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**EXAMINING THE ROLE OF HRD PRACTICES TOWARDS  
ORGANIZATIONAL CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOR: THE MEDIATING  
ROLE OF AFFECTIVE ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT**

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**ABSTRACT**

The present study aimed to investigate how HRD practices can help enhance Organizational citizenship behavior in the workplace. The study also strived to examine the mediating role of affective organizational commitment on the relationship between HRD practices and OCB. The study deployed 218 respondents from two public sector universities from Saudi Arabia. Through using self-administered approach, questionnaires were distributed. A total of 163 questionnaires were received back out of which, 152 were found appropriate and taken for final analysis. Structural equation modeling results have reported significant results for all the 4 hypothesized relationship. Findings have reported that, HRD practices are crucial for organizations to enhance affective organizational commitment and organizational citizenship behavior. The study has also reported that higher affective commitment levels also foster citizenship behaviors directly. Notably, the study has also found significant mediation of affective organizational commitment in the relationship between HRD practices and OCB. The research provides explanation on the findings and implications.

**Keywords:** HRD Practices, Affective OC, OCB, Mediation, Saudi Arabia

**1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

Higher education sector in Saudi Arabia is facing several issues concerning to employees' commitment and positive citizenship behaviors (Achoui, 2009; Benjamin, 2012). Scholars have outlined towards the challenges to country's economy out of which HRD ranks amongst the biggest. Sadly, little is empirically known to help Saudi government, businesses or authorities in the country as to how they can help address these issues in a responsive manner.

HRD practices in the workplace are highly significant for employees (Peterson, 2004). They are significant to the level that their importance cannot be ignored or marginalized particularly when it comes to enhancing employee outcomes. Studies have been carried out, outlining the role of HRM practices in fostering employees' skills and competencies to achieve organizational objectives (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Schaufeli & Salanova, 2007). According to Yorks and Barto (2013), HRD features these days are designed to help employees express better commitment and alignment with organizational objectives. According to Valentine et al., (2013), organizations develop HRD processes with the purpose of boosting employee outcomes and behaviors through providing robust learning opportunities, promotion prospects, career growth options and so on.

Notably, organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) is becoming an increasingly important concept whereby, businesses have started outlining its significance for better business performance prospects (Borman & Motowidlo, 2014). Parallel to this, literature also suggests that organizations across the globe require robust support of HRD practices in order to boost commitment levels.

As per Frank, Finnegan, and Taylor (2004) HRD practices are of major significance for helping employees to align themselves with organizational commitment and other related prospects (Lamba & Chaudhary, 2013). In line with these general explanations, the current study aimed to investigate how HRD practices can help relate to organizational citizenship behavior followed by the mediation of affective organizational commitment.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **HRD Practices**

HRD practices refer to practices that help in developing the capabilities and prospects of the employees. HRD practices principally include skill focused training, career growth opportunities, counseling and performance appraisals (Usha, 2015). These practices are generally outlined as highly significant and essential for employees across all the job cadres. Hence how employees view these practices actually helps them in shaping their work behaviors for better performance (Shuck, Shuck, & Reio, 2013). Similarly, employees perceiving lack of support from the organization in terms of their development can actively express dull behaviors and outcomes. Study by Shuck, Twyford, Reio and Shuck (2014) has outlined that employees receiving adequate HRD support offer better work outcomes and are more committed towards work, compared to others. The study also mentions that such employees express less turnover intentions and are more inclined to work with higher levels of ownership.

### **Affective Organizational Commitment**

Affective organizational commitment refers to the sense of strong emotional attachment with the organization and the work that they are responsible for (Allen & Meyer, 1990). People who are engaged are higher in outlining goals and objectives or the business and actively engage themselves in working towards their responsive achievement (Flynn & Schaumberg, 2012; Pahi & Hamid, 2015). According to (Gillet et al., 2015) that employees who are committed affectively, tend to express relatedness and ownership with the work. Organizations in order to achieve their goals and objectives need to have affectively committed individuals. Individuals who are focused on competing for betterment and making sure that they are there for the healthy achievement of the organizational objectives have showcased more commitment with their job and organizations (Morin et al., 2015; Pahi, Umrani, Hamid, & Ahmed, 2015).

