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# A STUDY ON HR PRACTICES AND ITS IMPACT ON JOB SATISFACTION, ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT AND EMPLOYEE TURNOVER IN ICT INDUSTRY IN THE UAE

**Srinivasa Raghavan Murali**

Research Scholar, Banasthali Vidyapith, Jaipur, Rajasthan, India

**Dr. Megha Aggarwal**

Assistant Professor, Banasthali Vidyapith, Jaipur, Rajasthan, India

## ABSTRACT

*This research paper on the study on various HR practices and its impact on job satisfaction, organizational commitment and employee turnover in ICT industry in the UAE is an attempt to explore the relationship between these variables by collecting data from a sample of four hundred employees working in various ICT companies in the UAE. By administering a questionnaire that consists of ninety eight questions related to the areas such as HR practices, job satisfaction, organizational commitment and labor turnover, detailed data was obtained from the samples. The primary data was supported by using secondary data from various records maintained by the firms as well as from the government departments in the country. From the analysis of the data, it is revealed that there exists very high correlation between HR practices, employee job satisfaction, organizational commitment and employee turnover in the ICT industry in the UAE.*

**Key words:** HR Practices, Job Satisfaction, Organizational Commitment, Employee Turnover, ICT Industry, Primary Data, Secondary Data, Correlation.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Human resource management (HRM) can be defined as a distinctive approach to manage human resource to achieve competitive capability through strategic deployment of workforce that is highly committed, by using wide array of structural, cultural and personnel techniques

(Storey, 1995). It is the activities designed to coordinate the human resource of a business entity for its optimum utilization (Byars & Rue, 2004). In order to achieve the goals of an organization by utilizing the human resource, the organization should develop HR strategy (Schwab, 2016) as human resource has become a strategic asset due to the changes that has taken place in the business landscape. In the present business world, the employees are variously referred to as human asset, human capital or human resource. The term capital implies property, wealth or money, which is used to generate more wealth. Human capital refers to the collective knowledge, skill and abilities of the employees in an organization to promote economic value of the firm in the market place (Benhabib and Spiegel, 1994). When the value of people is increased, it will enhance the value of the firm. The human resource has become more important due to the development of a knowledge based economy and the emergence of organizations that strive to create competitive advantage by adopting knowledge management techniques (Eduardo, 2011). At present, the role of human resource in triggering off innovations in technology management is unlimited and unavoidable (Sorokin, Novikov and Zamkovi, 2016).

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Concrete literature base has been developed in human resource management that explains the relationship between HR practices, job satisfaction, organizational commitment and employee turnover or employee retention. The theories and models such as “General System Theory” (Boulding, 1968; Buckley, 1968; Easton, 1965), “human capital theory” (Schultz, 1961; Becker, 1964), “organizational learning theory” (Argyris & Schoen, 1978; Senge, 1990), Harvard Model (Beer, Spector, Lawrence, Mills and Watson, 1984), Matching Model (Fombrun, Tichy and Devanna, 1984), The Guest Model (Guest, 1997) and The Warwick Model (Hendry and Pettigrew, 1986) have given detailed insights into various areas of HR practices and its relationship with job satisfaction, employee commitment, employee performance and employee retention. In addition to these theories and models, various empirical studies have been conducted to explore the relationship between HR practices, job satisfaction, organizational commitment and employee turnover in various fields of business activities. The studies conducted by researchers such as Roderick and Donna (1999), Lok and Crawford (2001), John, David, Lynee and Laryssa (2002), Patrick, Timothy and Lisa (2003), Shahnawas and Rakesh (2006), Pascal (2012), Ajaya Kumar and Ravindra (2015), Simon (2015) and Ajay Kumar and Sreenivasa Reddy (2016) have made detailed analysis on the relationship between various aspects of HR practices, job satisfaction, organizational commitment and employee retention in various industries across the world. According to Chaudhury and Nazmul (2017), the employee turnover is a major issue in many of the organizations in many countries of the world after the emergence of globalization. Bernard (2018) in his study on strategies to reduce voluntary turnover among employees, estimates that the major industry leaders in the US spent around \$11 billion annually as cost of advertising, hiring and training due to voluntary employee turnover. The topic has got much importance now due to the current industrial scenario where employees move from one organization to another within a short stint of service.

