
Do HRM Practices Influence Organizational Commitment? Evidence from Local Administration in Jordan

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Abstract:

Purpose: Human Resource Management has a crucial influence on the organizational behavior of employees, thus ensuring achievement of the strategic objectives, mainly employees' commitment. Accordingly, this study examines the impact of human resources management practices on enhancing organizational commitment in local administration using the social exchange theory.

Design/Methodology/Approach: A random sampling technique was applied using a designed questionnaire to collect data from 425 employees from different job positions in Jordan's Municipality of Greater Amman (GAM). Statistical analysis of descriptive measures, T-test, F-test, correlation, and regression was performed to examine the research hypothesis.

Findings: The findings reveal that Human resource management practices significantly predict organizational commitment (R-Square =41%). It was found that career development and promotion accounted for about 30% of the variation in organizational commitment. All the human resource functions are practiced in GAM at a moderate level except for compensation and incentives. Nevertheless, participants showed a high level of organizational commitment.

Practical Implications/Limitations: Local administration should improvise extra consideration over human resource practices and activities that increase employees' performance, ultimately accentuating their level of commitment and, subsequently, the quality of public services rendered to citizens. Implications of results and future research directions are discussed.

Originality/Value: This study is one of the first studies in the Arab World that focuses on human resources practices and commitment especially in the local administration units.

Keywords: Human resources management, organizational commitment, local administration, Jordan.

JEL codes: M12, M54, J53, H83, D23.

Paper type: Research article.

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1. Introduction

Globalization and a rapidly changing organizational environment have caused today's work to become intensively complex, dynamic, and diverse (Jo *et al.*, 2024; Hu *et al.*, 2021). Changing the environment of technology and information, globalization, and customers' demands have revolutionized organizations and have created intense competition. To compete in the market, managers are always required to create, develop and implement differentiated strategies (Qomariah *et al.*, 2022).

Human resources management (henceforth HRM) practices constitute a crucial strategic approach for the organization's most valued assets, mainly the human capital, which plays a significant role in achieving the organization's strategic objectives (Jo *et al.*, 2024). HRM practices, such as HR planning, training, compensations, performance appraisal, and job security, are also vital to organizational success (Padave *et al.*, 2023; Stavrou-Costea, 2005). Furthermore, HRM practices help improve the organization's strategic position and the productivity of its employees (Lee and Lee, 2007). They depict the relationship between management and its employees, aiming to effectively enhance quality and achieve desired objectives (Al-Aali, 2021).

In today's competitive environment, employees are considered an essential element in determining the success of an organization. Previous research suggests that organizations should be committed to human resources management (Singh and Loncar, 2010). In this era of globalization and liberalization, employees are becoming a crucial competitive aspect of global business. In a tight labor market, retaining talented and skillful employees and developing organizational commitment have become the biggest challenges for business organizations.

As prospective employers continuously bid for top performers, human resources strategies must give appropriate consideration and effective resource allocation to keep employees motivated, satisfied, and committed. High individual performance and organizational effectiveness cannot be achieved without organizational commitment (Dasmadi and Handayani, 2023; Mowday *et al.*, 1982). Thus, the implementation of desirable HRM practices will positively affect employees' commitment. Shahnawaz and Juyal (2006) argue that employee commitment is a vital aspect of HRM policy for an effective and successful organization. In addition, they emphasize that this particular type of commitment is, perhaps, the essential organizational outcome of HRM strategies.

Jordan relies extensively on its human capital to achieve its national economic objectives. Human Resources practices put pressure on organizations to offer promotion opportunities, long-term development programs, and job security, among others, all of which are contributory factors for employee commitment. Therefore, appropriate HRM practices that foster and promote employee commitment are

essential for local administration units to sustain economic growth. In Jordan, local administration units face several challenges and problems, mainly financial, resulting in low-quality services to citizens (Ababneh and Rawabdeh, 2018).

