

Human resource practices, person organization fit and commitment among University lecturers

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to understand how Human Resource Management (HRM) practices affect the people, or human resources, who work for the organization. Information generated is vital in driving the organizational strategies and goals in order to gain competitive advantage. Such practices must enable the individual employees fit in their jobs, organization and commit to their organizations. This study will examine the relationship between HR practices, person organization fit and organizational commitment. It is hypothesized that these affect organization performance, commitment and effectiveness of employees to their organizations.

Key words: Human resource practices, organizational commitment, person organization fit

Résumé

L'objectif de cette étude est de comprendre comment les pratiques de gestion des ressources humaines touchent les gens, ou des ressources humaines, qui travaillent pour l'organisation. L'information générée est indispensable dans la conduite des stratégies d'organisation et les objectifs afin d'obtenir un avantage concurrentiel. De telles pratiques doivent permettre aux employés individuels de tenir dans leur emploi et l'organisation et de s'engager à leurs organisations. Cette étude portera sur la relation entre les pratiques de gestion des ressources humaines, propres à l'organisation du personnel et l'engagement organisationnel. On suppose que celles-ci affectent la performance de l'organisation, l'engagement et l'efficacité des employés pour leurs organisations.

Mots clés: Pratiques de ressources humaines, engagement organisationnel, propres à l'organisation du personnel

Background

Numerous studies show the benefits derived from specific human resource management (HRM) practices (Rubin and Merripen, 2003). There is growing interest in HRM as a package of complementary practices, not only because theory

suggests the impact is greater, but because organizations as big as universities in reality implement a variety of practices (Galang, 2004). Apart from avoiding contradictory practices that may confuse and result in negative outcomes such as lower motivation and productivity, the set of complementary practices often provides a synergistic effect that is greater than the sum of effects from practices that are applied independently from each other (Becker and Huselid, 1998).

Most organizations when recruiting staff focus more on the technical skills than personal dispositions or personality. However for effective organizational performance, person job fit and organizational commitment are very important. If human resource practices do not put into consideration person organization fit and organizational commitment, many organizations are bound to make losses resulting from the recruitment process as well as persistent and consistent poor employee turnover.

Universities in Uganda are faced with a challenge reflected through low levels of commitment which is characterized by frequent strikes from either the teaching staff or the support staff (Makerere university lecturers and support staff go on strike at least once every year). Despite employees' clear knowledge of what organizations go through, employees are not patient and cannot stay with an organization during times of low or poor productivity in terms of profits. This is because many organizations during selection process hardly march personality attributes to job characteristics, which create a person job misfit. This consequently leads to failure to work-life balance resulting into low organizational commitment and performance. If human resource practices are not well informed as well as based on purely organizational demands and needs, there is likely to be poor person organization fit as well as little or no organizational commitment at all from employees.

Literature Summary

Person organization fit refers to the compatibility between the person and the organization, emphasizing the extent to which the person and the organization share similar characteristics and/or meet each other's needs. Some human resource practices like recruitment and selection have been studied as antecedents of person organization fit (Sekiguchi, 2004; Cables and Parsona, 2001). Researchers and practitioners contend that person organization fit is the key to maintenance of a flexible and committed workforce that is necessary for a competitive

advantage. Person organization fit is correlated to a number of organizational attitudes including commitment (Papavero, 2007).

Blau and Boal (1987) defined organizational commitment as a psychological state in which an employee identifies with a particular organization and its goals and desires to maintain membership with the organization. Meyer and Allen (1991) summarized the major definitions of organizational commitment provided by different theorists and categorized them under three broad themes. These are the affective orientation theme, the cost-based theme and the obligation or moral responsibility of commitment theme. The most prevalent theme is through the affective orientation, in which commitment is considered as an affective or emotional attachment to the organization.

Study Description

This study will focus on human resource practices which are a range of practices and choices like selection and recruitment reward and pay training and development, performance appraisal, etc. Such practices are measured in level of their application in organizations (for example, universities) aimed at measuring the functionality of the human resource department. For the purpose of this study, Person-Organization fit is defined as the compatibility between norms and values of the organization and the person's values (Chatman, 1989).

This study will examine the relationship between HR practices and person organization fit; the relationship between HR practices and organizational commitment and the relationship between person organization fit and organizational commitment (See Fig. 1).

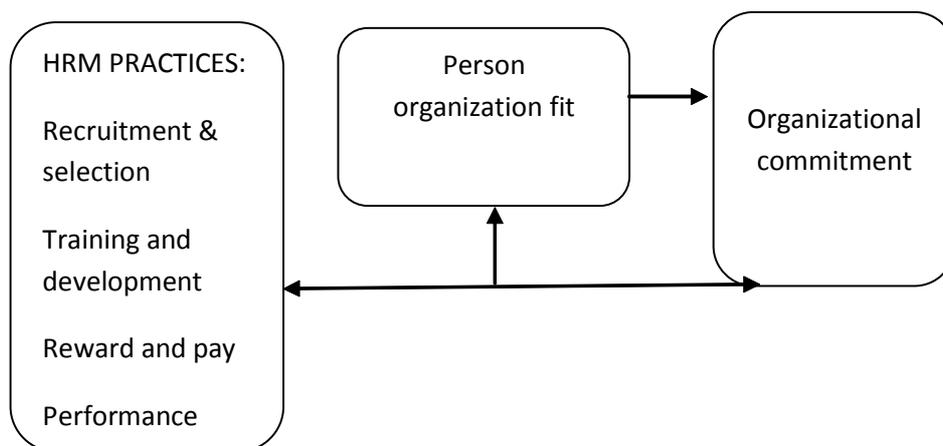


Figure 1. Conceptual framework of the study.

Research Approach

The study will adopt a cross sectional study design. Quantitative methodology, and in particular a correlational design, will be used to establish the relationship between human resource activities and person organization fit, human resource activities and organizational commitment, and person organization fit and organizational commitment among Makerere University teaching staff in selected faculties.

The targeted population of the study will be employees working as teaching assistants or lecturers. Currently, Makerere University has a teaching staff of 1277 as of July, 2010. Out of these 291 respondents from the various faculties will be selected (Morgan, 1970). The research will use non-random sampling techniques specifically purposive sampling by targeting heads of departments and staff in managerial positions since the results of study is most likely to apply more to them than other staff in non-management positions.

Research Application

The study will benefit the human resource practitioners on identifying human resource practices that promote person organization fit and enhance competitive advantage through positive work behaviors that increase flexible workforce. This in return may lead to organizational commitment by employees. This study may also contributes to the debate of human resource researchers on the convergence–divergence of human resource management practices by identifying linkages of human resources management practices and their organizational outcomes and work attitudes.

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