## 3. RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

The rationale for selecting UAE for studying the impact of HR practices on job satisfaction, organizational commitment and employee turnover is primarily motivated by three major reasons. Firstly, among the Middle East countries, UAE is considered as a high income country with a GDP ranking of 29<sup>th</sup> in the world in nominal terms and the GDP per capita is \$39,709 which is the 23<sup>rd</sup> highest in the world (IMF, 2019). In the entire Arab World, UAE

has earned reputation as a leading hub of modern techno-savvy enterprises and world class infrastructural facilities (Zhao, Scavarda, Waxin, 2012). The business friendly approach of the rulers of the nation has enabled the country to become a hub of IT and operating center for many IT companies across the Middle East. Secondly, the country is an attractive destination for job seekers around the world and the rapid economic drive generated by oil boom has tempted the economy to diversify into various areas of activities. The information and communication technology industry has become a job creator in the country now (UNCTAD, 2019). Thirdly, the rulers of the country have shown focused attention to develop a knowledge based economy by allocating sufficient resources for knowledge management activities (Budhwar, Pereira and Mellahi, 2019).

As compared to the traditional mode of business, the rules, practices and structure of industries have been undergoing unprecedented transformation under digital economies, the HR practices also has been undergoing changes to cope with the industry norms (Castells, 2009; Varian et al., 2002). The role of HR has been gradually evolved as a line activity rather than a staff function as the success and failure of firms in the modern digital world is highly depended upon the ability and skill of the human assets that they hold (UNECE, 2013). The same trend is visible in the Middle East market also and the ICT industry has been demonstrating remarkable progress since 2000 onwards as the data transmission between the Middle East and the rest of the world has increased by more than 150 times (McKinsey, 2016). Above all, the country has reached 100% smart phone penetration, 98.98% of social media adoption and 91.96% of mobile internet users now (GMI, 2020).

#### **4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

Based on the background information imparted, the following objectives are set for the study:

- To explore the relationship between various HR practices such as recruitment and selection, performance management, compensation management and training and development on employees' turnover in the ICT industry in the UAE. As the employees' turnover is quite high in the ICT industry across the world, the same trend is visible in the UAE also and hence, it is pertinent to analyze and explore the relationship between HR practices and employee turnover.
- To examine the relationship between the HR variables mentioned above with the job satisfaction of the employees in the ICT industry by linking the HR variables with various components of job satisfaction such as cognitive satisfaction, affective satisfaction and evaluative satisfaction.
- To investigate the impact of job satisfaction and its various components on organizational commitment of the employees in ICT industry by linking the job satisfaction elements with organizational commitment elements such as affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment of the employees.
- To explore the relationship between organizational commitment and its various components on employee turnover and absenteeism.

#### **5. RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS**

H01: Various HR practices such as recruitment and selection, performance management, compensation and reward management and training and development do not have any impact on employee turnover in ICT industry in the UAE.

Ha1: Various HR practices such as recruitment and selection, performance management, compensation and reward management and training and development influence the employee

turnover in ICT industry in the UAE negatively. The better the practice, lesser will be the employee turnover and vice versa.

H02: Various HR practices such as recruitment and selection, performance management, compensation and reward management and training and development do not have any substantial impact on the job satisfaction of the employees working in ICT industry in the UAE.

Ha2: The HR practices such as recruitment and selection, performance management, compensation management and training and development positively influence the job satisfaction of the employees working in ICT industry in the UAE.

H03: The cognitive, affective and evaluative component of job satisfaction do not influence the organizational commitment of the employees working in ICT industry in the UAE

Ha3: The cognitive, affective and evaluative component of job satisfaction influence positively the organizational commitment of the employees working in ICT industry in the UAE

H04: The organizational commitment variables such as affective, continuance and normative commitment do not influence employee turnover in ICT industry in the UAE

