# Human Resource Management Practices and Organizational Commitment: Research Methods, Issues, and Future Directions

Review of Integrative Business & Economics Research

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**ABSTRACT**

This explanatory study seeks to explain the relationship between affective, continuance and normative commitment with turnover intentions of academicians serving in public sector universities of Pakistan. Specific goals are: (1) To investigate relationship between affective, continuance and normative commitment and turnover intentions and (2) To develop a research model for AC, CC and NC measures for education sector of Pakistan. An attempt has been made to overview the available literature of affective, continuance and normative commitment in relation to turnover intentions. A summary of research findings and conclusions are given at the end of the review.

Keywords: Affective commitment, Continuance commitment, Normative Commitment, Turnover, Turnover intentions.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Teacher turnover is the biggest problem for education analysts and administrator around the world. For example, around 30% of newly hired teachers leave their job within five years of their joining period and this proportion is seen high in less developed areas (Hong, 2010; Ingersoll, 2001). Scholars have shown serious concern for teacher turnover problem as it not only harms academic achievement of students but also affects student learning (Buchanan et al., 2013; Ronfeldt, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2011). Turnover intention is the precursor of turnover as it helps in predicting individual's willingness to quit job or to quit the profession in order to start a new profession (Tett & Meyer, 1993). Moreover, turnover intention is an important aspect in turnover research and is defined as an individual's willingness to look for outside job (Tett & Meyer, 1993) and which in turn affects organizational performance (Chen, Ployhart, Thomas, Anderson, & Bliese, 2011). Turnover literature shows that commitment of employees is the most significant antecedent which helps in reducing turnover intentions of employees. Adding to this, a crucial factor that might decrease turnover intention, and therefore overall attrition, is commitment (Lee, Carswell, & Allen, 2000; Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch, & Topolnytsky, 2002). There are several predictors of turnover intentions which include; autonomy, burnout, participation in decision making and salary (Buchanan et al., 2013; Choi & Tang, 2009) but meta-analysis by Meyer et al. (2002) and other reviews in turnover literature have shown that commitment is one of strongest predictor of turnover intentions.

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Commitment of teachers can be conceptualized differently. Current study refers to the type of organizational commitment which is commonly used in commitment literature. Morrow (1983) identified twenty-five different types of conceptualizations of organizational commitment. But Meyer and Allen (1990) identified organizational commitment in a more comprehensive way. Organizational commitment is defined as individual's alignment with values and goals of organization, willingness to perform duties and to display efforts for organization (Meyer et al., 2002). Earlier studies regarded organizational commitment as a unilateral concept, but Meyer and Allen (1991) introduced multidimensional concept of organizational commitment (cf; Allen & Meyer, 1991); Meyer, Allen, & Smith, 1993; and Meyer et al., 2002), affective, continuance and normative commitment. Affective commitment is defined as individual's emotional attachment with the organization; continuance commitment is defined as individual's attachment with the firm due to associated cost of leaving the organization while normative commitment results due to moral obligation of employees with the organization. Meyer et al. (2002) conducted meta-analysis to analyze different forms of commitment i.e. affective, continuance and normative commitment, and their relationships with different antecedents of commitment. The found that three forms of organizational commitment are related to other distinguishable aspects of work like job involvement and satisfaction. Furthermore, commitment is found to be negatively associated with turnover intention and turnover. Affective commitment was found to be the strongest predictor of organizational-level outcomes like organizational citizenship behavior, performance and attendance as compared to continuance and normative commitment (Snape, Lo, & Redman, 2008).

Although there is minimal research of employee commitment relevant to their organization (at public sector universities in current case), literature also indicates that commitment of employees may also be associated with other organizational antecedents (Meyer et al., 1993). Meyer and Allen (1991) concluded that each of these forms of commitment have implications for performance and turnover intentions.

Numerous studies have analyzed the teacher commitment phenomenon in different cultural settings (e.g. Abd Razak, Darmawan, & Keeves, 2010; Chan, Lau, Nie, Lim, & Hogan, 2008; Choi & Tang, 2009). However, most of the studies analyzed commitment as generalized construct in teaching profession rather than conceptualizing commitment as multidimensional construct determined by Meyer et al. (1993, 2002) theory. Very few studies, like Joolideh and Yeshodhara (2009), examined commitment in Indian and Iranian high school and found that Indian teachers had better affective and normative commitment while Iranian teachers were high in continuance commitment. As per our knowledge, no current study has examined the relationship between multidimensional nature of organizational commitment and turnover intentions in the context of public sector universities of Pakistan. The relationship between these two variables is quite complex and because of volatile employment situation for teachers in the Pakistani context, this study provides a good opportunity to examine their relationship.

