Human Resource Management Practices and Organizational Commitment : A Comprehensive Review (2001-2016)

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Abstract

The primary purpose of this study was to synthesize empirical findings of studies that have investigated the relationship between HRM practices and organizational commitment (OC). We adopted a comprehensive review that covers empirical research on HRM - OC relationship, which was published between 2001 and 2016 in international peer-reviewed journals. A total of 63 empirical articles were included in this review. We adopted the content analysis method to synthesize the empirical findings on HRM - OC relationship and research methods adopted. Majority of the studies provided evidence of a positive association between HRM practices and OC. Evidence from this review pointed towards a significant mediating effect that the construct of OC exercised between HRM practices and different employee and organizational outcomes. Also, this review found support for an indirect relationship between HRM practices or systems and OC mediated by organizational environment characterized by factors such as, for example, work engagement, satisfaction with work, person - organization fit, and an enabling organizational climate.

Keywords : human resource management, organizational commitment, comprehensive review

JEL Classification : E28, J24, M10, M12, M51, M54

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Current literature on human resources management (HRM) practices has positioned it as a strategic tool for value creation so as to gain competitive advantage through superior organizational performance (Merudi, 2016 ; Mitchell, Obeidat, & Bray, 2013). It is argued that organizations, which view human capital as a potential lever for value creation (Massingham & Tam, 2015) utilize HRM practices as tools to build indigenous capabilities that lead to enhanced organizational performance. This stance finds support in resource-based view (Wright, Dunford & Snell, 2001),which asserts that organizations secure and sustain competitive advantage by developing tacit workforce competencies and capabilities among employees (Saá-Pérez & García-Falcón, 2002).

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Empirical evidence that has emerged from the early body of HRM research revealed that HRM practices are found to be at least moderately associated with organizational performance (e.g., Huselid, 1995; Jayaram, Droge, & Vickery, 1999). Though such studies provided valuable insights into the HRM - performance relationship, they revealed less on the underlying mechanisms that support the existence of this relationship (Wright, Gardner, & Moynihan, 2003). In this regard, experts argued that organization-level HRM practices are expected to elicit desirable employee perceptions, attitudes, and work-behaviour at the individual-level which, in turn, are expected to exercise their beneficial effects on organization-level performance outcomes (Bowen & Ostroff, 2004). It is for this reason that experts call for micro-level research that focuses on examining the impact of HRM practices on employee attitudes and behaviours (Guest, 1999).

Among employee attitudes, organizations situate organizational commitment (OC), conceptualized as a 'psychological state' (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001), as a factor that fosters stronger acceptance of organizational goals among employees, motivates them to exercise considerable efforts towards achieving those goals, and further elicits a keen desire in them to continue their membership with the firm (Meyer & Allen, 1997; Mowday, Steers, & Porter, 1979). Furthermore, it is argued that organizations whose employees are highly committed exhibit higher degrees of motivation, superior individual performance, reduced absenteeism, lower voluntary turnover intentions, and higher levels of life-satisfaction (Flint, Haley, & McNally, 2013 ; Giri, Kumar, & Rajesh, 2017; Meyer, Becker, & Vandenberghe, 2004 ; Tolentino, 2013 ; Woods, Poole, & Zibarras, 2012). From the employees' perspective, commitment to the organization leads to greater opportunities for rewards, recognition, benefits, and job satisfaction (Mowday, 1983). The fact that OC is found to be vital for both organizations' and employees' success motivated researchers to identify they key antecedents of OC. In this regard, past reviews identified the constructs such as personal characteristics, job characteristics, organizational characteristics, leader relationship, and socialization experiences as antecedents of OC (Cohen, 1992 ; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990 ; Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch, & Topolnytsky, 2002). Though these reviews provided valuable insights into possible antecedents of OC, there exists no review that situates HRM practices, based on past empirical research, as antecedents of OC so as to offer insights into the nature of relationship between these two constructs. Therefore, this paper attempts to fill this gap.

