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HRM Practices and Organizational Commitment: How Job Crafting Mediates the Relationship

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the influence of human resource management practices on organizational commitment (OC) of university employees with a special focus on job crafting as a mediator. Following the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory, the study concentrates on the role of resources as central to installing OC and enabling JC. The study proposes HRM practices including training, performance management, and participative decision-making as main drivers of job-crafting activity by providing the tools and environment needed. Based on empirical evidence, the research illustrates that job crafting mediates the link between HRM practices and OC, providing insights into the role of HRM in commitment. Results fill a knowledge gap in recognizing HRM strategies for retaining knowledge workers in universities, highlighting the importance of resource-based and empowerment-driven HRM

strategies to facilitate faculty retention and organizational performance. This research offers theoretical and practical knowledge on designing HRM strategies promoting employee commitment through job crafting.

Keywords: Commitment, Human Resource Management Practices, Job Crafting, SEM, Public University

Introduction

Human resource management (HRM) must prioritize workplace commitment concerns. Numerous issues emerge from the correlation between HRM practices and outcomes, particularly related to the substantial influence of organizational commitment as an employee outcome. Literature has consistently emphasized this relationship (e.g., Ly, 2023; Meyer & Smith, 2000). In higher educational institutions, became crucial to see links between HRM practices and, organizational commitment. However, universities trust heavily on high expertise, creativity, and problem-solving skills (Van Rossenberg et al., 2022). Also, these universities emphasize innovation, and their operations require skilled employees, analytical thinking, and creative abilities (Ly, 2023).

Expertise and skills make knowledge faculty vital resources. Usually, their jobs involve non-routine, complex, and mentally intensive work that requires analytical thinking and creativity (Meijerink et al., 2020). However, these workers also tend to exhibit high levels of job mobility and a lower tendency to identify strongly with a single organization (Genari & Macke, 2022). Their professional loyalties often align more closely with networks, peers, and their fields of expertise than with the organizations employing them (Park et al., 2019). This creates a significant challenge for organizations attempting to retain such employees, as their departure often results in a loss of critical knowledge that underpins competitive advantage (Van Rossenberg et al., 2022).

Organizational commitment is essential for retaining staff, particularly in the knowledge workers. Enhancing this commitment requires strategic efforts (Park et al., 2019; Al Balushi et al., 2022). Research demonstrates that HRM practices, including salary satisfaction, career development opportunities, and favorable management, positively affect employee commitment (Gomes et al., 2023). Also, factors, i.e. job autonomy & organizational culture, have been demonstrated to

influence outcomes significantly (Khosro & Pathan, 2023). The unique dynamics within universities including their dependence on specialized employees and sector-specific HRM systems, complicate the generalizability of these findings (Alqudah et al., 2022; Ahmad et al., 2024). University personnel require more explanation via HRM practices that can improve commitment among faculty. However, this study explores the influences of HRM practices on OC. This research adopts the unidimensional approach to commitment as proposed by (Qalati et al., 2024), defining commitment as a psychologically constructed bond between employees and their organizations, rooted in dedication and responsibility. HRM practices aligned with this framework can foster connections by supplying essential resources and support to navigate the complexities inherent in knowledge work.

The conservation of resources theory's theoretical foundations aim to handle and sustain scarce resources (Bon & Shire, 2022). Resources in this context include job-related tools, skills, and conditions that allow employees to thrive. For university faculty, resource availability is an important mediator influencing job crafting which refers to deliberate actions to acquire and utilize more resources for enhancing job performance (Tims et al., 2022). Moreover, job crafting has boosted the company's employees' commitment (Noesgaard & Jørgensen, 2024; John et al., 2024). This study hypothesizes that human resource management strategies enhance knowledge workers' organizational commitment by facilitating job creation and resource accumulation.