In earlier studies (cf; McInerney, Ganotice, King, Morin, & Marsh, 2014; Morin, Meyer, McInerney, Marsh, & Ganotice, 2015), commitment at both organizational and occupational level was found. Occupational commitment in the context of teaching profession is very important as it helps in predicting one's intention to quit teaching profession. Several commitment studies (e.g. Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975; Lavelle, Rupp, & Brockner, 2007, 2009) have shown that commitment of teachers is important to analyze specially when trying to predict similar outcomes (occupational commitment). Current study will only analyze organizational commitment of university teachers in Pakistani context.

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Turnover literature shows that voluntary turnover badly affects organizational performance, so organizational leaders are always in search to overcome this problem of turnover in order to retain their professional employees (Dong, Mitchell, Lee, Holtom, & Hinkin, 2012). As employee retention has become an integrated part of organizational success (Moussa, 2013), so company's ultimate preference is to retain their employees for more than five years (Bagga, 2013) in order to sustain organizational outcomes. Adding to this, around 50% of the employees quit their job during first 5 years of their professional career (Ballinger et al., 2011) and this in turn yields high replacement cost for employers (Maertz & Boyar, 2012). That's why employers pay more attention to implement policies that increase commitment of employees with their firms.

Though change of careers is multidirectional, more specifically in Western culture and transfer of profession is an ordinary matter for employees, it is likely that employers and firms desire stability in the professional career, especially in education sector, of their employees for smooth running of organizational performance (McInerny et al., 2015).

## 2. THE PAKISTAN CONTEXT

The human resources, especially the academicians are vital for the achievement of organizational goals including higher education institutions and play important role in achieving high academic standards across country. Institutional effectiveness suffers when HEIs de-motivates academicians and shows reluctance in resolving troubles of these academicians, which is imperative for development of the society toward progress and success. The needs of the individual and success are inter-related, yet HEIs in Pakistan are indifferent towards its teachers that results in numerous problems with reference to teacher motivation, performance and development of students (Malik et al., 2010). It is observed and reported by several researchers in Pakistan that the talented, qualified and young people tend not to prefer the profession of teaching because due to absence of evaluation and motivational mechanism in HEIs to reward their performance through incentives as the cause of the poor quality of standards in prevailing the HEIs of Pakistan. Alternatively, faculty`s supports, financial rewards, fringe benefits and salaries are very low to attract the highly qualified candidates in contrast to the increased living cost (Ahmed et al., 2016).

## 3. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Like every country, Pakistan also relies heavily on human capital. The role of academicians in higher education institutes cannot be denied specially in developed, developing and under developing countries. In Pakistan, more than 135 public and private institutions are competing to provide quality education. To maintain their quality and building standards, they need professional academic staff. Hiring professional staff in academic settings not only helps them attracting more students but also increases their ranking at national and international level. However these educational institutes are facing the problem of faculty turnover. It has been found that on average, 9% turnover rate of faculty members is observed in public sector institutes of Pakistan (Akhtar et al., 2015). There is strong need to overcome this issue in order to improve academic standards and also for the provision of quality education across country.

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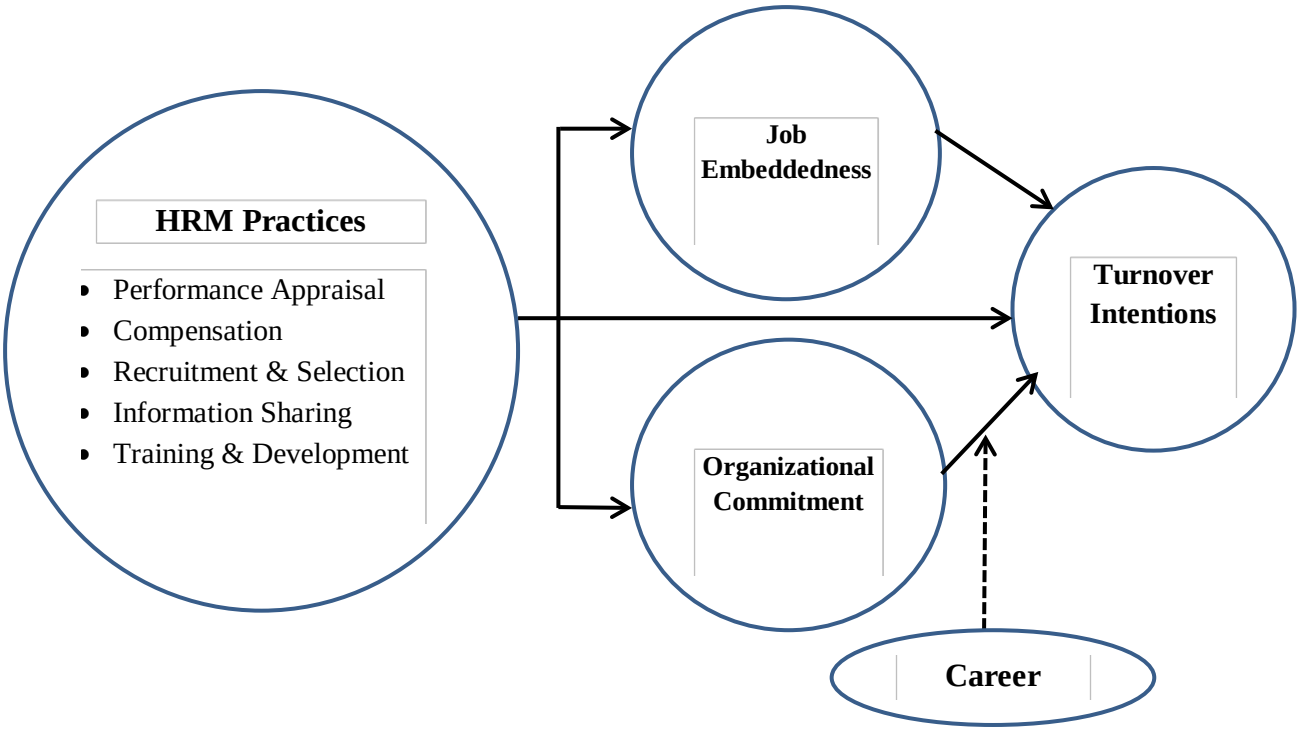
## 4. PROPOSED FRAMEWORK