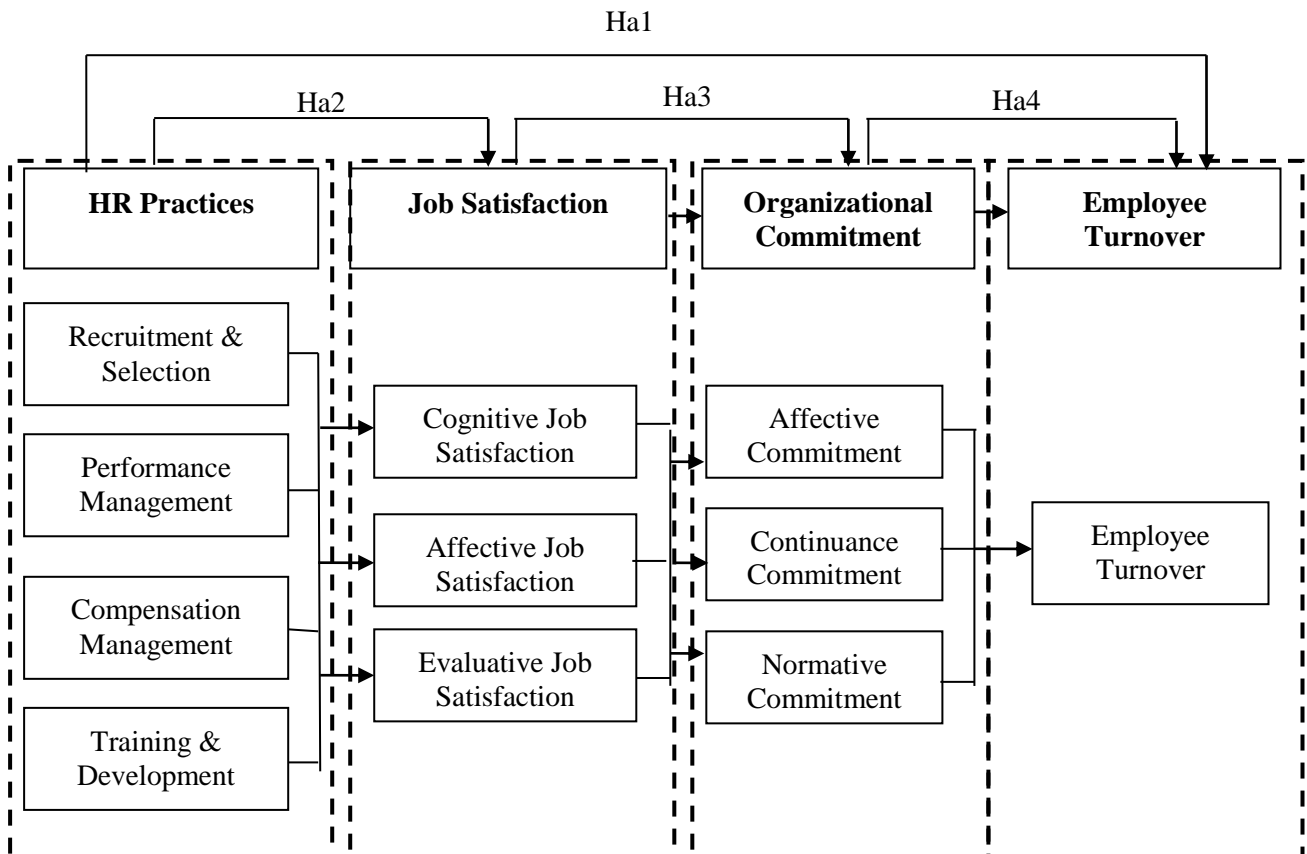
Ha4: The employee turnover in firms operating in ICT industry in the UAE is negatively correlated to organizational commitment of the employees working in this sector. If commitment is more, then turnover will be less and vice versa.

## 6. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF THE MODEL

The following conceptual model is developed to explain the relationship between the variables such as HR practices, job satisfaction, organizational commitment and employee turnover in ICT industry in the UAE. The conceptual framework is designed to explore the linkage between the various elements of HR practices with that of labor turnover, as it is found that despite the firms across the country follow international standards in recruitment, selection, performance management, training and development and reward management, the employee turnover is quite high in ICT industry in the UAE (Mercer, 2019). Since few research studies have been conducted on the linkage between the variables under study in ICT industry in the UAE, the findings of the study may be helpful in providing deeper insights into the issue concerned so that appropriate measures can be taken by firms to overcome the problem and thereby avoid the cost and expenses related to it. The conceptual model is outlined in figure 1.