This research enhances the existing literature in multiple aspects. First, it investigates the organizational determinants that influence commitment in the public university, bridging a significant gap in understanding HRM practices for specialized employee groups. Second, the investigation employs job crafting as the mediator in the link among HRM practices & commitment, providing a new viewpoint on HRM's "black box." Third, it highlights the HRM approaches that are most effective in retaining valuable knowledge workers, giving practical insights for firms. The article then discusses the theoretical foundations of HRM and OC, explains job crafting mediating roles, and tests hypotheses using empirical analysis. Finally, it discusses the findings' consequences, as well as future research objectives.

Literature Review

HRM and Organizational Commitment

Employers implement various practices, foster organizational commitment, and driven employees with high levels of commitment deliver superior performance, thereby enhancing organizational outcomes. This is especially relevant in knowledge-intensive industries, where employees possess critical expertise that resides with them rather than the organization. Consequently, organizations must prioritize specific HR practices to attract, retain, and motivate knowledge workers effectively. Evidence suggests that not all HR systems uniformly influence different groups of knowledge workers. For instance, high-involvement HR systems are beneficial, but performance work also influences driving productive behaviors (Lakshman et al., 2022). In spite of these findings, more studies on skilled-knowledge workers are still vital (Nawaz et al., 2021). These practices, including selection, development, rewards, and compensation, effectively increase and maintain commitment (Meyer & Smith, 2000). High-commitment HR practices are distinct in that they reinforce organizational resources and create a psychological connection between employees and their organizations (Matošková, 2023). These systems develop conditions that motivate employees to actively commit to organizational objectives, influencing their behaviors and attitudes. Importantly, high-commitment HRM signifies the employer's intention to meet employees' needs and form long-term relations. This strategy might be based on measures other than high-involvement practices, including internal development prospects, equitable reward systems, and heightened perceptions of justice (Ismat et al., 2023). Continuous skill development and autonomy are crucial motivators for organizational commitment, as they enhance knowledge workers' productivity and mitigate risks associated with knowledge loss due to workforce mobility (Genari & Macke, 2022). Practices such as career advancement opportunities, training, performance management, promotion, and creating an optimal work environment also contribute significantly to fostering employee commitment (Khosro & Pathan, 2023). Hence, it is proposed that:

H1. HRM practices relate positively to OC.

HRM Practices and Job Crafting

Since job crafting depends heavily on high-quality outputs, it requires robust personal effort, creativity, and adaptability in shaping work roles and tasks (Noesgaard & Jørgensen, 2024), employee proactivity is a critical factor in achieving superior performance in these organizations. McNaughtan et al. (2022) the creation of new services emerges from acquiring, assimilating, and utilizing new knowledge, underscores innovative capacity. Consequently, executing complex tasks is crucial for task effectiveness, with job crafting playing an essential role in acquiring such resources. Employees could modify positions to better suit their requirements and skills via job crafting (Meijerink et al., 2020). Another important factor in promoting JC behavior is HRM practices (Tej et al., 2021; Li et al., 2021). However, these measures are essential to help individuals actively reshape jobs to align with organizational goals, aligning with the contention that HRM is directly connected through job crafting. When HRM practices are carefully developed and focused on employee development, they offer the tools and setting needed for employees' crafting capabilities. Training and development programs equip employees with important knowledge, facilitating tasks and methods with confidence (Van Rossenberg et al., 2022). These programs not only enhance competencies but also encourage a sense of self-efficacy, prompting employees to recognize opportunities for value addition to their jobs or personal fulfillment.

Performance management systems that encourage ongoing feedback and reward programs provide an enabling environment for job crafting. Through the information received in feedback sessions, the staff obtains an understanding of what they excel in and what can be improved, and motivation to reorganize the work activities or modify the behavior patterns in interpersonal communication (Li et al., 2021). Similarly, HRM practices that emphasize career development enable employees to connect their current responsibilities with long-term professional goals, inspiring proactive adjustments. Moreover, supportive HR policies such as flexible work arrangements and participative decision-making enhance employees' autonomy, which is a fundamental job crafting driver (McNaughtan et al., 2022). HRM practices that emphasize empowerment, development, and recognition cultivate an environment conducive to job crafting. By facilitating these proactive

behaviors, HRM enhances individual satisfaction and motivation, affirming the association between HRM and, job crafting. Hence, it is proposed that:

H2. HRM practices relate positively to job crafting

Job Crafting and OC

Staff whose work actively shapes their roles exhibit greater fitness and enhanced skills (Demerouti et al., 2021). Through job creation, employees may raise their available resources even more, therefore enhancing OC. High-committed employees will be driven to use work crafting to acquire extra resources, including social and professional aspects. Job crafting allows employees to tailor their work to their abilities and interests, which boosts job satisfaction. By adapting assignments and interactions to their capacities, employees experience a greater sense of control, competence, and purpose. Moreover, job crafting promotes stronger relationships and seeks support and collaboration or develops better relationships in the company (Sujeong, 2022). Employees' social connection boosts their sense of belonging, which drives organizational dedication. Job crafting also lets workers match their employment to their values and professional goals. This alignment raises intrinsic motivation and lessens job-related stress. Job crafting positively influences organizational commitment by enhancing role satisfaction, fostering social connectedness, and aligning personal goals. As stressed by (Noesgaard & Jørgensen, 2024), committed employees may be more inclined to sustained organizational success, and positively related to job crafting. Employees who are dedicated are frequently more likely to contribute to the long-term success of an organization, as their dedication encourages proactive engagement and congruence with the organization's objectives. Furthermore, JC is a practice of individuals boost creativity to modify work duties, relationships, or cognitive beliefs and positively connect with commitment (McNaughtan et al., 2022). This relationship emphasizes the extent to which commitment motivates employees to exceed their designated responsibilities, thereby improving personal satisfaction. Hence, it is proposed that:

H3. Job crafting relates positively to OC.

HRM practices, OC, and JC

According to COR theory (Kim & Beehr, 2022), job crafting could lead to resources, boosting tough demands, declining limiting wants, and, expanding resources. Even,

knowledge workers' access to diverse organizational resources supports job crafting, which leads to sustainable employability, and OC (McNaughtan et al., 2022). Job crafting is important since it requires resources and challenges to suit clients' needs. Prior research links HRM practices to job crafting (Hu et al., 2022). HRM practices significantly influence the availability of resources, which in turn impact employee behaviors, including JC (Gomes et al., 2023). Evidence from COVID-19 pandemic shows that even in challenging situations, hindering demands like workload overload prompted increased job crafting, particularly when managers demonstrated strong OC (Federici et al., 2021). These findings underline HRM's role and job crafting in cultivating organizational commitment (Ekmekcioglu & Nabawanuka, 2023). For instance, a study of employees in the manufacturing industry confirmed job-crafting mediating role between HRM practices and OC (Diaa et al., 2024). Therefore, hypothesized:

H4: JC mediates between HRM practices and OC

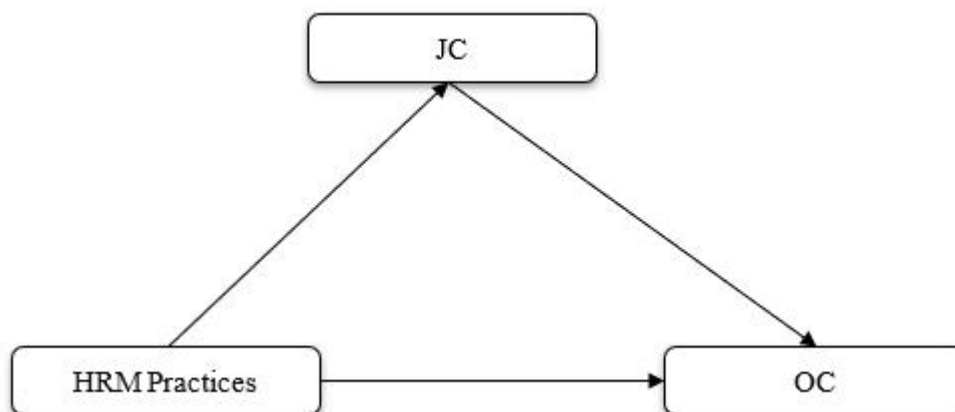


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

Methodology

Sample

Data were collected from visiting faculty members at a public university in Pakistan. Employees were contacted and asked to participate. Upon their consent, a questionnaire was administered personally to them. In total, 850 employees were contacted and 691 responses were received. The study had a response rate of 81.29%. Table 1 contains the profile of respondents. The profile reveals that 62.23% of respondents are male and 37.77% are female. Additionally, 24.31% of the respondents have bachelor's degrees, 8.39% have master's degrees & higher. Overall,

respondents 40.38% had 3-4 years of experience, and the age 18-24 years was 28.08%.

Table 1 Demographic-Analysis

Items	Category	Frequency	%
Gender	Male	430	62.23
	Female	261	37.77
Qualification	Matric	181	26.19
	Intermediate	284	41.10
	Graduate	168	24.31
	MS & Higher	58	8.39
Experience	1-2	178	25.76
	3-4	279	40.38
	5-8	172	24.89
	9 & more	62	8.97
Age	18-24	194	28.08
	25-30	159	23.01
	31-36	170	24.60
	37 & above	168	24.31

Measures

An 18-item scale of HRM practices was utilized in measuring HRM practices, including performance management, career planning, and self-managed teams (Memon et al., 2021). Sample items include ‘My direct managers are aware of my professional goals. The HRM practices reliability was 0.91 respectively. The organizational commitment construct was measured via a 4-measurement scale (Meyer et al., 1993). Sample items include “I would be more than pleased to continue working with this organization in the future”, Cronbach alpha was recorded as 0.81. Also, job crafting variables suggested by (Tims et al., 2012), were utilized to measure Job crafting 15 measurement scale construct. Scale items include: ‘I try to see my work as part of a larger purpose’.

Analytical Techniques

To validate the questionnaire and test the structural model, the study employed Analysis of Moment Structures (AMOS) with data collected from 691 participants

representing public university faculty personnel. Data analysis utilized SPSS and AMOS version 23. SEM was deemed suitable based on prior research, as it effectively represents and analyzes complex regression relationships within a single framework (Zhang et al., 2021). Moreover, SEM has been recognized as a robust method for investigating mediation and interaction effects (Hair et al., 2020). Consequently, this study utilized the SEM approach with maximum likelihood estimation to evaluate the proposed hypotheses. Moreover, With the Bootstrap test, the mediating role of Job Crafting between HRM practices and OC was checked. The result is considered significant and a parallel mediating relationship exists if the boot ULCI and the boot LLCI exclude the value 0. Otherwise, a full mediating relationship exists.

Measurement Model

All constructs utilized in the measurement model were assessed for reliability and validity to assess its adequacy. Cronbach's alpha (Alpha) and composite reliability (CR) were employed to evaluate reliability, which was assessed according to interitem consistency. Table 3 illustrates that all constructs had Alpha and CR values greater than 0.7, which verified their reliability (Hair et al., 2014). In an additional effort to evaluate the constructs' convergent validity at the item level, item loadings were identified. The item loadings of all constructs exceeded 0.7 (Hair et al., 2014). AVE was assessed to determine convergent validity at the construct level. The AVE values were greater than the minimum permissible value of 0.5 for all constructs (Hair et al., 2014). Lastly, heterotrait–monotrait (HTMT) ratios were calculated to demonstrate discriminant validity and pairings had ratios less than 0.85, as illustrated in Table 2 (Henseler et al., 2015), indicating no discriminant validity

Table 2: Heterotrait Monotrait Ratios (HTMT)

	1	2	3
HRM-practices	(0.720)		
OC	0.614	(0.698)	
JC	0.452	0.562	(0.613)