Importance of filling this gap arises because of several reasons. First, there is emerging evidence from the literature which suggests that HRM practices, among several other factors, are key antecedents of OC (Meyer & Smith, 2000) and second, a synthesis of empirical investigations that examine the effectiveness of HRM practices in eliciting OC are expected to provide valuable perspectives and insights on the nature of relationship between the two constructs and, also, elucidate the role of OC in the relationship between HRM practices and various employee and organizational performance outcomes. In this connection, a cursory overview of past literature suggests that no studies, in the period before the year 2001, have investigated the HRM-OC relationship in the Indian context. In fact, Indian researchers can draw useful inferences from the findings of HRM-OC research published during the period from 2001 - 2016, which are discussed in this review, and thus adopt relevant causal models that could provide answers to the questions of 'how' and 'why' HRM practices affect employee commitment or different individual - level and organization - level outcomes through OC. Against the specific backdrop of the contextual relevance of this study, that has nevertheless a universal application, this review paper puts these issues in a methodologically rigorous perspective. Also, as organizations strive to compete and survive in an increasingly challenging and complex business environment, practitioners and decision makers are expected to be relentless in identifying appropriate ways to improve organizational outcomes. In this regard, for practitioners, there is a continual need for evidence-based insights and hence, they are expected to be appraised of comprehensively reviewed empirical findings in the field of HRM. It is, therefore, expected that vital information gathered through robust synthesis of empirical research would greatly assist practitioners in HRM decision making. Accordingly, this review is important for both researchers and practitioners.

We, therefore, have restrained the focus of this review to two specific research questions for the synthesis and analysis of HRM - OC research. First, how do HRM practices relate to OC ? Second, what role does OC play in the relationship between HRM practices and individual and organizational performance outcomes?

The purpose of this review is, therefore, twofold. First, it seeks to offer a robust synthesis of empirical studies, particularly the outcomes of HRM-OC research and second, this paper seeks to offer suggestions and insights for future research.

The paper is organized as follows. The ensuing section narrates the search methodology adopted for this review. The findings and discussions section, that follows, discusses in detail the key findings and lessons drawn from past research with regard to HRM - OC outcomes. The future directions section offers insights on research and managerial implications. This is followed by concluding comments and a section on limitations of the current review.

Search Methodology

We undertook a comprehensive search and selection of relevant literature in three distinct stages. The first stage focused essentially on setting the inclusion criteria for selecting relevant studies. We restricted the search criteria to empirical studies published between 2001 and 2016 in international peer-reviewed journals. Consistent with the practice adopted by Gallardo - Gallardo and Thunnissen (2016), this review did not consider non-empirical studies, unpublished masters or doctoral dissertations, theses, conference proceedings, and working papers for inclusion in this study. Further, the inclusion of the papers was restricted to studies published in English language journals with predominantly international readerships. Furthermore, since multiple HRM practices were found to influence employee and organizational outcomes more significantly than a single HRM practice considered in isolation, only those empirical studies that investigated the impact of multiple HRM practices on OC were considered for inclusion. This meant that studies that reported impact of a single HRM practice on OC or its components were excluded from consideration for this study.

In the second stage, we adopted a systematic search of studies from five literature databases, that is, Emerald Insight, EBSCOhost, JStor, Science Direct, and Sage Journals, by using several combinations of descriptions that included the terms such as "human resource management practices," "high performance work systems (HPWS)," "high performance work practices (HPWP)," "high involvement work systems (HIWS)," "high involvement work processes (HIWP)," "high commitment human resource management practices (HCHRP)," "high involvement human resource practices (HIHRP)," "innovative human resource management practices (IHRP)," "strategic human resource management (SHRM)," "work practices," "work systems," "employment practices," "organizational commitment (OC)," "employee commitment," "workplace commitment," "affective organizational commitment (AOC)," "continuance organizational commitment (COC)," "normative organizational commitment (NOC)," and "employee attitudes" from the fields of title, abstract, and keywords of the published papers.

The third stage involved selecting relevant studies retrieved from the five literature databases based on the search criteria decided in stage one. All the retrieved papers were carefully reviewed by us for their relevance and eligibility to be included in this study. Differences pertaining to inclusion decisions of retrieved papers were resolved among us by arriving at a consensus through a series of discussions. The selected papers were then distributed among researchers for a thorough content analysis. After the content analysis, data were extracted and charted in an excel file according to the relevant templates for ensuring the ease of collating and summarizing the results. In all, our final database of empirical studies for the comprehensive review comprised of 63 full-text papers published between 2001 and 2016 in 30 international peer - reviewed journals.