The research works on employee turnover provide detailed information on the influence of HR dimensions on job satisfaction ((March and Simon, 1958; Mobley et al., 1979; Holtom & Inderrieden, 2008; Hayes, 2012). The dimensions of job satisfaction such as cognitive, affective and evaluative variables are influenced by the HR practices positively. The cognitive component of job satisfaction related to beliefs on one's job as to whether it is respectable, challenging and rewarding. The affective component consists of the actions of people in connection with their work such as tardiness, working late, purposeful avoidance of work etc. The evaluative job satisfaction is the overall reaction of an employee towards his/her organization as to whether he/she likes or dislikes the employer. The various components of job satisfaction is positively correlated with organizational commitment (Tett & Meyer, 1993; Garima, 2013). The organizational commitment can be affective commitment (Jaros et al., 1993), continuance commitment (Becker, 1960), and normative commitment (Penley and Gould, 1988). The organizational commitment is defined as a force that binds a person to a particular course of action that is linked to one or more objectives, which is otherwise known as psychological state (Allen and Meyer, 1990), 'psychological bound' (Mathieu and Zajac,

1990) or psychological attachment’ (O’Reilly and Chatman, 1986). The affective commitment is emotional linkage of an employee with the values nurtured by an organization. Continuance commitment shows how much employees feel the need to stay at their organization. Normative commitment related to how much staffs feel that they should stay at their organization. The employees that feel normative commitment will continue with the organization for long time. When the organizational commitment increases, the employees will serve continuously for long time which in turn will reduce the labor turnover. Various research works emphasize the fact that the enhanced organizational commitment can assists a company by way of improved performance, and lesser turnover (Meyer and Allen, 1997; Mowday, 1998; Cooper-Hakim and Viswesvaran, 2005).



**Figure 1** Conceptual framework of the study

## 7. POPULATION AND SAMPLING METHOD

The total population consists of staff employed in ICT industry in the UAE, where various projects are running in different stages of its life cycle. Thus the total population is the people who work in this industry. The sampling method adopted for the sample is stratified random sampling and the sample size consists of various levels and categories of employees working in managerial as well as operational areas of the business activity. From the population, a total sample of 400 staff members are chosen by adopting Raosoft sample selection technique with 5% confidence level and 81% of response rate.

## 8. DATA COLLECTION

The data for the study is collected from primary sources as well as from secondary sources. The primary data is collected from the sample of 400 staff members selected on the basis of stratified random sampling method. The tools used for collecting primary data are

questionnaires and interviews. The questionnaire used for collecting data is closed ended questions related to four areas of the study such as HR practices, job satisfaction, organizational commitment and employee turnover. The total number of questions included in the questionnaire was 98 out of which 40 questions are related to HR practices, 24 questions related to job satisfaction, 24 questions on organizational commitment and remaining 10 questions pertains to employee turnover. Interviews were conducted in those few cases where it was found to be inevitable to elicit information. The scale used for the questionnaire is Likert five point scale ranging from 1 (Highly Disagree), 2 (Disagree), 3 (Neutral), 4 (Agree) and 5 (Highly Agree).

The secondary data for this study is sourced from the database available from the firms, research reports in professional journals, website of professional bodies such as chamber of commerce, government publications, newspapers and magazines.

## 9. ANALYSIS OF DATA

The data collected is analyzed by using various statistical tools to derive information from the data. The major tools used are descriptive statistical tools such as measures of central tendency, measures of dispersion and inferential statistics such as Karl Pearson's correlation coefficient.

### 9.1. Reliability Statistic on Different Variables

The reliability static on different variables of HR practices, job satisfaction, organizational commitment and employee turnover give the values mentioned in the table 1.

**Table 1** Reliability Statistic of Various Dimensions

Sl. No.	HR Practices Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	No. of Items
1	Recruitment and Selection	0.699	8
2	Performance Management	0.798	8
3	Compensation & Reward Management	0.749	8
4	Training and Development	0.811	8
6	Cognitive Component	0.844	8
7	Affective Component	0.801	8
8	Evaluative Component	0.727	8
9	Affective Commitment	0.751	8
10	Continuance Commitment	0.704	8
11	Normative Commitment	0.689	8
13	Labor Turnover	0.784	8

From the table, it is obvious that two variables such as recruitment & selection and normative commitment show Cronbach's Alpha value less than the threshold level and the figures are 0.699 and 0.689 respectively. Since the variations in the figures are minor, the data can be treated as reliable and consistent to provide the desired attribute intended to be derived through the questionnaire.