### **Organizational Citizenship Behavior**

The concept refers to positive efforts beyond core responsibilities that employees take in order to benefit their coworkers or company (Organ, 1988). It is not necessary that individuals expressing OCB behaviors are high in general work performance also but they are typically more engaged in investing additional efforts for the betterment of company and its stakeholders at large. Individuals with citizenship behaviors can be of acute importance for companies as they help in boosting efficiency, productivity, reducing cost and turnover (Podsakoff, Whiting, Podsakoff, & Blume, 2009).

According to Borman and Motowildo (2014) OCB can be enhanced at the workplace through numerous prospects such as motivating employees showing citizenship behaviors; providing learning and development opportunities focused on citizenship behaviors; and recognizing and providing growth prospects upon successfully achieving milestones towards OCB behaviors.

### **HRD Practices and Organizational Commitment**

HRD practices have been linked with organizational commitment (Lamba & Chaudhary, 2013; Saridakis et al., 2013). These studies have outlined that positive perception based on the healthy availability of HRD features help can help employees develop a sense of belongingness towards their organizations. Therefore, it can be expected that higher education institutions in Saudi Arabia through focusing on HRD practices would be capable of fostering their employees' commitment in a responsive manner. Study by Borman and Motowildo (2014) underlines that HR practices could be great significance and therein, providing opportunities to employees to learn, develop and grow in their career can be of great significance for them to foster commitment. The study also outlines that high performance HR practices can make a notable

impact on the overall performance of employees. On the grounds of these evidences, the current study examined the following hypothesis:

***H1: There will be a positive relationship between HRD practices and Affective organizational commitment***

### **HRD Practices and OCB**

Accordingly, studies have outlined that employee who are commitment with their organizations are more profound in expressing citizenship behavior (Huang et al., 2012). The meta-analysis has reported that OCB refers to discretionary efforts that an individual make towards the betterment of the organization and/or towards its related stakeholders (Organ, 1988). Employees expressing citizenship behaviors go an extra mile compare to others to help serve the organizational purposes. These efforts are not amongst the assigned roles yet such employees happily engross themselves in them. Limited studies can be found talking about HRD practices and their relationship with OCB (Husin, Chelladurai & Musa, 2012; Watty-Benjamin & Udechukwu, 2014). These evidences outline that HRD practices and their availability can help employees to attach with the job and organization, feel more values and thus express more concern in this regard. As a result, there is a serious gap to address not only for higher education institutions in Saudi Arabia but will also be a notable contribution to the literature.

***H2: There will be a positive relationship between HRD practices and organizational citizenship behavior***

### **Affective Organizational Commitment and OCB**

Literature suggests that organizational commitment can predict organizational citizenship behavior. Studies have outlined that there is a connection between employee emotional connectivity and willingness towards taking additional efforts towards the organization. Studies like Huang, You and Tsai (2012) have outlined that organizational commitment is important for businesses to foster citizenship behaviors. The study further explains that when individuals at work are attached emotionally, they are more inclined towards investing additional discretionary efforts to help support their coworkers and organization at large.

Similarly, Mamman, Kamoch, and Bakuwa (2012) suggest that organizations with affectively committed individuals observe more citizenship behaviors at the workplace. Similar explanations have been presented by Chiang and Hsieh (2012) and Kehoe and Wright (2013), concerning to how organizational citizenship behaviors can be fostered through leading from developmental practices to affective organizational commitment. Hence, the current study aims to examine the relationship in Saudi Arabian higher education sector with the following hypothesis:

***H3: There will be a positive relationship between Affective organizational commitment and organizational citizenship behavior***

**Mediation of Affective Organizational Commitment**

Studies have outlined that when individuals are committed, they tend to be more focused and include towards putting discretionary efforts for better work outcomes (Huang et al., 2012). Accordingly, employees who are actively engaged in taking discretionary efforts are often the one who are highly committed with their organization (Mamman, Kamoche, & Bakuwa, 2012; Khalid, Pahi, & Ahmed, 2016). Hence an intervening relationship could be expected. Importantly, notable studies have outlined towards the mediating potential of affective organizational commitment (Dhar, 2015; Peng et al., 2016; Peng et al., 2013). Henceforth, affective organizational commitment may mediate the relationship between HRD practices and OCB. In other words, employees perceiving positive about HRD practices can significantly influence their affective commitment levels to foster their citizenship behaviors (Benjamin & David, 2012; Shah, 2015) due to which, it can be asserted that HRD practices perceptions would help employees to foster affective commitment to result in higher organizational citizenship behavior.

