

The Effect of Human Resources Management Practices on Employees' Loyalty

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Abstract

A number of studies have examined the relationship between Human Resources Management (HRM) practices and the employees' loyalty to the organization. However, most of these studies have been conducted in the West. Accordingly, the research at hand inquires into the effect of HRM Practices on employees' loyalty to the organization in the Egyptian context and aims to propose a model that helps Egyptian service firms to increase their employees' loyalty through the effective implementation of HRM practices. To achieve the aims of this research, the researchers selected the Egyptian service sector as one of the largest in the region. Data was collected from 160 different employees in a number of organizations in the service industry in Egypt using a structured questionnaire.

Data collected was statistically analyzed using SPSS, where Reliability Analysis (Cronbach alpha) was used for the measures used in the test. Descriptive statistics, Chi-Square, and Correlations were computed in order to test the research hypotheses. Findings and practical implications were reported, and recommendations could be used by employers in order to increase their employees' loyalty through effective implementation of HRM Practices.

Keywords: Employee Loyalty, Human Resources Practices, Job Analysis, Employee Selection, Training, Job Satisfaction, Performance Appraisal, Career Planning, Compensation.

INTRODUCTION

As economic globalization has become more pronounced, the ability of organizations to compete in the global marketplace becomes more tied to the quality of their human resources. Many organizations rely on the expertise of their employees to gain competitive advantage in global economies (Reiche, 2007). There are major challenges in attempting to retain employees (Barney, 1991; Price, 2003; Sinangil, 2004; Woods, Heck, & Sciarini, 1998) which become an increasingly important aspect of building organizational capabilities to ensure sustained competitiveness (Holland, Sheehan, & De Cieri, 2007).

Armstrong M (2006) defines Human Resource Management (HRM) as a strategic and coherent approach to the management of an organization's most valued assets - the people working there who individually and collectively contributes to the achievement of the objectives. HRM involves all management decision and practices that directly affects the people, or human resources, who work for the organization.

Stavrou-Costea (2005) argues that effective human resource management can be the determining factor for the success of a firm. As supported by Lee and Lee's (2007) work, the effect of HRM practices on business performance such as training and development, teamwork, compensation/incentive, HR planning, performance appraisal, and employee security helps improve firms' business performance including employee's productivity, product quality and the firm's flexibility.

Research on Human Resource Management practices and their outcomes such as employee satisfaction, commitment, and retention have rarely been conducted in service companies in Egypt.

Employee loyalty

According to Allen and Grisaffe (2001), loyalty is a psychological state and it characterizes the relationship of an employee with the organization for which they work and that has implications

for their decision to remain with the organization. According to the definition of Mathieu and Zajac (1990), loyalty means as attachment to the organization that may be considered an emotional response, especially when an employee believes strongly in organizational goals and values and has a strong desire to maintain membership of the organization. According to Becker et al. (1995), loyalty could be defined as a strong desire to maintain a member of an organization; a willingness to slug on high levels of efforts for the sake of the organization; and a definite belief in and admissibility of the values and goals of the organization. Thus, loyalty is characterized by the strong wish to continue membership of an organization, which plays a positive role in retention of members in the organization. Organizational loyalty of employees could be defined as “the relative strength of an individual’s identification with and involvement in a particular organization” (Wu and Norman, 2006).

Job Analysis

This refers to the process of getting detailed information about a job (De Cieri & Kramar, 2008, p. 60), which could provide information for a variety of purposes, including determining training needs, development criteria, and appropriate pay and productivity levels (Price, 2003, p. 362). Job design deals with making decision. It has been argued that job analysis and design can enhance performance of the employees and job satisfaction (Moyes, Shao, & Newsome, 2008).

Employee Selection

Selection refers to the process by which an organization identifies those applicants with the knowledge, skills, abilities, and other characteristics that will help it achieve its goals (De Cieri & Kramar, 2008, p. 30).

Hiring capable people is an attractive point of departure in the process; but building and sustaining a committed workforce is more likely to be facilitated by the employment of a range of sophisticated human resource management infrastructures (Y. Chew, 2005; Raghuram, Bird, & Beechler, 1993).