Findings

Findings from this review on HRM - OC research discourse is synthesized and evinced by Table 1.Among the studies that this paper reviewed, 19 out of 63 studies examined the direct relationship between HRM practices or systems and OC. Majority of the studies supplied evidence of a direct association between HRM practices and OC. For example, Edgar and Geare (2005) found that higher employee perceptions on safe working conditions (SWC), training and development (T&D), equal employment opportunities (EEO), and recruitment and selection (R&S) exhibited a strong association with OC. Hennekam and Herrbach (2013) found that HRM practices like job design, recognition, and respect significantly improved affective commitment (AC) among older employees. In a similar study, with a sample of late career managers, Herrbach, Mignonac, Vandenberghe, and Negrini (2009) found training opportunities to be significantly associated with affective commitment, high sacrifices commitment, and low alternatives commitment (i.e. sub - dimensions of continuance commitment). However, their study found that HRM practices, like flexible working conditions and assignment of new roles like 'mentoring,' had an insignificant impact on commitment. Majority of the studies provided evidence of a positive association between HRM practices and OC (e.g., Edgar & Geare, 2009). However, no set of HRM practices seemed to emerge as a consistent precursor to OC. For instance, Kinnie, Hutchinson, Purcell, Rayton, and Swart (2005) found that only a few HRM practices were consistently found to relate to OC across three groups of employees, that is, managers, professionals, and workers. They found rewards and recognition (R&R), communication, and work-life balance (WLB) to be the significant predictors of OC in all the three groups while other practices like career opportunities (CO), performance appraisals (PA), involvement, and openness were found to be significant predictors of OC in only one or two groups, but not all the three. Further, other practices like R&S were found to be the significant predictors of commitment in few studies (Aladwan, Bhanugopan, & D'Netto, 2015 ; Edgar & Geare, 2005 ; Yu & Egri, 2005), but were found to be insignificant in other studies (Gould - Williams, 2004 ; Paul & Anantharaman, 2004). A same pattern was observed for practices like T&D. Though the studies of Aladwan et al. (2015), Edgar and Geare (2005, 2009), Hennekam and Herrbach (2013) , Paul and Anantharaman (2004), and Gould-Williams (2004) found T&D to be significantly associated to commitment, other studies such as those of Yu and Egri (2005), Kinnie et al. (2005), etc. demonstrated non-significance.

Overall, 15 studies out of 63 examined the role of an intervening variable in understanding the relationship between HRM practices or systems and employee commitment. Different mediators considered include work-engagement (WE) and job-satisfaction (JS) (Ang, Bartram, McNeil, Leggat, & Stanton, 2013), psychological-contract (PC) (Bal, Kooij, & De Jong, 2013), person-organization (P-O) fit (Boon, Den Hartog, Boselie, & Paauwe, 2011; Takeuchi & Takeuchi, 2013), psychological- empowerment (PE) (Butts, Vandenberg, DeJoy, Schaffer, & Wilson, 2009 ; Boxall, Ang, & Bartram, 2011), procedural justice (PJ) (Chang, 2005 ; Wu & Chaturvedi, 2009), concern for climate (Takeuchi, Chen, & Lepak, 2009), HRM attributions (Van de Voorde & Beijer; 2015), social identification (SI) (Young, Bartram, Stanton, & Leggat, 2010), WLB (Bui, Liu, & Footner, 2016), public service motivation (Mostafa, Gould - Williams, & Bottomley, 2015), task proficiency (Boon & Kalshoven, 2014), and HPWS satisfaction (Zhang, Di Fan, & Zhu, 2014).

Six studies (Ang et al., 2013 ; Bal et al., 2013 ; Chang, 2005 ; Takeuchi et al., 2009 ; Van de Voorde & Beijer, 2015 ; & Wu & Chaturvedi, 2009) attempted to bridge the micro - macro gap, through multi-level analysis, in order to provide greater insights into the latent processes through which HRM practices or systems would influence work attitudes like employee commitment. For example, Ang et al. (2013) asserted that only if there was a coherence between management - implemented HPWS and employee experiences of those HPWS, could there be beneficial employee outcomes like satisfaction, commitment, and intention to stay with the organization. Drawing from the social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), they argued that the relationship between employee-