***H4: Affective organizational commitment will mediate he relationship between HRD practices and OCB.***



**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework**

**3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

**Measures**

9-item scale by Tsui et al., (1997) was employed to examine HRD practices in the present study. Accordingly, a 6 item scale by Moorman and Blakely (1995) was adapted to test Organizational citizenship behavior. Similarly, 11-item scale by Meyer and Allen (1997) was used to access the direct and mediating effects of affective organizational commitment. In addition, respondents

were asked to answer to demographic questions also, including age, gender and years of experience.

### **Sampling**

218 academic staff members from the two public sector universities in Jeddah were sampled for the present study. Through using self-administered questionnaires, the questionnaires were distributed during the period of May, 2016. A total of 163 questionnaires were received back out of which 11 were found inappropriate. Hence, 152 were used for data analysis and hypothesis testing. This concluded in the response rate of 69 percent for the present study.

### **Data Analysis**

The current study used structural equation modeling approach via Smart PLS 2.0 (Ringle et al., 2005) to examine the hypothesized relationships. The SEM procedures comprises of two stages i-e measurement model and structural model (Hair et al., 2014).

### **Measurement Model**

The measurement model encompasses the examination of convergent and discriminant validity for which, the composite reliability and AVE scores are evaluated. According to Chin (1998), the loading of each of the items should not be less than 0.5. The results in table 1 and Figure 2 outline significant loading for each of the items of the three constructs except one item from OCB and 2 from affective organizational commitment. Items resulting less than 0.5 loadings were effectively deleted based on Chin (1998) criterion. Accordingly, the results have also reported sufficient cronbach alpha and AVE values as per the recommendations of Hair et al., (2011).