Since local administration units cannot collect revenues efficiently, they should focus clearly on the internal dimensions of the organization, particularly the human resources. As a significant local administration unit, the massive number of plans, activities, and strategic objectives in the Municipality of Greater Amman (GAM) calls for the presence of highly motivated, skilled, and committed labor. Therefore, local administration management should pay attention to the development of HR by enhancing their job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

Little research has investigated the influence of HRM practices on enhancing organizational commitment (Shin *et al.* 2020; Alrosan and Alomosh, 2013). Therefore, the present study aims to examine the impact of HRM practices on employee commitment by investigating the attitudes of employees working in GAM.

The current study contributes significantly to the existing literature by investigating the role of HRM practices in organizational commitment, primarily in local administration units in the Middle East area. Hopefully, this study will provide reliable information to policy developers and decision-makers of GAM and local administration units to enhance organizational commitment. In addition, the findings of the current study will also help those responsible for developing and practicing HRM to make more productive and efficient organizations.

2. Literature Review and Hypotheses Development

Organizations are working in an intensively competitive business environment to achieve high performance. Pfeffer (1998) identifies the best practice in high-performance organizations as a set of HR policies and procedures associated with improving performance in all organizations and, by implication, for all kinds of employees, including organizational commitment. HRM attempts to mentor the employees and determines the need for skill acquisition and development, thus investing in these employees for a long-term organizational commitment and optimizing their job performance (Storey, 2007; Thalassinou *et al.*, 2023).

Organizations should always combine “Number of Best HR Practices,” which managers should implement for the survival and sustainability of the organization (Lamba and Choudhary, 2013). Choo and Bowley (2007) noted that human resource management practices (HRM) involve planning, recruitment, selection, training and development, performance appraisal, and labor relations. In addition, Noe *et al.* (2007) pointed out that HRM practices are the organizational assets that help an organization maintain and enhance its effectiveness.

These practices are considered a crucial tool to change employee attitude, behavior, organizational commitment, and job satisfaction. Similarly, HRM is the composition of policies, procedures, and regulations that determine employee behavior, attitude, and performance.

Organizational commitment can be defined as a strong magnetic attraction that employees show to be attached to and remain members of their organization. Numerous previous studies were conducted to examine the relationship between employee satisfaction and commitment. For example, Matzler and Renzl (2006) concluded that satisfied employees are more committed to the organization than dissatisfied.

Moreover, their study also concluded that a higher level of satisfaction among human resources practices leads to a higher level of employees' commitment to their organization. Akintayo (2010) articulated that HR practices and employee commitment generate and match individual goals with the overall organization's strategic objectives. Accordingly, employee commitment can be defined as the degree to which employees are excited, loyal, and willing to remain a member of the organization. Employee commitment has three multidimensional aspects related to the working conditions, employee coordination and collaboration with coworkers, and the organization's social responsibility to execute the jobs (Akintayo, 2010).

The major underpinning theory of the current study is “social exchange theory”. According to this theory, employees' behavior is a result of an exchange process. It suggests that valuing the benefits and costs of each organizational relationship determines whether or not employees choose to continue their interaction and involvement (Koster, 2011).

Employees' organizational commitment can be increased and enhanced by giving them appropriate compensation, promotion, training, fringe benefits etc. (Lamba and Choudhary, 2013). Guest (2011) argues that HRM practices affect employee outcomes by intervening mechanisms such as organizational commitment. Previous research has demonstrated that HRM practices positively influence firm performance, leading to organizational commitment (Naz *et al.*, 2016).

Moreover, organizational commitment has been considered a crucial measure that confirms whether HR practices can cultivate intellectual connections amongst organizations and the employees' objectives (Sendogdu *et al.*, 2013). Moreover, Jawaad *et al.* (2019) argue that employees' high organizational commitment is an affirmative reflection of sound HRM practices employed in organizations to nurture and foster the links between organizational and employee objectives. In addition to that, organizational commitment is an intangible outcome and consequence of HRM practices and is imperative in retaining employees and exploiting their potential to the fullest extent over time (Ahmad and Schroeder, 2003).