**Table 2** Summary Statistic of Different Variables

<b>1. Summary Statistic on HR Practices Variables</b>							
Sl. No.	Dimensions	Mean	Standard Deviation	Maximum Value	Minimum Value	Range	No. of Items
1	Recruitment & Selection	4.021	0.427	4.723	3.097	1.626	8
2	Performance Management	3.951	0.577	4.511	3.892	0.619	8
3	Compensation Management	4.511	0.321	4.625	4.102	0.523	8
4	Training & Development	4.365	0.628	4.551	3.021	1.53	8
	Average of Sub-totals I	4.212	0.489				
<b>2. Summary Statistic on Job Satisfaction Variables</b>							
1	Cognitive Component	2.689	0.503	3.647	2.854	0.793	8
2	Affective Component	3.884	0.417	4.512	3.847	0.665	8
3	Evaluative Component	3.506	0.714	4.664	2.915	1.749	8
	Average of Sub-total II	3.359	0.545				
<b>3. Summary Statistic on Organizational Commitment Variables</b>							
1	Affective Commitment	4.652	0.231	4.899	3.989	0.9	8
2	Continuance Commitment	4.898	0.276	4.714	3.713	1.001	8
3	Normative Commitment	2.124	0.304	3.125	2.487	0.638	8
	Average of Sub-total III	3.891	0.271				
<b>4. Summary Statistic on Employee Turnover</b>							
1	Employee Turnover	4.002	0.33	4.356	3.565	0.791	8
	Average of Sub-total IV	4.002	0.33				

The average values for the data on HR practices is 4.212 that is above the rating of good which shows that there is high level of agreeableness from the respondents related to the various aspects of dimensions mentioned in the questionnaire. The standard deviation value is 0.489 which is relatively low and hence, it can be concluded that there is less variability of the data from the mean. In the case of job satisfaction, the average value is 3.359 which is above satisfactory. The overall average value is relatively less due to the low rating of cognitive component. The average values of cognitive component of job satisfaction is 2.689 which shows poor level of agreeableness among the respondents in connection with the role of cognitive component in job satisfaction among employees of ICT industry in UAE. The variability in opinion is relatively less as the standard deviation value is only 0.545 and it can be found from the data that there is high degree of unanimity among the respondents that the cognitive components is unimportant in assessing the job satisfaction of the employees. In the case of organizational commitment, the overall average is 3.891 which is approximately nearer to the rating of good in agreeableness. The corresponding standard deviation value is 0.271 which is very low. In the case of summary statistic on employee turnover, the average value is 4.002 which is above good and the corresponding standard deviation value is only 0.330 which is very low.

## 9.2. Bi-Variate Correlation –Pearson’s Correlation test on relationship between Human Resource Practices and Job Satisfaction

**Table 3** Bi-variate correlation between HR Practices and Job Satisfaction

HR Practices	Job Satisfaction		
	Cognitive	Affective	Evaluative
Recruitment and Selection	0.389	0.616	0.589
Performance Management	0.697	0.802	0.827
Compensation & Reward Management	0.788	0.814	0.799
Training and Development	0.773	0.837	0.687

Table 3 shows the positive correlation between various dimensions of HR practices and job satisfaction. The four variables of HR practices are strongly positively correlated with the three dimensions of job satisfaction, except recruitment and selection with cognitive job satisfaction which shows a value of 0.389 only. This implies that recruitment and selection has got limited role in developing cognitive job satisfaction.

### 9.3. Bi-Variate Correlation between Job Satisfaction and Organizational Commitment

Organizational commitment is the relative strength of an individual's identification and with an involvement in particular organization (Mowday et al., 1979). The data from the study reveals the following information on the relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

**Table 4** Bi-Variate Correlation between Job Satisfaction and Organizational Commitment

Job Satisfaction	Organizational Commitment		
	Affective Commitment	Continuance Commitment	Normative Commitment
Cognitive Job Satisfaction	0.869	0.799	0.814
Affective Job Satisfaction	0.769	0.758	0.738
Evaluative Job Satisfaction	0.881	0.897	0.807

All the job satisfaction variables are highly positively correlated with all the organizational commitment dimensions such as affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment. It is natural that high level of job satisfaction can lead to higher level of organizational commitment on the part of employees. Hence, it can be summarized that an employee who is highly satisfied in his job will show high level of commitment towards the organization.