The process of staffing employees in the organization consists of finding, evaluating, and assigning people to work (Harel and Tzafir, 1996). HRM activities involved in getting the right person on the right place (employee skills and organizational structure) contribute to higher productivity (Huselid, 1995). In addition, research has shown that implementing an effective staffing process (selectivity in staffing) is positively related with organizational performance (Delany and Huselid, 1996).

Training

According to Goldstein (1980) and Latham (1988), training is defined as the systematic acquisition and development of the knowledge, skills, and attitudes required by employees to adequately perform an assigned job or task to boost performance in the job environment.

Training should impart new knowledge and skills if the training is relevant, meet employee and organizational needs, efficiently and effectively designed and delivered (Salas, 1999). Huselid (1995) suggested that perceptions of HR practices such as providing training and job security by the company are important determinants of employee retention. According to Landsman (2004), he suggested that training is a valuable activity for enhancing skills and improving staff performance, and that training can address some of the factors contributing to staff retention.

Investment in training measures and the implementation of development schemes are becoming increasingly acknowledged as vital elements of HRM (Oakland & Oakland, 2001), and studies across a wide range of industries and sectors have all found a positive correlation between investment in training and employee commitment (Bassi & Buren, 1999).

Performance Appraisal

Performance appraisal is a process of inspecting and evaluating an individual’s performance in his

duty to facilitate the decision of career development of the individual. It evaluates the individual overall contribution to the organization through assessment of his internal characteristics, working performance and his capability to pursue higher position in organization (Gruman & Saks, 2011). "Performance appraisal represents, in part, a formalized process of worker monitoring and is intended to be a management tool to improve the performance and productivity of workers" (Shahzad, Bashir and Ramay, 2008, p.304). It is widely recognized as the primary human resource management intervention for providing feedback to individuals on their work-related achievements (Waddell *et al.*, 2000).

Performance appraisal can be used as an aid in making decisions pertaining to promotion, demotion, retention, transfer, and pay. It is also employed as a developmental guide for training needs assessment and employee feedback. Employee commitment and productivity can be improved with performance appraisal systems (Brown and Benson, 2003). Today many companies use performance appraisal as a way to retain the best employees, and to get rid of all that constitute a liability. Performance management is mainly concerned with the individual's performance and development. It is used to ensure that the employee's activities and outcomes are congruent with the organization's goals (De Cieri & Kramar, 2008, p. 61), by focusing on future performance planning and improvement rather than on retrospective performance appraisal (Armstrong, 2003, p. 4

Career planning

Career can also be defined narrowly in the context of jobs. It could imply work patterns which occur over time; improving experience through job-related satisfaction; and job sequences within an occupation, or movements between occupations. The term "career management" is often used to describe an individual's desire and strategy to fulfill career needs for advancement, extension of skills, or the enhancement of human experience on the job. These needs are then related to the future requirements of the organization.

Career Planning is an organizational initiative to help employees assess their skills, defines their career goals, and create an action plan for accomplishing those goals. The organization is also responsible for holding employees accountable to those goals. Some organizations fear that career planning will communicate to employees that their jobs are at risk, but it can be framed differently to communicate that they are willing to invest in helping employees reach their potential (Moses, 200

Compensation

Williams et al. (2007) found that if employees are satisfied with how the company operates and communicates its compensation policies, they remained committed to the organization. Furthermore, an organization's reward system can affect the performance of the employee and their desire to remain employed (e.g., Bamberger & Meshoulam, 2000, MacDuffie, 1995).

Compensation systems that organizations offer to the employees play a key role in increasing employee motivation (Milgrom and Roberts, 1992, p.388), performance and productivity. According to expectancy theory (Vroom, 1964), when pay is tied to some measure of individual or group performance, employees are more likely to work harder to increase the individual's, the group's or the organization's performance and an increase in performance in any of these areas will lead to an overall improvement in firm performance. Several studies have been developed that examined the impact of compensation on firm performance and found that an advanced compensation system can be a potential source of achieving competitive advantage (Gomez-Mejia and Wellbourne, 1988; Gerhart and Milkovich, 1992). In addition, incentive compensation has a positive impact upon organizational performance, lowers employee turnover and increases sales growth (Arthur, 1994; Delaney and Huselid, 1996; Batt, 2002).