Committed employees usually adhere to the company vision, mission, and policies and have lower intention to leave, directly related to employee retention. In India, Lamba and Choudhary (2013) found that HRM practices significantly influence employees' organizational commitment. Applying the individual-level analysis, Paul and Anantharaman's (2004) study for a sample of software professionals in India showed that HRM practices had a significant positive relationship with organizational commitment.

Moreover, Kinnie *et al.* (2005) raised the question about the effect of HR policies on effective organizational commitment. Findings showed that satisfaction with some HR practices is associated with employees' commitment. Recently, Kapur (2020) argued that human resources must be committed to their work duties and responsibilities to attain the desired job outcomes. He argued that even when human resources do not feel satisfied with their jobs when they are committed, they can accomplish their job duties and responsibilities in a well-organized manner and achieve personal and professional objectives. Consequently, it can be stated that it is required to remain committed to work and organization.

Previous research has examined the impact of HRM practices at the organizational level; outcomes were depicted as revenue, turnover, and profitability (Guchait and Cho, 2010), whereas researchers have investigated the impact of HR practices on a single employee's state of mind, such as organizational commitment (Hemdi and Nasuridin, 2006). Edwards and Wright (2001: 570) noted that there are still 'rare studies to assess the effect of HR policies on employee commitment.' Their study found satisfaction with five HR practices important for explaining the commitment: career opportunities, rewards and recognition, involvement, communication, and work-life balance.

Syed and Yan (2012) argued that employee satisfaction and commitment are the consequences of different factors like compensation, promotion, relationships with co-workers, and promotion opportunities. Compensation is the most influencing factor affecting employee satisfaction and commitment among all these factors.

This argument is supported by (Handel, 2000), who found that compensation and remuneration in commissions, cash, recognition, and stock option make employees more satisfied and loyal. In addition, compensation plays a vital role in attracting and retaining highly qualified employees.

The impact of the appraisal systems on employee commitment has been examined. For example, Cowling and Newman (1995) emphasized that the appraisal system improves employee commitment by offering personal recognition. In addition, performance appraisals are a part of professional growth that depends on the feedback given to the employees about their performance and contributions in achieving the organizational objectives.

Furthermore, researchers concluded that traditional performance appraisals create dissatisfaction and reduce organizational commitment among employees. For that reason, there is a need to adopt an appraisal system that emphasizes the development, growth, and promotion needs of employees. Vlachos (2008) argued that training practices are associated with organization performance in several ways.

First, training programs increase employees' knowledge, abilities, and skills, consecutively increasing productivity and effectiveness due to their commitment to reducing employee turnover. Second, training practices decrease the cost and effort of recruiting and selecting candidates, which again increases employee productivity and reduces turnover, and increases employees' commitment and productivity.

Cardon and Stevens (2004) emphasized that attracting and hiring policies can ensure that the right employees, with the desirable characteristics and competencies, knowledge, and skills, are in the right place to fit in the organization's culture, leading to organizational changes commitment. Moreover, selecting the right employees would decrease the cost of employees' training and development.

More clearly, the study found that HR practices of high-performance companies increase employees' productivity and commitment and significantly reduce turnover rates. In India, Shahnawaz and Juyal (2006) showed that HRM practices significantly predicted organizational commitment in consultancy and fashion organizations. Performance appraisal and 'attitudes towards HRM department' were the significant predictors of organizational commitment in both organizations.

In another study, Jawaad *et al.* (2019) tested the relationship of HR practices and organizational commitment among the employees (n=2018) of the telecommunication sector of Pakistan. "Recruitment and selection", "performance appraisal satisfaction," "rewards and recognition," and "work environment" result in statistically significant variation in organizational commitment. Alharzain *et al.* (2020) investigate the impact of HRM practices on organizational commitment using data from 237 employees (academics and administrative staff) from Palestinian universities.