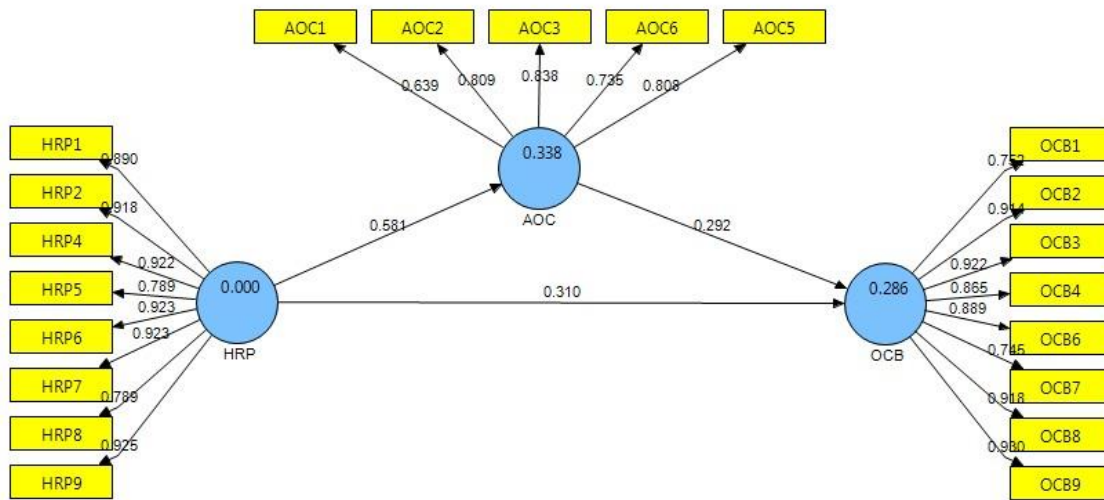


Figure 2: Measurement Model

Table 1. Loadings, AVE and Composite Reliability

| Latent variables                           | loadings | AVE             | CR              |
|--|----------|-----------------|-----------------|
| <b>Affective Organizational Commitment</b> |          | <b>0.591517</b> | <b>0.877704</b> |
| AOC1                                       | 0.639    |                 |                 |
| AOC2                                       | 0.809    |                 |                 |
| AOC3                                       | 0.838    |                 |                 |
| AOC5                                       | 0.808    |                 |                 |
| AOC6                                       | 0.735    |                 |                 |
| <b>HRD Practices</b>                       |          | <b>0.786188</b> | <b>0.966994</b> |
| HRP1                                       | 0.890    |                 |                 |
| HRP2                                       | 0.918    |                 |                 |
| HRP4                                       | 0.922    |                 |                 |
| HRP5                                       | 0.789    |                 |                 |
| HRP6                                       | 0.923    |                 |                 |
| HRP7                                       | 0.923    |                 |                 |
| HRP8                                       | 0.789    |                 |                 |
| HRP9                                       | 0.925    |                 |                 |
| <b>OCB</b>                                 |          | <b>0.75614</b>  | <b>0.960999</b> |
| OCB1                                       | 0.752    |                 |                 |
| OCB2                                       | 0.914    |                 |                 |
| OCB3                                       | 0.922    |                 |                 |

|      |       |  |  |
|------|-------|--|--|
| OCB4 | 0.865 |  |  |
| OCB6 | 0.889 |  |  |
| OCB7 | 0.745 |  |  |
| OCB8 | 0.918 |  |  |
| OCB9 | 0.930 |  |  |

**Discriminant Validity**

Next examination in the measurement model is the assessment of discriminant validity, which explains the extent to which each of the variable in the study is distinctive from each other. Based on the explanation of Fornell and Larcker (1981), the square root values of the AVE should be greater than the compared correlations. Table 2 outlines that all the variables have significantly attained discriminant validity

**Table 2. Discriminant Validity**

| Latent Variable | 1             | 2             | 3             |
|-----------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| AOC             | <b>0.7691</b> |               |               |
| HRP             | 0.5813        | <b>0.8866</b> |               |
| OCB             | 0.4719        | 0.4793        | <b>0.8695</b> |

**Structural Model**

Bootstrapping procedures were applied in order to examine the significance of the path coefficients for hypothesis testing. Table 3 in this aspect outlines that relationship between HRD practices and affective organizational commitment has found to be significant hence ( $\beta=0.581$ ,  $t= 7.756$ ) hence supporting hypothesis 1. Accordingly, the path coefficient results have also reported significant relationship between HRD practices and organizational citizenship behavior ( $\beta=0.310$ ,  $t= 2.443$ ) thus, supporting hypothesis 2. In parallel, the study examined the relationship between affective organizational commitment and OCB and the results have also concluded a significant relationship between the two ( $\beta= 0.292$ ,  $t= 2.593$ ) henceforth, supporting hypothesis 3. Notably, the study examine the mediation of affective organization commitment between HRD practices and OCB and the SEM result suggest strong mediation in this regard ( $\beta=1.872$ ,  $t= 3.015$ )