Table3: CR, AVE, and Factor Loading

Variable	Items	F. L	CR	AVE	α
HRMP	HRMP1-HRMP18	0.721-0.865	0.914	0.525	0.898
OC	OC1-OC4	0.712-0.914	0.752	0.788	0.824
JC	JC1-JC15	0.820-0.865	0.752	0.911	0.863

Results

A model fit was achieved by the CFA model containing HRD practices, OC and JC ($\chi^2/df = 3.15$, RMSEA = 0.051, SRMR = 0.042, TLI = 0.966, and CFI = 0.979). Hence, model fit provides a reliable representation of HRD practices, OC, and JC. Table 2 presents the correlation-coefficient analysis. Table 3 displays Factor loadings, Cronbach alpha, AVE, and CR values results. Table 4 displays the hypothesis test results. Hypothesis 1: HRMP and OC were significantly associated ($\beta = 0.388$, significant), thereby supporting Hypothesis 1. Hypothesis 2: HRMP and JC were shown significantly associated ($\beta = 0.771$, significant). Hypothesis 2 is supported. Hypothesis 3: JC and OC were also significantly associated ($\beta = 0.576$), Consequently, hypothesis 3 is supported. Hypothesis 4 indicates that OC mediates the association between HRMP and JC ($\beta = 0.324$), thereby supporting Hypothesis 4.

Table 4 Hypothesis Testing

Items	β	t	P-value
HRMP - OC	0.388	7.660	0.000
HRMP - JC	0.771	24.412	0.000
JC - OC	0.576	13.334	0.000

Items	β	t	LL	UL
HRMP - OC - JC	0.324	7.224	0.27	0.50

Discussion

HRM practices and OC have confirmed significant roles in university settings. The study results confirm several outcomes: HRMP, Job crafting, and OC link one another, and the influence of JC mediating relationship among HRMP and OC. The study's findings are consistent with prior research conducted by (Ekmekcioglu & Nabawanuka, 2023; Hu et al., 2022; McNaughtan et al., 2022; Tej et al., 2021). This

finding suggests that effective HRM practices foster a commitment to the implementation of job crafting within the university setting. The theoretical framework suggests that universities employ human resource management through JC and the enhancement of organizational commitment. Job crafting serves as a mediator, demonstrating its ability to transform supportive HRM practices into improved organizational outcomes. Career planning initiatives that correspond with individual aspirations allow employees to redefine their roles meaningfully. Performance management systems that facilitate feedback and skill development improve both task and cognitive crafting. The results correspond with the study by Memon et al. (2021), which indicated that effectively organized HRM systems enable employees to tailor their work to fulfill goals. The association between job crafting elements profoundly affects Organizational Commitment (OC). Workers who change their workplace relations repeatedly demonstrate stronger feelings of affective commitment. The results of Tims et al. (2012) support the identification of relational crafting as a main factor for fostering workplace bonds and team collaboration. The analysis utilizing SEM conducted a detailed evaluation of the mediation effect. Enhanced job crafting stands out as a vital mediation mechanism in these results since key values from bootstrapping analysis remain above the zero-point throughout. The current findings support the COR theory by showing how human resources management practices supply resources that employees can use through job crafting for increased commitment. Diverse job crafting techniques exhibited by employees prove it essential to create unique human resource management approaches for every situation. Worker groups showing higher proactive behavior derive greater value from HRM systems highlighting autonomy and creativity but staff with lower proactivity need clear support channels to engage effectively in job crafting activities. Creating an environment marked by trust and recognition enhances the relationship that exists between JC and OC.