espoused HPWS and AC would be mediated by WE and JS. In a similar vein, Bal et al. (2013) showed that macro-level developmental practices and micro-level employee outcomes like WE and AC were mediated fully by transactional and relational psychological contracts. Further, their study demonstrated that the availability of development-oriented HRM practices would lead to higher AC, which is more relational and less transactional in nature. Takeuchi et al. (2009) positioned establishment-level variable of 'concern for climate' as an important mediator in explaining the cross-level relationship between establishment-level HPWS and individual-level employee attitudes like JS and AC. These findings revealed that concern for climate acted as the channel through which individual employees could appreciate HRM initiatives. As a result, HRM practices would, in turn, translate into favourable attitudes like AC. Chang (2005) investigated the association between macro-level HPWS and employees' overall perceptions of HPWS, PJ, and AC. Chang found PJ to have partially mediated the relationship between overall perceptions of HPWS and AC. Similarly, Wu and Chaturvedi (2009) found that macro-level HPWS enhanced the perceptions of employees on PJ that lead subsequently to greater levels of AC. In fact, development of attitudes among employees was found to be contingent upon their actual experiences of implemented HRM practices in their organization.

Some studies investigated moderators of the HRM- OC relationship. For example, Wang, Yi, Lawler, and Zhang (2011) examined organizational culture as a moderator of HRM practices - OC relationship. Their study found strong evidence for the role of culture as a moderator in the relationship between HRM practices and OC. Boon et al. (2011) examined P-O fit as a moderator of the relationship between HPHRP and employee attitudes (i.e. JS, OC) and behaviour (organizational citizenship behaviour (OCB) and turnover intentions (TI)). In this connection, this study found that P-O fit did not moderate the relationship between HPHRP and OC, indicating thereby that the level of P-O fit would not necessarily influence the degree to which HRM practices affect workplace commitment. Consistent with 'attribution theory' (Bowen & Ostroff, 2004), Sanders and Yang (2016) found that HRM systems, characterized by high degree of distinctiveness, consensus, and consistency, were likely to be strongly related to AC because the presence of the three afore-mentioned dimensions would assist employees in making assertive attributions about the operationalized HRM practices of their organizations. This would further provide employees with insights into expected behaviours that are encouraged and likely to be rewarded. Drawing from SOC theory, Bal et al. (2013) examined the effect of moderators such as selection, optimization, and compensation on accommodative HRM practices - AC relationship and found that only selection and compensation moderated the relationship between the two variables. Selection, optimization, and compensation did not moderate the relationship between developmental HRM practices and AC. Qiao, Khilji, and Wang (2009) investigated the moderating effect of demographic variables between HPWS and commitment and found gender and marital status to have moderated the relationship between the variables of interest.

Among the 63 studies that this paper examined, 20 studies investigated the role of OC or AC as a mediator in the relationship between HRM practices or systems and different work behaviours and organizational - level outcomes. In particular, four studies (Gardner, Wright, & Moynihan, 2011; Gong, Law, Chang, & Xin, 2009 ; Gong, Chang, & Cheung, 2010 ; Messersmith, Patel, Lepak, & Gould-Williams, 2011) pertained to the investigation of the role of commitment, at the unit-level of analysis, in explaining the relationship between HRM practices or systems and unit-level outcomes. Outcomes of these studies were aggregate - turnover (Gardner et al., 2011), collective - OCB (Gong et al., 2010), firm - performance (Gong et al., 2009), and departmental-performance (Messersmith et al., 2011). All the studies established AC/OC as a mediator between HRM practices and outcomes. For example, Gardner et al. (2011) found that collective AC mediated independently the relationship between HRM practices that enhanced motivation and those HRM practices that enhanced empowerment. Findings from the study of Messersmith et al. (2011) revealed that HPWS positively affected OCB and departmental-performance through employee attitudes like AC. Unlike other studies that predominantly focused on AC, Gong et al. (2009) provided deeper insights into the effect of performance-oriented and

maintenance-oriented HRM practices on AC and CC. The findings of this study demonstrated that performance-oriented HRM practices were significantly related to AC and not to CC. Further, maintenance-oriented practices were found to be significantly related to CC and not AC. Furthermore, among different types of commitment, only AC was found to be significantly related to firm-performance.