RESEARCH AIM

The main subject of the research is to investigate the effect of Human Resources Management

Practices of employees' loyalty to the organization in the Egyptian context and to help Egyptian service firms to increase their employees' loyalty through the effective implementation of HRM practices. Accordingly, the research question that the study seeks to answer is given below:

What is the effect of Human Resources Management Practices of employees' loyalty to the organization in the Egyptian context?

Research Hypotheses

In order to answer the above questions literature has been extensively reviewed to devise the following hypothesis and sub-hypotheses:

H.1 There is no significant difference between Human Resources Management Practices and employees' loyalty to the organization

#	Sub-hypothesis
H.1:	There is no significant difference between Job analysis and employees' loyalty to the organization
H.2:	There is no significant difference between Employee Selection and employees' loyalty to the organization
H.3:	There is no significant difference between Training and Developing employees and employees' loyalty to the organization
H.4:	There is no significant difference between Performance appraisals and employees' loyalty to the organization
H.5:	There is no significant difference between Career Planning and employees' loyalty to the organization
H.6:	There is no significant difference between Compensation and employees' loyalty to the organization

Research Framework

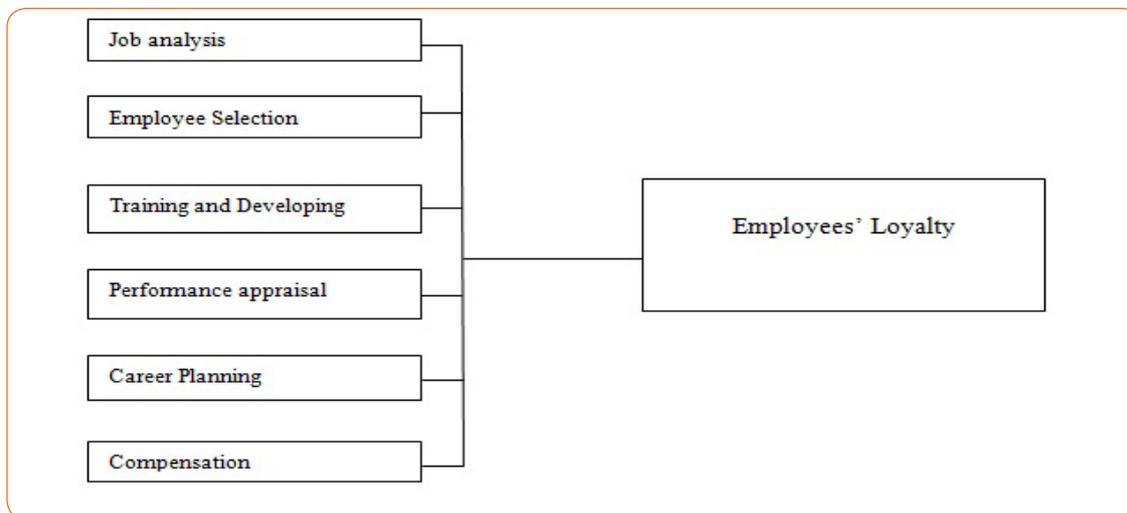


Figure 1: The impact of HRM practices on Employees' Loyalty Framework

As part of a wider investigation of the effect of the implementation of effective HRM practices on the employees' loyalty to the organization, a questionnaire was designed to survey employees working at 10 different service firms in Egypt in order to measure the impact of Human Resources practices on their loyalty to the organization.

The questionnaire was designed in English and translated into Arabic. Questionnaire forms were distributed in both languages, according to respondents' preferences, 300 questionnaires were distributed in 10 different service firms in Alexandria and only 160 questionnaires were collected. A summary of the questionnaire see appendix 1. The questionnaire contained 37

variables arranged in 7 groups and a demographics section. The used scale in this study is a five-point Likert-scale ranging from 5 'Strongly agree' to 1 'Strongly Disagree'.

- *Group 1:* Items Four items are used to measure Job Analysis (Questions 1-4)
- *Group 2:* Four items are used to measure Employee Selection (Questions 5-8)
- *Group 3:* Six items are used to measure Training and developing employees (Questions 9-14)
- *Group 4:* Seven items are used to measure Performance Appraisal (Questions 15-21)
- *Group 5:* Seven items are used to measure Career Planning (Questions 22-28)
- *Group 6:* Five items are used to measure Compensation (Questions 29-33)
- *Group 7:* Five items are used to measure Employees Loyalty (Questions 34-37)

The scale used to measure the Human Resources Management practices in this research is adapted from previous studies (Sign, 2004; Tahir and Mohammad, 2006). The second scale used in this research is employee loyalty measure and it is also adapted from previous study (Eskildsen et al., 2003).