The results reveal that HRM practices significantly influence employee organizational commitment. Furthermore, work engagement reported a significant mediating effect between performance appraisal and organizational commitment on the one hand and between rewards and compensation and organizational commitment on the other hand.

Mackay (2018) found a significant association between employee job satisfaction and the high commitment HR practices (training, feedback, performance appraisal, etc.) and organizational commitment. Torlak *et al.* (2018) reported a significant positive impact of HRM practices on organizational commitment using data collected through a survey based on interviews in Turkey and Iran.

In the same line, Shin *et al.* (2020), based on data from 104 small- and medium-sized retail enterprises and 6,320 employees from Spain, found that a high-involvement HRM system can promote the affective commitment of women. Aydoğan and Arslan (2020) conducted two separate surveys to 104 employees from international maritime companies to examine the relationship between HRM practices and organizational commitment. Findings showed moderate positive and negative linear relationships between HRM practices bundles and organizational commitment.

Moreover, significant statistical differences between the organizational commitment levels of employees and their perceptions on the effects of HRM practices on their performance were determined. Finally, Maheshwari *et al.* (2020) explored the role of employee relations and HRM practices on firms' commitment to sustainability in the context of five food processing micro, small and medium enterprises in India. Findings reported a framework constituting four levels, namely "awareness, action, comprehensiveness, and excellence (AACE)," reflecting HRM practices adopted by MSME firms to develop their commitment to sustainability.

In the Arab world, several studies were conducted to examine HR practices with other organizational outcomes. For example, Alrosan and Alomosh (2013) examined the impact of HR information systems (HR planning, selection, training, compensation, and performance appraisal) on employees' commitment in five-star hotels in Jordan. Findings showed a significant impact of all the HR practices except for HR planning on employees' commitment.

In another study, Gharib (2014) investigated the relationship between career management represented by (training, promotion, job rotation, and motivations) and organizational commitment for employees (n=353) who work in Syrian telecommunication companies in both public and private sectors. Results showed a positive correlation between career management and organizational commitment.

Alshwashrh *et al.* (2013) examined the impact of some organizational policies (promotion, compensation, top management support) on organizational commitment for a sample of employees working in the Jordanian Company of Electricity Distribution. Analysis revealed that the three policies positively influenced employees' commitment. For a sample of (1300) public employees in Syria, Rajab (2014) found a statistically significant impact of the role of strategic planning of human resources in creating organizational commitment (Tyagi *et al.*, 2023).

Hamdan and Saket (2011) reported that incentives, as HR practice, significantly influence the organizational commitment of the Palestinian public employees. In addition, employees reported high satisfaction with the promotion system, which was considered justice. Similarly, Naser (2015) reports a crucial impact of incentives on enhancing organization commitment of employees in a plastic pipes factory in Algeria. For a sample of pharmacists working in chain pharmacies in Jordan,

Bisharat *et al.* (2016) found that training and development and reward system were positively impacted affective commitment, and both recruitment and selection and reward system were positively significantly affected continuance commitment.

However, no significant impact was found between normative commitment and any of the suggested human resource management practices. The study of Abu Juladaydah (2018) found that the Libyan telecom companies seek to obtain the best available human resources through the strategy of placement and recruitment and show high interest in the strategy of training and development. In addition, employees reported a high level of organizational commitment to work and were keen to apply the correct values and avoid negative behaviors.

Recently, Cherif (2020) investigated the role of HRM and employee job satisfaction in predicting organizational commitment in the Saudi Arabian banking sector. Results showed that HRM correlated positively with employee job satisfaction and organizational commitment. HRM and employee job satisfaction made significant individual contributions to the prediction of organizational commitment.

Al-Aali (2021) showed that HRM practices and organizational commitment have a significant and positive effect on employee performance in the Bahrain Cement Industry. Research reported that training programs raise employees' commitment, leading to enhanced organizational performance (Bimpitsos and Petridou, 2012; Bisharat *et al.*, 2017; Norena-Chavez and Thalassinou, 2022).

