes. In recent years, much has been written on the importance of designing an HRM system with practices that complement one another and fit together as a whole in achieving the organization's goals. Internal alignment among practices should result in performance advantages for firms because different sets of HRM practices will elicit, reward and control the appropriate employee behaviors for achieving strategic objectives (Delery & Doty, 1996).

2.2.4 Organizational Justice delivered through PRP, Training and PA Processes

Organizational justice refers to perceived fairness in the workplace and comprises of distributive, procedural and interactional justice (Greenberg, 1990). Fairness of PRP, training and PA processes is a composite of employees' perceptions of whether the processes adhere to the principles of delivering the three dimensions of justice. Perceived fairness of HRM processes affects how positively HRM activity is viewed and the capability of the HRM processes to influence employee attitudes and behaviors. Researchers have argued that there is a positive relationship between perceptions of HRM fairness and what has been termed the acceptability criterion of HRM practices.

Agreement among employees' perceptions of event-effect relationships will be influenced by whether employees have similar perceptions of what distribution rules apply in what situations. Outcomes such as rewards can be distributed based on an equality rule, in which all receive the same outcome; an equity rule, in which subsets of employees receive different amounts based on relevant differences, such as in a merit pay system; or an individual need rule in unique circumstances. Organizational justice and trust have also been

shown to lead to higher levels of organizational commitment. High commitment performance management, a sub-system of practices within high commitment work practices, focuses on the three dimensions of performance management: appraisal, target setting and reward (Whitener, 2002).

3.0 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This research was descriptive and diagnostic in nature in that the states of affairs were described as they existed and the researcher had no control or intervention over the variables. A descriptive research study is concerned with describing the characteristics of an individual, group or situation (Orodho, 2009). According to Polit and Beck (2003), in a descriptive study, researchers observe, count, delineate, and classify. They further describe descriptive and diagnostic research studies as those that have, as their main objective, the accurate portrayal of the characteristics of persons, situations, or groups, and / or the frequency with which certain phenomena occur.

A cross-sectional survey research design was employed in this study. A survey is a method of collecting information by interviewing, observing or administering questionnaires to a sample of individuals drawn from a large population. The survey was cross-sectional in nature as data were collected at one point in time. The information collected in this study was about processes through which HRM practices were translated to employee commitment.

3.2 Target Population

All items in any field of enquiry constitute a population or universe (Kothari, 2004). In 2013, there were 45 commercial banks operating in Kenya; 33 of them were locally owned constituting over 70% of the banking institutions in Kenya. Nearly all the banks had branches in Kiambu County and most of the branches were medium-sized (CBK, 2013). In this study, the sampling frame is a list of employees of some selected commercial banks in Kiambu County. The source was obtained from branch managers with the help of supervisors in charge of operations, HR, customer service, credit, IT & innovations, accounts, marketing, risk & investments and internal audit.

The sample for this study was drawn from ten conveniently sampled commercial banks in Kiambu County. This technique of sampling allowed a blend of both locally owned and foreign owned banks. Five banks were locally owned and the other five were foreign owned. Stratified random sampling technique was used to select the subjects for the study. Bank departments namely operations, HR, customer service, credit, IT & innovations, accounts, marketing, risk & investments and internal audit constituted the strata. The subjects under study were members of staff from these sections who were selected using simple random sampling technique. For each bank, five respondents were selected from each department or combination of departments.

The sample consisted of 250 respondents who have worked for at least three years in their current stations.

3.3 Research Instruments

Of the three main methods of data collection namely questionnaire, interview and observation, this study used the questionnaire method. A questionnaire is an instrument used to gather primary data which allows measurement for or against a particular viewpoint (Orodho, 2009). A questionnaire is considered as the heart of a survey research design. The questionnaires were close ended and self administered. In this study, a lot of information was collected from a large number of employees in a reasonably short time. The questionnaires were delivered by the researcher to the respondents. Likert rating scales are appropriate for measuring attitudes, perceptions, values or behaviours (Saunders *et al*, 2007).

3.4 Data Processing and Analysis

In analyzing the data collected, Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was employed. The mean and SD of the data were obtained. Further, correlation analysis was employed to determine the extent to which the variables under study were inter-related. Karl Pearson's product moment coefficient of correlation was used as it assumed a linear relationship between independent variable and dependent variable (Zikmund & Rabin, 2001). Simple regression was used to determine the statistical relationship between each of the three independent variables and the dependent variable. The direct model tested each independent variable against the dependent variable. Further, multiple regression analysis collectively tested the three independent variables against the dependent variable.

4.0 RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Reliability of the Questionnaires

By applying SPSS reliability analysis, the following reliability coefficients were obtained for the constructs.

Table 4.1 Reliability Coefficients

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of items
Employee Commitment	.81	12
Visibility of HRM Processes	.78	12
Consistency of HRM Processes	.76	12
Organizational Justice	.73	12

According to Rousson *et al* (2002), a coefficient of .70 or higher is an acceptable measure of consistency. Therefore the questionnaires were significantly reliable.