## 5. HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

### HR practices and Turnover intentions

According to social exchange theory (1962), when both contracting parties are satisfied at an agreement, then favorable results can be seen. But, if one of the contracting party is suffering and other party is getting favorable outcomes, then such exchange does not results into long relationship between the contracting parties. For example, if organizations plan good HR practices which are appreciated by employees, then, in return, employees give their maximum effort to attain organizational targets. Such findings can be seen in the study of Cesário and Magalhães (2016). They found that employees who were happy with organizational practices, shown positive behavior towards organizational outcomes and their turnover intentions were found low as compared to those who were not happy with certain organizational practices.

Keeping in view the findings of above mentioned literature, it can be hypothesized that

**H1:** There exists negative relationship between HRM practices and turnover intentions of academicians.

### Organizational Commitment and Turnover Intentions

### Affective commitment and Turnover Intentions

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Turnover literature mainly focuses towards highlighting the antecedents of turnover and came to conclusion that losing professional and valuable employees leads towards high replace cost for organizations (Hancock et al., 2013; Holtom et al., 2008). Turnover intention is defined as an individual's willingness to leave organization (Mobley et al., 1979), and is regarded as the most prominent predictor of employee turnover (Griffeth et al., 2000). Past turnover literature have shown considerable contribution of affective commitment (Gatling et al., 2016), ineffective leadership (Mossholder et al., 2005) and pay (Vandenberghe and Tremblay, 2008) in predicting turnover intentions of employees. According to Meyer et al. (2002), employees have low turnover intentions when their belongingness and sense of identification with their organization is strong. Thus, employees having high level of affective commitment have low levels of turnover intentions and high levels of performance and satisfaction (Mathieu and Zajac, 1990; Meyer et al., 2002). Several empirical studies (cf; Gatling et al., 2016; Vandenberghe and Tremblay, 2008) and meta-analytical reviews, by Griffeth et al. (2008) and Perryer et al. (2010), have shown negative relationship between affective commitment and turnover intentions of employees. Thus, it is expected that similar pattern of relationship will be found in this study. On the basis of existent literature, following hypothesis can be drawn:

**H2 (a):** Affective commitment is negatively related to turnover intentions

**Continuance commitment and Turnover Intentions**

Continuance commitment can be described in two terms, continuance-sacrifices and continuance-alternatives. In the case of continuance–sacrifices commitment, employees stay with the current organization due to the fear of losing benefits in case they leave. Staying with current organization is not stressful as they enjoy benefits out of their job. While attachment of employees due to perceived lack of alternatives explains continuance-alternatives commitment (Vandenberghe et al., 2011). Pare and Tremblay (2007) examined the relationship between continuance commitment and turnover intentions and found that as long as employee's feel high cost, in case of leaving, they will show higher levels of commitment with the current firm. Thus, it can be said that perceived cost of leaving firms employees with their organizations (Dunham, Grube, & Castaneda, 1994; Meyer, Allen, & Gellatly, 1990; Wasti, 2003). In addition to this, Dunham et al. (1994) and Perryer, Jordan, Firns, and Travaglione (2010) found that as long as employees have higher levels of fear of losing benefits, they will tend to continue their services for the firm. But as soon as they find better alternatives, they will quit their jobs.