Practical Implications

This research delivers operational guidance which helps organizations apply Human Resource Management practices to boost employee dedication and work performance. Organizations need to value developing spaces where workers can perform job-crafting activities. When employees get the freedom to modify their

work assignments it leads to increased work satisfaction and stronger organizational commitment. The workforce engagement increases when organizations develop flexible policies regarding task structuring decisions together with permission for work processes participation. The Human Resource Management system incorporates procedures that match JC behavior stimulation by delivering career progress maps to employees with suitable competence training options as well as employing performance measurement systems. Organizations need these practices both for task effectiveness and to allow people to adjust work responsibilities according to their unique abilities. To support JC behaviors organizations must devote funds toward both training managers about these behaviors and providing them with planning instruments that help shape culture conducive to staff self-orientation. Organizations should develop performance management systems which both identify and reward JC initiatives. Specific acknowledgement and support of JC behaviors create greater employee engagement while motivating workers to get involved in these practices because they strengthen their dedication to the organization. This results in a workforce that is more engaged with the employer, leading to increased retention rates and improved organizational performance. Organizations must create work environment that emphasize work-life balance and offer employees the flexibility to align work responsibilities with their personal lives. HRMP that prioritizes employee well-being effectively reduces stress and burnout, and enriches JC, thus fostering greater satisfaction and OC.

Theoretical Implications

This research contributes significant theoretical advancements to the domains of human resource management, organizational behavior, and job crafting literature. This study improves the understanding of the intricate relationship between HRM practices and organizational commitment by including job crafting as a mediating variable. This study addresses a significant gap in the literature by illustrating the intermediary mechanisms, specifically job crafting, that elucidate the relationship between HRM practices and organizational commitment, despite prior research examining this direct connection. Job crafting, by assuming the role of a mediator, enhances the comprehension of the significant influence HRM practices can exert on promoting employee commitment. This study emphasizes the significance of

employee agency within the workplace. Conventional HRM practices primarily emphasize the management of employee behavior and outcomes via established policies, guidelines, and compliance measures. This study highlights the role of job crafting as a mediator, emphasizing the importance of individual agency in influencing work outcomes. Employees actively engage with HRM initiatives, reshaping their roles to align with personal interests, strengths, and objectives. This viewpoint facilitates the exploration of employees' roles as change agents within organizations. Future research should examine the influence of proactive behaviors on three primary organizational results which involve employee engagement alongside organizational innovation and general performance outputs. This work extends work-design theory because it demonstrates why structured jobs provide meaningful employee experiences leading to greater motivation and commitment (Hackman & Oldham, 1976).

These research findings demonstrate that organizations must establish HR management practices to support job crafting activities through both task flexibility and employee autonomy to produce beneficial work outcomes. This research reveals how HRM practices interact with job crafting to impact employee commitment and deepens theoretical understanding of job design techniques as organizational support tools for strengthening worker engagement. Finally, the study initiates new discussions regarding the interactionist perspective in organizational behavior, emphasizing the interplay between individual characteristics and job context in shaping outcomes. The incorporation of job crafting into the model recognizes that organizational commitment arises from a dynamic interaction between individual actions (such as job crafting) and contextual factors (such as HRM practices), rather than being attributed solely to individual or environmental elements. This conceptualization may guide future research to investigate how different HRM practices promote particular types of proactive employee behaviors, which in turn result in varied employee outcomes, thereby enhancing the understanding of the connections between HRM practices and organizational performance.

Limitations and Future Directions

This study presents several limitations. The study employs a cross-sectional design, thereby constraining the capacity to determine causal relationships among HRM

practices, job crafting, and organizational commitment. Future research may employ a longitudinal design to enhance evidence of causality. The dependence on self-reported data may lead to bias; thus, integrating objective data or qualitative methods could yield a more comprehensive perspective. The sample concentrated on particular sectors, which may restrict generalizability. Future research should encompass a wider array of industries and regions to analyze the variability of these relationships across diverse contexts. Furthermore, although job crafting was recognized as a significant mediator, other elements, including individual characteristics or organizational culture, were not examined. Future research may explore additional mediators and moderators to enhance understanding of the intricate dynamics involved. Furthermore, investigating the long-term effects of job crafting on organizational commitment would elucidate its enduring impact. Future studies should examine the impact of digital tools and flexible work arrangements on job crafting and organizational commitment, particularly in the context of the growing trend towards remote work, to enhance understanding of contemporary work environments.

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