Meyer and Becker (2004) found that employees' commitment would escalate as HR practices implemented can infuse the employees to recognize accomplishment, autonomy, and financial benefits. Lim and Ling (2012) examined the role of HR practices of the contractors. They revealed that employees are convinced by the performance appraisal system, where a strong positive correlation exists with job satisfaction that enhances organizational commitment.

Thus, the above-presented research indicates a significant relationship between HRM practices and organizational commitment. Therefore, based on the discussion as mentioned earlier, the central hypothesis can be developed as follows:

HR practices (HR planning, job analysis, recruitment and selection, training, performance appraisal, compensation and incentives, career development and promotion, and job safety) positively influence employees' commitment in the Municipality of Greater Amman.

As mentioned earlier, this study is based on the social exchange theory. The inducement-contribution argument lies at the center of the social exchange theory (Whitener, 2001). Employees aim to balance their exchange relationships with organizations by having their behavior equal to the degree of employer dedication to them (Wayne *et al.*, 1997).

The reciprocity notion suggests that employers provide HR practices, and employees become obliged to afford commitment. Organizational inducements, such as positive and beneficial actions and behaviors (HR planning, job analysis, recruitment and selection, training, performance appraisal, compensation and incentives, career development and promotion, and job safety) directed at the employee create commitments for employees to reciprocate in contributions for the organization.

This theory attempts to establish propositions about the HRM practices and employees' behaviors and attitudes. Through their performance and commitment, employees reciprocate the HRM practices they obtain from their organizations (Whitener, 2001). Employees perceive HRM practices as a 'personalized' dedication, which they then exchange back with the organization through positive behavior and attitude such as commitment. This may include discretionary behavior 'beyond contract', employee commitment, intention to stay, and motivation.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Population and Sample of the Study

The local government in Jordan is structured into twelve governorates. After several phases of amalgamation and integration of local government units, there are now 99 municipalities and the Municipality of Greater Amman (GAM). GAM is the largest local government unit in Jordan with about 4.5 million population and accounts for approximately 40% of the Jordanian's population; 80% of the industry; and 55% of the total employment (Final Report of Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability (PEFA) Assessment-GAM, 2017).

The increasing intensity of urbanization and the burgeoning citizen's demands on public services by the rapidly growing population have created incredible pressure on the GAM to develop and implement efficient and accountable systems for delivering high-quality local services. All municipalities in Jordan are subject to hierarchical supervision by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, while GAM reports directly to the Prime Minister and is considered a part of the Governorate of the capital city, Amman. The Prime Minister appoints the mayor of the GAM, which the citizens hold accountable to implement local services and programs (waste disposal, urban planning and development, permit and license issuance, etc.) as the Municipal Council approves it in the financial budget. According to the features mentioned above, GAM was chosen to conduct the current study.

The study population includes all employees working in GAM. GAM is administratively and financially independent of the Jordanian central government. The total number of employees is about 27,000, located in 22 different administrative areas. According to the statistical sampling table (Sekaran and Bougie 2013), the appropriate sample size at the confidence level of (0.05) is about 378 individuals when the total population is about 27,000. A simple random sample of

500 was selected to answer the designated questionnaire. Finally, 433 responses were received. It was found that eight questionnaires were incomplete that left the total usable questionnaires to 425 (response rate, 85%). The sample was selected from all locations to have a good representation.

After getting the approval from the GAM officials, the researchers, with the help of three qualified research assistants, distributed and collected the study papered questionnaire. The questionnaire has a clear statement of the purpose of the study and the direction in answering the questions. Respondents were informed that their participation is voluntary and they could withdraw from the study at any stage without reporting the reason. They have assured confidentiality and asked not to mention any sign that might indicate their profile. After participants' agreement, they were given the questionnaire and were asked to hand it to the researcher directly or keep it in the secretary of the office.