**H2 (b):** Continuance commitment is negatively related to turnover intentions.

**Normative commitment and Turnover Intentions**

Normative commitment is defined as Individual's consent to stay with their firms due to the feeling of moral obligation of employees for staying (Balassiano & Salles, 2012). As long as firms facilitate their employees and provide them with suitable working environment, employees feel it their moral obligation to continue their services and also contribute their part in achieving organizational goals (Balassiano & Salles, 2012). Normative commitment is considered to predict similar results as that of affective commitment. It is related to moral obligation of employees to stay with their firms. Employees, who regard organizational practices, have less negative behaviors and low turnover intentions (Meyer et al., 1993).

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Meyer et al. (1991) stated that turnover intention is low among employees who have high levels of normative commitment. In meta-analysis by Meyer et al. (2002) similar findings were found and results shown that there exists negative relationship between normative commitment and turnover intentions. As long as employees have sense of obligation, they will continue their services for their firms. According to Iverson et al., (1999) there exists negative relationship between normative commitment and turnover intentions of employees. Furthermore, Gelaidan and Ahmad (2013) stated that employee's normative commitment results due to the belief that they must reciprocate once they receive certain benefits and services from their firms (Gelaidan & Ahmad, 2013).

On the basis of existent literature, following hypothesis can be drawn:

**H2 (c):** Normative commitment is negatively related to turnover intentions.

**Job embeddedness and Turnover intentions**

Jiang, McKay, Lee and Mitchell (2012) conducted a meta-analytic study and found that job embeddedness plays affective role in reducing turnover. When organizations plan productive and healthy work environment, it helps in enhancing employee interest towards their job. Adding to this, managers can play an important role in building employee interest towards job by providing alternate approaches for improving employee performance (Mitchell et al., 2001). In another study, Kim and Ryu (2016) analyzed the relationship between job embeddedness and turnover intentions of hospital employees. It was found that negative relationship exists between the variables. They concluded that as long as employees are satisfied from organizational policies, they remain with the organization but when the satisfaction level of employees is low, they look for alternates. Social exchange theory is also of the view that whenever a balance social exchange takes place between the two contracting parties, positive outcomes can be seen. Same is the case with employees and organizations. On the basis of above mentioned literature, it can be hypothesized that

**H3:** Job embeddedness is negatively related to turnover intentions of academicians.

**Moderating role of career stage between organizational commitment and turnover intentions**

Cohen (1991) conducted a meta-analysis based on the Hunter, Schmidt and Jackson (1982) and Hunter & Schmidt (1990) methodology. One hundred studies were reviewed for this review. It was found that career stage helps in predicting both turnover and turnover intentions. Earlier career stage was found to be a moderating variable for commitment and turnover intentions. Employees, who were in earlier carrier stage were found be committed as compared to mid- and later-career stages. Allen and Meyer (1993) conducted a study to examine the relationship between organizational commitment and career stages. 123 library staff of university was selected to participate in sample 1 and 168 respondents were selected for sample 2 study which includes clerical, supervisory and managerial staff. It was found that both affective and normative commitment among employees was found to be higher for older employees and for the employees with longer professional career in both samples. No significant relationship was found between continuance commitment and career stage. Continuance commitment was found to be increased in sample 2 when positional and

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organizational tenure measures were counted for age. Affective commitment was stronger in employees and increases with the age as compared to other measures. Both samples expressed high moral obligations for organization in case of older employees. In another study, Kaur and Sandhu (2010) conducted a study in Indian. Respondents were employees serving in banks. It was found that there exists no significant relationship between organizational commitment (affective, continuance and normative) with earlier-career stage while mid- and late-career stages are found to be strongly associated with all three forms of commitment. Results show that mindset of young individuals is different as compared to senior staff members. New incumbents have low levels of commitment. The reason is lack of professional skills, low investments and prestige which results into quitting behaviors and searching for alternate jobs. From above mentioned literature, it is evident that career stage plays an important role in predicting commitment of employees. Thus, it can hypothesized that

**H4:** Career stage moderates the relationship of organizational commitment and turnover intentions.

## 6. CONCLUSION

Due to lack of studies on the relationship of above mentioned variables in this country, attempt has been made to analyze the relationship between measures Affective, continuance and normative commitment and turnover intentions of academicians serving in public sector universities of Pakistan. This study reviewed literature within the context of turnover intentions to highlight this problem in our country. The aim is to shed light on research problem. Keeping this factor in mind, aim of future study is:

1. To investigate relationship between affective, continuance and normative commitment and turnover intentions
2. To develop a research model for AC, CC and NC measures for education sector of Pakistan.

On the basis of future agenda, survey strategy is designed to conduct empirical research in order to examine hypothesis. It is hoped that important discussed in this paper would help academicians, educationist and policy makers to retain skilled faculty members serving in public sector universities.

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