Among the 20 studies mentioned above, 14 studies measured the variables and their relationships at the individual-level. These studies measured employee outcomes like TI (Fabi, Lacoursière, & Raymond, 2015 ; Guchait & Cho, 2010 ; Jhudi, Pa'wan, & Hansram 2013 ; Kuvaas, 2008 ; Luna - Arocas & Camps, 2007 ; Paré and Tremblay, 2007; Wang et al., 2011), perceived job performance (Gibbs & Ashill, 2013; Kuvaas, 2008), perceived organizational performance (Mansour, Gara, & Gaha, 2014), knowledge-sharing behaviour (Chiang, Han, & Chuang, 2011), work withdrawal (Wang et al., 2011), exit-voice-loyalty-neglect (Si & Li, 2012), extra-role behaviour (Srivastava & Dhar, 2016), OCB (Yang, 2012),and behavioural commitment (Macky & Boxall, 2007). Affective commitment was found to be a mediator in the relationship between HPWS and employee performance (Chang & Chen, 2011) as well as in the relationship between OCB and intention to stay (Kehoe & Wright, 2013).Two studies, in particular, examined the role of OC/AC as a moderator between HRM practices and SME performance (Lai, Saridakis, & Johnstone, 2016), and OCB (Chang, Nguyen, Cheng, Kuo, & Lee, 2016).

In four studies, OC or its components like AC and CC were established as significant antecedents of employee performance (Boxall et al., 2011) ; intention to stay (Chew & Chan, 2008) ; TI, job quality, improvement, and job-involvement (JI) (Takeuchi & Takeuchi, 2013) ; and firm performance and profitability (Wright et al., 2003). These studies did not examine explicitly the mediating role of commitment in the relationship between HRM practices or systems and different organizationally beneficial and individually rewarding employee outcomes. However, given the empirically significant relationship between HRM practices - employee commitment, and employee commitment - employee/firm outcomes, the above-mentioned studies placed employee commitment as a possible mediator between the aforementioned variables of interest.

Only one study (Vui - Yee, 2015), among all the studies considered for this review, investigated the role of HRM practices as a mediator, in the relationship between business strategy and employee outcomes that included OC. This study found an indirect effect of HRM interventions on the firm's differentiation strategy and OC. Also, HRM practices were found to exhibit an indirect effect on low - cost strategy and all outcome variables of interest, that is, OC, employee involvement (EI), turnover intention (TI), and JS.

Whitener (2001) examined the role of HRM practices as a moderator in the relationship between perceived organizational support (POS) and OC. The study found that, among all the HRM practices considered for the study, internal rewards influenced significantly the relationship between POS and OC in such a manner that commitment was found to be stronger in employees when they perceived organizations to be demonstrating higher levels of equity in internal rewards.

Discussion and Future Directions

The primary purpose of this study is to synthesize the findings of empirical studies that have investigated the relationship between HRM practices and organizational commitment during the period from 2001 - 2016. In this process, the study provides directions for future research also, so as to provide valuable insights into the underlying conditions and mechanisms through which HRM practices affect organizational commitment. The accumulated evidence that emerges out of this study also offers essential research and managerial implications.

As regards the question of how HRM practices relate to OC, an examination of the research models espoused by us reveals that majority of the HRM - OC studies can be placed broadly into six categories (Refer Table 1) , that is, studies that examined the direct relationship between HRM practices and OC ; studies that investigated mediators in HRM-OC relationship ; studies on moderators in HRM-OC relationship ; studies that examined the