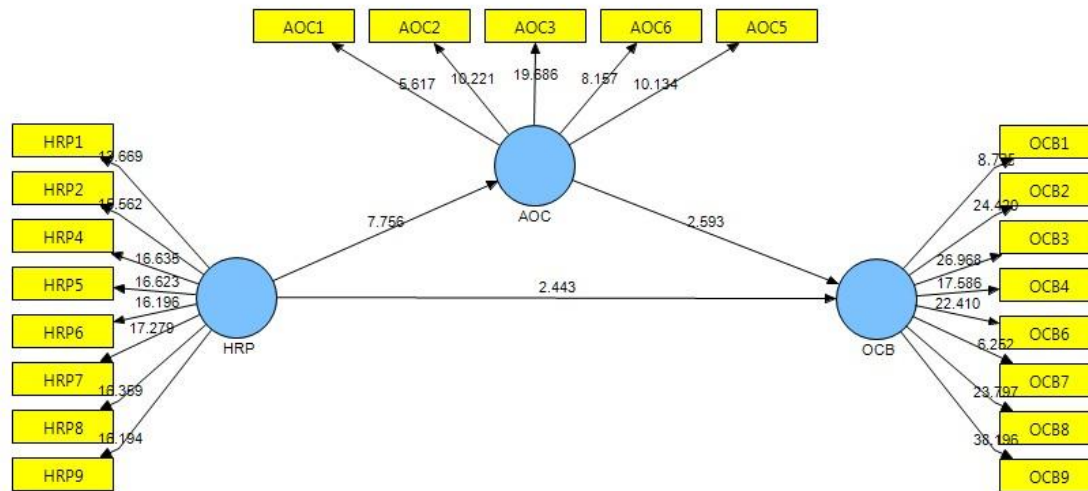


Figure 3: Structural Model

Table 3. Structural Model Results

| Relationship    | Beta  | Standard Error | T Statistics | Decision  |
|-----------------|-------|----------------|--------------|-----------|
| HRD → AOC       | 0.581 | 0.075          | 7.756        | Supported |
| HRD → OCB       | 0.310 | 0.127          | 2.443        | Supported |
| AOC → OCB       | 0.292 | 0.113          | 2.593        | Supported |
| HRD → AOC → OCB | 1.872 | 0.108          | 3.015        | Supported |

#### 4. DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS

The purpose of the current study was to examine the associations between HRD practices, affective organizational commitment and OCB. In specific, the study investigated these relationships amongst the academic staff members of the two public sector universities of Saudi Arabia. The results have highlighted the HRR practices are of great significance and hence can help enhance individual’s affective organizational commitment. This means that academic staff members perceiving significant availability of HRD practices, aiming to enhance their skills through training; growth prospects through career opportunities and healthy feedback through performance appraisals would significantly enhance their affective commitment with the organization. This finding can be seen parallel to the results of Agarwala (2003) who outlined robust link between the two.

Additionally, the study results have outlined that HRD practices are also robust in enhancing the element of citizenship whereby, individuals because of sufficient HRD practices would feel a sense of belonging and care from the organization hence, expressing willingness to work invest additional efforts towards the betterment of organization at large. These results are parallel to Wei et al., (2010) who outlined empirical importance of HRD practices towards organizational citizenship behavior. Moving further, the study has also outlined that affective organizational commitment also enhances citizenship behavior. This means that individuals expressing more emotional commitment with the organization were more capable of putting discretionary efforts hence expressing more citizenship behavior.

This leads us to understand that similar to various employee outcomes, affective commitment can also be of value for fostering citizenship behaviors. This also suggests that organizations through enhancing employees' commitment levels can not only boost performance and productivity prospects but can also help foster behaviors (citizenship) that push people to invest more for the organization and its stakeholders.

In the meanwhile, the study has also confirmed the mediation of affective organizational commitment in the HRD practices and OCB relationship. The finding has confirmed the explanations of Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch, and Topolnytsky (2002) pertaining to the mediation potential of affective organizational commitment. This in other words suggests that companies implementing HRD practices would have better organizational citizenship behaviors due to more intensive degree of affective organizational commitment. Henceforth, organizations should focus on HRD practices to enhance their citizenship and commitment outcomes. This also underlines that organizations need to review and focus on employees' affective organizational commitment to help maintain citizenship behaviors. The significant positive relationship between HRD practices and OCB suggests the inclusion of activities that could induce affective organizational commitment to enhance organizational citizenship behaviors. The study has result in r square value of 0.23 which means HRD practices and affective organizational commitment explain 23 percent variance in the OCB. This refers that future studies are encourage to highlight the remaining 77 percent of the variance in this regard.

In a nutshell, pertaining to Saudi Arabia, the study results suggest that universities can help enhance their academic staff organizational citizenship behaviors through HRD practices. Accordingly, affective organizational commitment can also help play a part in harnessing this relationship. The findings suggest that academic staff members were positive about HRD practices and their perception towards them is of acute significance towards harnessing their commitment and citizenship behaviors.

## CONCLUSION

The study aimed to investigate the relationship between HRD practices with OCB with the mediation of affective organizational commitment. The study has outlined that HRD practices are critical for businesses to enhance employees' behaviors and outcomes. Organizations can help boost citizenship behaviors through HRD practices wherein, they also help enhance affective organizational commitment. The study has also outlined that affective organizational commitment can act as a valuable mediator in this relationship hence suggesting its acute significance. In a nutshell, the study has rendered explanation towards affective organizational commitment and its link towards OCB. The study concludes with the significant understanding towards OCB literatures and how it can be harnessed and respectively addressed.

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