4.2 Response Rate

To determine the actual number of respondents who actively took part in the study, analysis of response rate was done. The sample size for this study was 250 members of staff of ten commercial banks. Out of the 250 sets of questionnaires delivered to the employees, 150 complete sets were filled in and returned to the researcher. This represented a response rate of 60 %. A response rate between 30% and 80% can be generalized to indicate the opinion of the entire sample (Gasser, 2002).

4.3 Analysis of Data

Table 4.6 Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Mean Score	Percentage Score	Standard Deviation
Employee Commitment	3.60	72.0%	0.086
Visibility of HRM Processes	3.04	60.8%	0.077
Consistency of HRM Processes	3.66	73.2%	0.052
Organizational Justice	2.90	58.0%	0.082

It can be inferred from table 4.6 that the mean score for employee commitment was quite high (3.60) representing 72.0% level of commitment. The results also showed that the most prevalent feature of HRM

processes was consistency with a mean of 3.66 and the least prevalent one was organizational justice with a mean of 2.90.

Table 4.7 Pearson’s Correlation Coefficients

	1	2	3	4
1. Employee Commitment	1.00			
2. Visibility of HRM Processes	0.62**	1.00		
3. Consistency of HRM Processes	0.66***0.60**		1.00	
4. Organizational Justice	0.54*	0.47 ⁺	0.57*	1.00

* $***p < 0.01$, $**p < 0.025$, $*p < 0.05$, $^+p < 0.1$ for one-tailed tests

From the findings, the three independent variables were positively correlated with employee commitment. To test whether the coefficients indicated significant correlation, t-test statistics were calculated. The relationship between the three features of HRM processes and employee commitment was statistically significant.

Table 4.8 Direct Effect of Features of HRM Processes on Employee Commitment

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3
	<i>Unstandardized</i>	<i>Standardized</i>	<i>Unstandardized</i>	<i>Standardized</i>	<i>Unstandardized</i>
Constant	4.005		4.000		3.950
HRMVIS	0.56*	0.50*			
HRMCONS			0.61**	0.56*	
OJ					0.48*
F	10.63***		16.92***		6.55*
R ²	0.3844	0.3840	0.4356	0.4352	0.2916
Adjusted R ²	0.3841	0.3836	0.4352	0.4347	0.2910

* $***p < 0.01$, $**p < 0.025$, $*p < 0.05$

Table 4.9 Additive Effect of Features of HRM Processes on Employee Commitment

	<i>Unstandardized Coefficients</i>	<i>Standardized Coefficients</i>
Constant	4.005	—
Visibility of HRM	0.480	0.429
Consistency of HRM	0.548	0.529
Organizational Justice	0.432	0.420
R-square	0.452	0.436
Adjusted R ²	0.448	0.443

$P < 0.05$ for all coefficients

4.4 Summary of Findings

The research findings revealed that visibility of HRM processes was directly related to employee commitment. Correlation analysis indicated that visibility of HRM processes correlated well with employee

commitment ($r = .62$). Visibility of HRM processes explained 38.4% variance in employee commitment. Standardized coefficients showed that an increase in one standard deviation of visibility of HRM processes resulted in a 0.50 standard deviation increase in employee commitment.

Consistency of HRM processes explained 43.6% variance in employee commitment. The results indicated a regression coefficient β_2 for consistency of HRM processes as 0.61 and a standardized coefficient of 0.56. Therefore a unit change in consistency of HRM processes predicted a change of 0.61 units of employee commitment. A change in one standard deviation of consistency of HRM processes resulted in 0.56 standard deviation increase in employee commitment. Therefore consistency of HRM processes was an important predictor of employee commitment.

OJ featured as the least conspicuous feature of HRM process (mean = 2.90). OJ correlated positively with employee commitment ($r = .47$) but the correlation strength was lower than that of visibility and consistency of HRM processes. The coefficient of regression, β_3 for OJ as a predictor of employee commitment was 0.48 and the explained variance of employee commitment was 29.0%. The explained variance of employee commitment in the direct model ranged from 29.2% to 43.6%. In the additive model, the explained variance was 44.5%. Therefore the additive model was better than the direct model. The additive model implied that if employees perceived HRM processes as significantly visible, consistent and just, they would be more committed to organizations. Therefore multiple configurations of HRM processes resulted in more employee commitment.

5.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusions

5.1.1 Effect of Visibility of PRP, Training and PA Processes on Employee Commitment

The study revealed strong direct effect of visibility of PRP, training and PA processes on employee commitment. One important aspect of visibility of the processes was disclosure of HR information to employees. This affected employees' sense of belonging to the organization and their strength of identification with the organization. This in turn affected their belief and acceptance of organizational goals and values. Visibility of HRM processes made employees more aware of HRM practices. As posited by Bomans (2013), visibility of HRM enabled people to attend to information and cognitively organize it as a prerequisite for sense making. Therefore visibility of HRM processes affected both employees' desire (affective commitment) and need (continuance commitment) to maintain organizational membership.