3.2 Measurement of Variables

Based on the previous literature, the researchers developed a self-reported questionnaire to measure each variable. The questionnaire has three main parts. The first part includes six demographic and occupational variables of the participants (gender, years of experience, age, job title, number of employees in the department, job nature).

The second part includes 27 items that cover the main functions of HRM. The examined functions were HR planning (4 items), job analysis (3 items), recruitment and selection (4 items), training (4 items), performance appraisal (3 items), compensation and incentives (3 items), career development, and promotion (3 items), and job safety (3 items). The researchers relied on the Geringer et al. (2002) Human Resource Management Practice scale to examine this part of the study. The third part covers employees' commitment (15 items) based on the study of Mowday *et al.* (1982).

The questionnaire was given to nine experts to examine the face-content validity of the items in terms of language, clarity, and dimensions fitting. The experts approved the questionnaire's content and agreed on the main variables of the study. However, they raised minor issues regarding the language and phrasing of some items. Cronbach's Alpha test also was applied to measure inter-item reliability and consistency (Sekaran and Bougie 2013).

Some references argue that if the Cronbach's Alpha value is greater than (.70), it indicates a high level of reliability, and the questionnaire items measure the required concepts and variables. Cronbach's Alpha values were .95 and .94 for the HRM items and the organizational commitment, respectively. The items of HRM and commitment were measured using a Likert five-point scale. Participants were asked to answer each item or statement by marking (x) for their agreement level as it is

practiced in the GAM, not as what they wish to be. The five levels of agreement of each statement are strongly agreed (5), agree (4), moderately agree (3), disagree (2), and strongly disagree (1).

Ababneh (2016) suggested three primary levels of agreement (high, moderate, low) examine the participants' answers of either each item/statement or dimension. While the highest level of agreement proposed in the questionnaire is 5, this number was divided by 3 (levels of agreement) to assess the mean value of items or dimensions. Consequently, the value of the mean (0-1.67) is considered as low agreement, (1.68-3.33) is considered as a moderate agreement, and (3.34-5) is considered as high agreement.

Using the confirmatory principal component method of varimax with Kaiser Normalization rotation, factor analysis showed that the cumulative variance contribution of HR practices and organizational commitment was about 64% and 55%, respectively. The items of HR practices were divided into eight main factors. Organizational commitment was also divided into three main factors proposed in the theoretical model.

In order to accept the proposed model, it has been suggested that all factor loadings should be greater than .40, and all communalities exceed .50 (Hair *et al.*, 2006). Accordingly, the result of the factor analysis confirms that every single factor has a specific measure and is not overlapped or mixed up with other factors, which validates the theoretical model and the empirical scope of the examined variables.

4. Data Analysis and Findings

In order to analyze the study data, the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 24 was conducted. Analysis techniques of descriptive statistics such as means, standard deviations, and frequencies were used to describe the respondents' personal and occupational information. T-test and F-test were also used to check the statistical differences in respondents' assessment of HRM practice level and commitment in GAM. Regression analysis was also used to test HR practices' impact on organizational commitment.

Regarding the description of the personal and occupational variables of the participants (n=425), the analysis showed that 55% are male, and about 80% of them perform pure administrative tasks. Nearly two-thirds of the participants have less than ten years of experience, and about 90% of them are less than 45 years of age.

Only 20% of the respondents hold an official position (manager, assistant manager, head of the department, and head of the branch). Regarding the educational level, it was found that about half of the participants hold a diploma or less, and only 7% hold a master or Ph.D. Almost 55% of the participants reported that the number of employees who work in their department is six and more.

Table 1 shows the attitudes of the GAM employees toward the practice level of human resources management and their level of organizational commitment. Participants reported that all human resources management functions are practiced at a moderate level (ranged between 2.83-3.56) except for compensation and incentives with a weak level (mean=2.46).