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

In order to analyze the questionnaire data, statistical analysis was done using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) software. Statistical tests used were as follows:

- Reliability Analysis (Cronbach alpha) was used to measure the reliability
- Descriptive analysis was used to provide insights on the sample structure
- Chi-Square was used to further test whether the (independent variables) affect the (Dependent variable).
- Correlation analysis.

Reliability Analysis

Reliability test is an assessment of the degree of consistency between multiple measurements of a variable. Cronbach's alpha is the most widely used measurement tool with a generally agreed lower limit of 0.6. Table I, provides an overview of the reliability scores. As can be seen from this table, all the alpha coefficients were above the required level of 0.6.

TABLE II
RELIABILITY

Scale	Number of Items	Alpha
JOB ANALYSIS	4	0.7
EMPLOYEES SELECTION	4	0.7
EMPLOYEES TRAINING	6	0.8
EMPLOYEES APPRAISAL	7	0.8
CAREER PLANNING	7	0.8
EMPLOYEES COMPENSATION	5	0.6
EMPLOYEES LOYALTY	4	0.7

A. *Testing the Hypotheses*

In order to understand the effect of the implementation of effective Human Resources Management Practices on the employees' loyalty to the organization, a number of hypotheses were devised and tested as shown below:

H₀1: *There is no significant difference between Job analysis and employee loyalty*

Testing this using the relevant questions, Chi-square =154.650 (DF=13, sig. =0.000).

This shows a significant relation between Job analysis and Employees' loyalty. This would enable the authors to reject the null hypothesis.

H₀2: *There is no significant difference between Employee Selection and employee loyalty*

Testing this using the relevant questions, Chi-square = 109.150 (DF=13, sig. =0.000).

This shows a significant relation between Employees selection and Employees' loyalty. This would enable the authors to reject the null hypothesis.

H₀3: *There is no significant difference between Training and Developing employees and employee loyalty*

Testing this using the relevant questions, Chi-square = 117.750 (DF=19, sig. =0.000).

This shows a significant relation between Training and Developing employees and employees' loyalty. This would enable the authors to reject the null hypothesis.

H₀4: *There is no significant difference between Performance appraisals and employee loyalty*

Testing this using the relevant questions, Chi-square = 74.150 (DF=20, sig. =0.000).

This shows a significant relation between performance appraisal and employees' loyalty. This would enable the authors to reject the null hypothesis.

H₀5: *There is no significant difference between Career Planning and employee loyalty*

Testing this using the relevant questions, Chi-square = 57.50 (DF=19, sig. =0.000).

This shows a significant relation between career planning and employees' loyalty. This would enable the authors to reject the null hypothesis.

H₀6: *There is no significant difference between Compensation and employee loyalty*

Testing this using the relevant questions, Chi-square = 119.225 (DF=16, sig. =0.000).

This shows a significant relation between compensation and employees' loyalty. This would enable the authors to reject the null hypothesis.

Correlation

Based on the findings from previous studies (Bamberger & Meshoulam, 2000; MacDuffie, 1995; Gruman & Saks, 2011; Y. Chew, 2005) that focused on measuring the relationship between Human Resources Management practices and employees' loyalty to their organization, the following hypotheses will be tested in the Egyptian context:

H. There is a correlation between Human Resources Management Practices and Employees' loyalty

To test the relationship between human resources management practices and employees' loyalty, a correlation was computed. The correlations between human resources management practices and employees' loyalty were moderate and statistically significant (*r* ranged from 0.33 to 0.5). There was positive and significant correlations between all the human resources management practices and employees' loyalty (*r*=0.5) except for the job analysis.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Job Analysis	1						
2. Employees Selection	0.4	1					
3. Employees Training	0.5	0.5	1				
4. Performance Appraisal	0.4	0.6	0.4	1			
5. Career Planning	0.4	0.5	0.7	0.4	1		
6. Compensation	0.2	0.4	0.4	0.6	0.5	1	
7. Employees Loyalty	0.33	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	1