### 9.4. Bi-variate Correlation between Organizational Commitment and Employee Retention

A voluntary move by an organization by creating an environment which engages employees for long term is called as retention (Chaminade, 2007). The major objective of retention is the prevention of loss of competent employees from the organization as it adversely affects productivity and service delivery. The commitment of employees to the organization is reflected in at least three general areas such as active association with the organization, the predictable costs of leaving the organization and obligation to remain with the organization (Meyer and Allen, 1997). These three factors are termed as affective, continual and normative commitment. Based on these three approaches, we can say that organizational commitment is a psychological state characterized by the association of employees to the organization and it implies the tendency to continue with the present work and with the organization for a pretty long period of time. The analysis of the data obtained from the respondents reveal the following relationship between organizational commitment and employee turnover and reduced absenteeism.



**Table 5** Bi-variate correlation between Organizational Commitment and Labor Turnover

Organizational Commitment	Staff Retention	
	Low Turnover	Reduced Absenteeism
1.Affective Commitment	0.779	0.667
2.Continuanace Commitment	0.876	0.773
3.Normative Commitment	0.736	0.697

## 10. DISCUSSION

There is high level of variability in the application of HR practices in various organizations considered under the study. It is found that many of the organizations still follow a tall structure with multiple levels of hierarchy and the HR department is treated as a staff function rather than a line function, which is contrary to the trend found among leading ICT companies across the world. It is a fact that in all the leading ICT companies of the world, HR is a line function and the most important asset of the organization is the human asset. This fact is affirmed by the Resource Based View (RBV) of a firm in the management literature. The study also brings to light the fact that few staff members join organizations with the motivation to develop a career guided by concrete career planning. In a country like UAE, career planning is restricted only to the local nationals who work in organizations. The expat labor force is employed based on residence visa and its validity is restricted only for two years. So a person joining the organizations can leave any time upon completion of the visa period. Hence among the expats, it is found that the primary concern is not growth and development in job and its related areas but to earn income. As job guarantee is limited and termination possibilities are high, every employee who are employed in various segments of the industry attempt to grab upcoming opportunities where remuneration and rewards are very high. Hence, they hop from one job to another which is happening within the industry as well as between the industries. The job enrichment and vertical scaling up in the job is rare as vacancies are filled up by procuring needed people from the market, as ready supply of skilled and unskilled manpower is available at any time. In addition to this, horizontal expansion is found as the employees in the existing job is assigned more and more task related activities which has adversely affected the work-life balance of the individuals who are employed. It is also found that the normative commitment among the expats is very poor as the obligation towards the organization is found to be lacking due to the short tenure of service with an organization. One of the most important findings that could be observed recently is the influence of continuance commitment on employee productivity, turnover and absenteeism. The continuance commitment is not because of the favorable aspects of the job but because of the intermediating effect of uncertainty and embarrassment caused by the job loss. It can be found that fear and uncertainty about the external market condition imposes strong feeling of threat, which forces the employee to continue with an organization even if the working environment is not highly motivating and challenging. This possibility is very high in employment scenario in the UAE as the job opportunities are shrinking due to economic uncertainties and the job market is becoming more and more challenging due to the entry of more and more expats from various countries of the world in search of employment opportunities.

## 11. CONCLUSION

The study is an attempt to find out the relationship between HR practices, job satisfaction, organizational commitment and employee turnover in ICT industry in the UAE. The study has given an opportunity to explore the trends related to job market in the country with special focus on ICT industries. The study was conducted by collecting information by adopting

stratified random sampling. From the study, it is found that there is strong positive correlation between HR practices and the various components of job satisfaction among employees working in the industry. High level of job satisfaction influences the organizational commitment of the employees measured in terms of affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment. Strong organizational commitment influences the employees to continue in an organization for a long period of time which in turn, reduces the labor turnover. Hence, organizations should attempt to create organizational commitment by improving the job satisfaction which ultimately can lead to low labor turnover or high level of employee retention.

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