Furthermore, participants showed agreement about the level of practicing human resources management functions as aggregate and close to the mean as the standard deviation value indicates (.80). On the side, respondents showed a high level of organizational commitment toward the GAM, and they agreed about this level since the value of the standard deviation (.89) indicates close to the mean.

Table 1. Mean scores and standard deviations of human resources management and organizational commitment in GAM (n= 425)

| Dimension | Mean | SD | Level |
|------------------------------------|------|------|----------|
| 1- Job Analysis | 3.56 | .85 | Moderate |
| 2- Training | 3.14 | .98 | Moderate |
| 3- Performance Appraisal | 3.14 | .99 | Moderate |
| 4- HR Planning | 3.10 | .86 | Moderate |
| 5-Job Safety | 2.94 | 1.02 | Moderate |
| 6-Career Development and Promotion | 2.86 | 1.02 | Moderate |
| 7-Recruitment and Selection | 2.83 | 1.03 | Moderate |
| 8-Compensations and Incentives | 2.46 | 1.16 | Weak |
| Human Resources Management | 3.00 | .80 | Moderate |
| Organizational Commitment | 3.62 | .89 | High |

Source: Own study.

Pearson correlation was conducted in order to examine the relationship between human resources management and organizational commitment in GAM. Table 2 shows that the relationship between human resources management and organizational commitment variables is strong, with a value of about .65 and significant at the level of 0.05.

Regarding the correlation between HR and organizational commitment function, the correlation values ranged between approximately .47- .54. The highest correlation value was between career development and promotion and organizational commitment (.54), while the lowest was between job analysis and organizational commitment (.47). All correlation values were significant at the level of 0.05.

Table 2. Pearson Correlation between Human Resources Management and Organizational Commitment in GAM (n=425)

| Dimension | Organizational Commitment | Significance Level |
|-----------------|---------------------------|--------------------|
| 1- Job Analysis | .472 | .000 |
| 2- Training | .505 | .000 |

| | | |
|-------------------------------------|------|------|
| 3- Performance Appraisal | .539 | .000 |
| 4- HR Planning | .526 | .000 |
| 5- Job Safety | .534 | .000 |
| 6- Career Development and Promotion | .544 | .000 |
| 7- Recruitment and Selection | .530 | .000 |
| 8- Compensations and Incentives | .518 | .000 |
| Human Resources Management | .643 | .000 |

Source: Own study.

Table 3 displays the stepwise multiple regression analysis to examine the impact of each HR practice on organizational commitment in GAM. Analysis indicated that only five HR practices (Career Development and Promotion, HR Planning, Performance Appraisal, Job Safety, Recruitment and Selection) significantly explain the organizational commitment. Five regression models were utilized to examine the impact of HR practices on organizational commitment.

As the adjusted R-square value shows, the five HR practices account for approximately 41% of the variation of organizational commitment in GAM. The first model indicates that career development and promotion accounted for about 30% of organizational commitment variation. Model two (career development and promotion and HR Planning) explains about 35% of the variation of organizational commitment.

After adding performance and appraisal to model two, the three practices in model three explains about 39% of the change in organizational commitment. Model four (Career Development and Promotion, HR Planning, Performance Appraisal, Job Safety) explains about 40% of the variation in organizational commitment. Finally, model five (Career Development and Promotion, HR Planning, Performance Appraisal, Job Safety, Recruitment, and Selection) explains about 41% of the change in practicing organizational commitment. All five models were significant in their impact, as indicated by f-values. According to the stepwise regression, the other HR practices (job analysis, training, compensation, and incentives) did not affect the organizational commitment. Table 3