CONCLUSION

The main subject of the research is to investigate the effect of Human Resources Management Practices of employees' loyalty to the organization in the Egyptian context and to propose a model to help Egyptian service firms to increase their employees' loyalty through the effective implementation of HRM practices. The findings found from this study will be particularly useful for top organization to understand how they can do better to improve their employee loyalty. The research explores how employees perceive the importance of job analysis, selection, career planning, and training, compensation and appraisal aspects when they formulate decision to keep on loyal with an organization. Based on the findings generated, employees are generally concerned with all these aspects as result shows close relationship between these independent variables and employee loyalty.

Job analysis, selection, career planning, training, compensation and appraisal aspects emerged as the significant variables in explaining the variance in employee Loyalty. This reflects positive significant relationship between the variable employee loyalty and all other variables under study where all the variables had a significant relationship with employee loyalty with a value of 0.5 while job analysis at a value of 0.3 which means that they play a role in employee loyalty and can explain a part of the variation in employee loyalty.

This means that effective HRM practices lead to employee Loyalty. Results revealed that dimensions of HRM practices emerged as the predictors of employee loyalty in the case of service firms in Egypt. These practices include compensation, job analysis, performance appraisal, training, career planning & selection.

Furthermore, while making implications for academics as well as management professionals, research limitations should be taken into account which shows that this study was conducted in the context of Egyptian service organization where employees were used as the subject's experiment. It is therefore difficult to generalize the results obtained to other types of organizations such as business firms or factories.

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Appendix

TABLE I.A

QUESTIONNAIRE ITEMS

Questionnaire Items
The duties of every job are clearly defined in our organization
Each job in our organization has an up to date job description.
The job description for each job contains all the duties performed by individual employee.
The actual job duties are shaped more by the employee than by the formal job description.
The selection systems followed in our organization are highly scientific and rigorous.
In our organization, line managers and HR managers participate in selection.
Valid and standardized tests are used when required in the selection process.
Selection system in our organization selects those having the desired knowledge, skills and attitudes.
Our organization conducts extensive training programs for its employees in all aspects of quality.
Employees in each job will normally go through training programs every year.
Training needs are identified through a formal performance appraisal mechanism.
There are formal training programs to teach new employees the skills they need to perform their jobs.
New knowledge and skills are imparted to employees periodically to work in teams.
Training needs identified are realistic, useful and based on the business strategy of the organization.
Performance of the employees is measured on the basis of objective quantifiable results
Appraisal system in our organization is growth and development oriented
Employees are provided performance based feedback and counseling
Employees have faith in the performance appraisal system
Appraisal system has a strong influence on individual and team behavior.
The appraisal data is used for making decisions like job rotation, training and compensation
The objectives of the appraisal system are clear to all employees
Individuals in this organization have clear career paths.
Employee's career aspirations within the organization are known by his/ her immediate superior
Employees in our organization have more than one potential position for promotion
Individual and organization growth needs are matched in this organization
Our organization plans for the career and development of employees
Our organization prefers an internal employee whenever a vacancy exists.
Each employee is aware of his/her career path in the organization
Job performance is an important factor in determining the incentive compensation of employees
In our organization, salary and other benefits are comparable to the market.
our organization, compensation is decided on the basis of competence or ability of the employee
The compensation for all employees is directly linked to his/her performance.
In our organization, profit sharing is used as a mechanism to reward higher performance

TABLE I.B
QUESTIONNAIRE SUMMARY

Personal Data	
Gender	Male
	Female
Marital Status	Single
	Married with no children
	Married with children
	Divorced with no children
	Divorced with children
Age	20 – < 30
	30 – < 40
	40 – < 50
	50 – < 60
	60 and above
Monthly Income	< L.E 1,000
	L.E 1,000 – < 3,000
	L.E 3,000 – < 5,000
	L.E 5,000 – < 10,000
	L.E 10,000 and above
Level of Education	University graduate
	University postgraduate
Organizational Level	Manager
	Employee
	Clerical / Secretarial
Years at the job	< 5 years
	5 – < 10 years
	10 – < 20 years
	20 years and above

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