Table 1. HRM - OC Research Categorization

Category	Relationship	Mediators	Moderators	Outcomes	References
I	**HRM - OC (Direct Relationship)**	-	-	-	Agarwala (2003); Aladwan et al. (2015); Boselie (2010); Edgar & Geare (2005, 2009); Fiorito, Bozeman, Young, & Meurs (2007); Giauque, Resenterra, & Siggen (2010); Gould-Williams (2004) Gould - Williams & Davies (2005) ; Hashim (2010); Hennekam & Herrbach (2013) Herrbach et al. (2009); Kinnie et al. (2005); Mendelson, Turner, & Barling (2011); Paul & Anantharaman (2004); Smeenk, Eisinga, Teelken, & Doorewaard (2006); Schieble & Bastos (2013); Rode, Huang & Flynn (2016); Yu & Egri (2005)
II	**HRM - MEDIATOR - OC**	Job satisfaction, work engagement , psychological contract, person-organization fit, psychological empowerment, procedural justice, concern for climate, HRM attributions, social identification, HPWS satisfaction, work-life balance (WLB) and motivation, task proficiency	-	OC or its components	Ang et al. (2013); Bal et al. (2013); Boon et al. (2011); Boon & Kalshoven (2014); Bui et al. (2016); Mostafa et al. (2015); Takeuchi & Takeuchi (2013); Butts et al. (2009); Boxall et al. (2011); Chang (2005); Wu & Chaturvedi (2009); Takeuchi et al. (2009); Van de Voorde & Beijer (2015); Young et al. (2010); Zhang et al. (2014)
III	**HRM - MODERATOR- OC**	-	Organizational culture, person-organization fit, HRM attributions, SOC, demographics, performance		Bal et al. (2013); Boon et al. (2011); Kwon, Bae, & Lawler (2010); Sanders & Yang (2016); Qiao et al. (2009); Wang et al. (2011)
IV	**HRM- PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES**	OC(mediator)		Employee performance, turnover intentions, aggregate turnover, perceived job performance, collective OCB, knowledge sharing behaviour, work withdrawal, exit-voice-loyalty-neglect, firm performance, departmental performance, customer satisfaction	Chang & Chen (2011); Chiang et al. (2011); Fabi et al. (2015); Gardner et al. (2011); Gibbs & Ashill (2013); Gong et al. (2009) ; Gong et al. (2010); Guchait & Cho (2010); Jhudi et al. (2013); Kehoe & Wright (2013); Kuvaas (2008); Luna-Arocas & Camps (2007); Macky & Boxall (2007); Mansour et al. (2014); Messersmith et al. (2011); Paré & Tremblay (2007); Si & Li (2012); Srivastava & Dhar (2016); Wang et al. (2011), Yang (2012)
		OC (moderator)		OCB SME performance	Chang et al. (2016); Lai et al. (2016)
V	**IV - OC**	HRM practices	-	-	Vui-Yee (2015)
VI	**IV - OC**	-	HRM practices	-	Whitener (2001)

Note : IV - Independent variable ; SOC - Selection, optimization, and compensation ; EVLN- Exit, voice, loyalty, and neglect

intervening effects of employee commitment in HRM- performance relationship ; and the studies that examined the moderating or mediating role of HRM practices between some independent variable and OC.

Majority of the empirical studies, considered for the review, demonstrated evidence to establish HRM practices or systems as key antecedents of OC. The evidences that emerge from this review also suggest that HRM practices - OC relationship may not be direct but one that is likely to be influenced by specific moderating and mediating variables. In this connection, social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) and signalling theory (Ostroff & Bowen, 2000) provide some valuable insights on 'how' and 'why' HRM practices affect workplace attitudes like OC (Kooij, Jansen, Dikkers, & De Lange, 2010). These theories argue that organizations utilize HRM practices to communicate important organizational goals and desired behaviours to their employees (Bowen & Ostroff, 2004). Moreover, employees view these operationalized HRM practices as 'signals' from the organization about its intentions towards employee support and well-being (Rousseau, 1995). Employees, who receive such support from their organization, would, then, reciprocate by exhibiting favourable attitudes and behaviours (Hannah & Iverson, 2004; Kaur & Bedi, 2017; Sood, Bakhshi, & Singh, 2015). Organizational commitment is, therefore, looked upon as an important criterion to measure effectiveness of HRM practices.

As regards the question of what role does OC play in the relationship between HRM practices and myriad performance outcomes, findings from this review suggest that studies have been able to situate OC or AC as a key mediator in HRM- performance relationship, providing thus useful insights into the underlying mechanisms through which HRM practices influence employee and organizational performance outcomes. These findings are consistent with the framework of Bowen and Ostroff (2004) who posited that HRM practices should fundamentally influence employee attitudes and outcomes even before they exercised their impact on organizational performance outcomes.