The other aspect of visibility of HRM processes investigated in this study was clarity of HR messages sent through HRM processes. The study revealed that if employees received fairly clear HR messages through these processes, they would be more committed. As Bowen and Ostroff (2004) conjectured, visibility of HRM processes was a basic prerequisite for interpretation of HR messages coded in HRM practices. This meant that if an organization had visible HRM processes, the employees would receive the intended HR messages allowing them to have the desire and need to maintain membership of the organization.

5.1.2 Effect of Consistency of PRP, Training and PA Processes on Employee Commitment

It emerged from the study that consistency of HRM processes had a strong positive effect on employee commitment. Consistency of HRM processes had the signaling function of sending messages that affected employees' perceptions positively, which in turn raised employees' commitment to the organization. It came into view that if consistent HRM messages were sent to employees about the expected, it was more likely that employees espoused attitudes such as commitment. Perceptions that HRM processes were inconsistent

with each other would make it difficult to communicate consistent HR messages. Therefore HRM processes needed to be linked so that they would not cause contradicting employees' perceptions.

It was important that HRM processes were effective in eliciting the desired attitudes and behavior which were linked with employee consequences to ensure instrumentality which was a component of HRM consistency (Bowen & Ostroff, 2004). Consistency of HRM processes strengthened employees' sense of belonging and loyalty to organizations resulting in strengthened affective commitment. As pointed out by Sanders *et al* (2008), perceptions of consistency were positively related to affective commitment.

5.1.3 Effect of Organizational Justice on Employee Commitment

Results of the research indicated that positive perceptions of OJ delivered through PRP, training and PA processes were related to employee commitment in a positive sense. Two aspects of OJ namely procedural justice and distributive justice were positively linked to employee commitment. This positive association indicated that fair processes led to fair decisions giving rise to positive perceptions of HRM. This led to increase in employee commitment. OJ triggered discretionary behavior in employees in order to stimulate organizational commitment. Improved focus on improving perception of OJ increased employees' level of identification with the organization and employees felt they were valued.

The researcher found out that the prevailing employee consensus on perceptions of OJ on explicitness of training opportunities and clear appraisal criteria led to employee commitment. As suggested by Sanders *et al*, (2012), the notably low level of consensus on pay decisions may have evoke mixed messages on the long-term promises made to individual employees and the criteria on which pay for performance was based. This incongruence in perceptions may be linked to reduced levels of individual commitment to the organization. Distributive justice perceptions in rewards affected the employee's liking and identifying with the organizations hence demonstrating affective commitment. Therefore the level of prevalence of OJ was a major predictor of employee commitment.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the research, it can be concluded that visible, consistent and fair processes of PRP, training and PA process led to increased employee commitment. Some recommendations were suggested.

1. Enhance visibility and clarity of HRM processes

Managers and supervisors should make employees aware of virtually all components of processes of training, PA and PRP and their intentions. The processes should be made more salient and visible throughout much of employees' daily work routines to allow for sense making. Visibility of HRM processes would allow complementary sets of HRM practices to be more figural relative to other stimuli. Subjecting employees to the same processes would enable them to develop shared meanings, leading to more employee commitment to the organization.

2. Increase internal consistency and integration among HRM processes

It would be important that HRM processes are made more internally integrated so that they could send consistent HR messages to the employees. Specifically, there should be a clearer fit among PA, training and PRP. This would make HRM processes more congruent with organizational goals. Consistency of HRM processes is likely to enable employees to attribute synergistic bundles of HRM practices to the expected attitudes and behaviors, thus contribute to increase in employee commitment. HR actors should further close the gap between what HRM purports to do and what it actually does. As far as possible, HRM processes should avoid double-bind communication.

3. Entrench delivery of procedural and distributive justice

Aspects of procedural and distributive justice influence employees' perception of OJ. HRM should not be a source of employee dissatisfaction by sending signals that the system is biased, political and irrelevant. Employees should be involved as far as possible in determining performance outcomes. The way outcomes are determined and the actual outcomes received should be openly communicated to the employees in a way that discourages negative perceptions. Performance standards should apply consistently and fairly across employees. Employees should be given fair chances for training as and when training is necessary. Similarly, incentive programmes such as gain sharing, profit sharing and skill-based pay should promote fairness, equity and consistency, and should send signals that employees are valued and are not being exploited by the management.

5.4 Suggestions for Further Research

A longitudinal research design could be employed to explore further effect of features of HRM processes on employee commitment. More insight into the interrelationships among visibility, consistency and fairness of HRM processes could be addressed in further research endeavors.

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FIGURES

Figure 2.1 Kristof-Brown (2001) Model

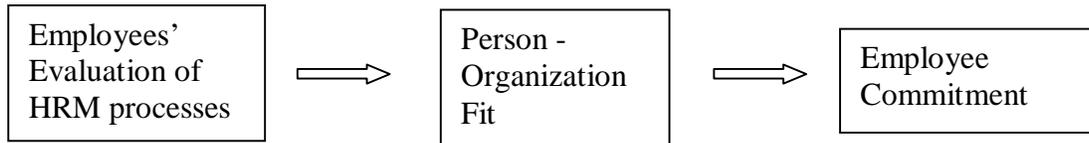


Figure 2.2 Conceptual Framework