Adopting a wide range of mediators and moderators in the HRM- OC research, scholars have rendered significant contributions to the literature by providing valuable perspectives into the issues 'how' and 'why' HRM practices or systems influence OC. This stream of literature, however, also offers insights into some unexplored areas for researchers to investigate. One possible avenue for research is to investigate how HRM practices or systems operate with other possible antecedents of OC. For example, prior research has situated leadership as a key driver of OC (e.g., Avolio, Zhu, Koh, & Bhatia 2004 ; Erben & Güneşer, 2008). Also, findings of recent studies suggested that there exists the possibility of leadership and HRM practices serving as substitutes for each other in influencing employee outcomes (Chuang, Jackson, & Jiang, 2016). Therefore, it can be posited that leadership and HRM systems operate in a synergetic manner to affect employee attitudes like OC and JS. Also, another possible contextual factor that could impact HRM - OC relationship is the presence of individual characteristics of employees. Given the fact that individual employees vary in terms of expertise, creativity, knowledge, experiences, needs, and personality traits (Nishii, Lepak, & Schneider, 2008), they are expected to respond variedly to different HRM practices depending on their personality characteristics. Therefore, future studies are encouraged to explore the mediating - moderating roles of leadership and individual characteristics in understanding the relationship between HRM practices and OC.

Managerial Implications

This paper has several managerial implications. It has contributed to our understanding of the role and effectiveness of HRM practices and systems in eliciting organizational commitment among employees. This review has also pointed out the existence of research evidence that situates OC as a significant mediator between HRM practices and different outcome variables such as, for example, organizational citizenship behavior, knowledge-sharing, employee performance, intention to stay, firm and departmental performance, profitability,

and collective organizational citizenship behavior. Therefore, it is crucial for managers to choose organization-specific and context-specific HRM practices so that they induce organizational commitment among employees. There also exist enough empirical evidences, which suggest that the relationship between HRM practices and organizational commitment may not be isolated from certain enabling factors. Therefore, it is likely that this relationship is mediated by the presence of an organizational environment characterized by the factors such as, for example, work engagement, satisfaction with work, person-organization fit, and an enabling organizational climate. Accordingly, managers are expected to cultivate an enabling organizational environment so that OC becomes a natural outcome of the organizational climate itself. This implies that what is within the control of HRM decision makers is to modify the factors of organizational environment so as to bring about satisfaction, person - organization fit, and an engaging work culture that would naturally induce, among employees, organization commitment from within.

Finally, research evidences, which emerge from this review, point towards the phenomenon that OC is strongly linked to employee satisfaction with HRM practices of their organization. Organizational systems are bound to implement a diverse set of HRM practices that optimize workforce contribution and performance. Also, within an organization, various work-groups are expected to be exposed to different HRM practices based on their organizational needs and thus, employees from different work-groups are expected to respond distinctively to these operationalized HRM practices. Commitment of employees towards the organization would then appear to emerge out of their satisfaction with HRM practices. In other words, satisfaction depends upon the extent of fulfilment of employees' organizational needs. Much of this depends upon how line managers would translate the organizational espousal of situation - appropriate HRM practices into employee appreciation and experience. In this regard, the ability of line mangers to assess objectively the situation that prevails in the organization, combined with their experience and expertise to enable contextualized utilization of available managerial tools, would decide the extent to which the intended HRM practices are operationalized effectively to meet the objective of inducing higher degree of OC among employees.

Conclusion

The purpose of this review is to summarize the key findings of empirical research that examines the influence of HRM practices or systems on employee commitment. In so doing, this study has also explored some possible directions for future by which researchers can address the more complex and nuanced research question of 'how' and 'why' HRM practices affect employee commitment. Findings, then, from such studies are expected to help organizations to better manage their employees in order to realize their strategic goals.

Limitations of the Study

This study has some limitations. The first limitation is the fact that, though having covered 63 empirical articles on HRM-OC domain from 30 international peer-reviewed journals, this review cannot claim to have covered every study in the specific field published between 2001 and 2016. We, though, attempted to address this issue by searching five literature databases and by using broad and myriad combinations of search terms. Second, all relevant articles were searched on the basis of search terms appearing in the title, abstract, or keywords of the study. This may have excluded some empirical studies that may have examined the relationship between HRM practices and OC, but did not make mention of the search terms in their title, abstract, or keywords. However, we tried to minimize this limitation by scrutinizing the reference list of retained studies to identify any possible empirical articles that may have got excluded during the initial search.

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