Table 3. Simple Regression Analysis (n=425)

| Models | Stand Coeff- Beta | Standard Error | Mean Square | Adjusted R ² | F- Value | Sig. |
|--------------------------------------------------|-------------------|----------------|----------------|-------------------------|----------|------|
| 1- Career Development and Promotion | .544 | .749 | 99.848 .561 | .294 | 177.9 | .000 |
| 2- Career Development and Promotion, HR Planning | .315 | .714 | 60.961 .510 | .359 | 119.4 | .000 |

| | | | | | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|------|----------------|------|------|------|
| 3-- Career Development and Promotion, HR Planning, Performance Appraisal | .245 | .698 | 44.081 .487 | .388 | 90.5 | .000 |
| 4- Career Development and Promotion, HR Planning, Performance Appraisal, Job Safety | .168 | .692 | 34.072 .478 | .398 | 71.2 | .000 |
| 5- Career Development and Promotion, HR Planning, Performance Appraisal, Job Safety, Recruitment and Selection | .134 | .688 | 27.795 .473 | .405 | 58.7 | .000 |

Note: Independent variable: HRM Practices, Dependent Variable: Organizational Commitment, $p < 0.001$

Source: Own study.

5. Discussion

This study aims to investigate how much HRM practices can explain commitment in GAM. To the best of the authors' knowledge, this is one of few systematic studies that examine HR practices and organizational commitment relationships on an individual level in local administration in Jordan. Under the focal lens of social exchange theory, this study hypothesized and reported significant positive relations among the GAM employees' perceptions of HR practices and organizational commitment. Previous research suggests that for productive and positive work experiences to enhance organizational commitment, employees should consider that such experiences result from effective and efficient management policies and practices; mainly HR practices (Edwards and Wright, 2001).

GAM has regulation number 71 for HRM for 2012 that organizes all the HR practices for all employees working in the GAM. This study revealed that all the HR functions are practiced in GAM at a moderate level except for compensation and incentives functions. Participants believe that GAM gives evident attention to developing a professional job analysis (mean=3.65) plan by identifying job descriptions and job specifications that set the boundaries of the responsibilities and qualifications of any job.

GAM should comply with the regulations of the Civil Service Bureau, the centralized governmental office of hiring, in preparing job descriptions and specifications for every position and task. In addition, respondents indicate that GAM applies HR planning (mean= 3.10) by analyzing the demand and supply of the labor in each department and trying to identify the needed number and quality of employees. GAM has close and direct relations with local citizens that force managers to plan extensively of HR supply and demand to meet the increasing calls of community services.

GAM works intensely in attracting and recruiting (mean= 2.86) qualified candidates to achieve its vision effectively. Applying the merit system with complete transparency and fairness is crucial for the GAM to attract professional and highly qualified employees since Amman's development infrastructure needs to be managed and organized.

For example, GAM created 600 vacancies in 2018 to be filled with qualified employees, mainly engineers, veterinarians, surveyors, and painters. Over the past five years, GAM has transferred more than 5,000 daily base-wage employees to a tenure monthly salary base, which more likely will increase their commitment level. In 2019, GAM called for several engineers vacancies at the contract base salary. According to the contract base, employees are hired with high qualifications, experience, and talent and are often paid three to five times the salary of the average candidates. Accordingly, commitment and attachment to the GAM of employees are expected.

Training and development function has been highly recognized as a crucial element of the best HR practices. The training aims essentially to bridge the gap between job requirements and the current competencies of employees. GAM considers this practice a priority (mean= 3.14) since employees should develop their skills, knowledge, and abilities frequently and eliminate deficiencies to meet the vast demand of the municipality services by criticizes. According to the GAM previous reports, several planned and unplanned training courses are conducted to enhance employees' performance to provide high service municipality quality to citizens of the capital city, Amman.

GAM has a specialized training center that offers programs related to management, infrastructure, engineering, environment, urban planning and local administration, computer skills, and training of trainers. This is a good indication that GAM considers training as a crucial part of HR practices to provide high-quality municipality services to citizens. The statistical analysis reveals that training does not impact organizational commitment significantly at $p=0.5$, but it is more likely to lead to job satisfaction, leading to superior organizational goals needed by the employees.

Findings reported that most of the current study's sample includes young employees who have relatively less than ten years of experience. The priority of this group is often getting the proper training as a crucial element for their career development, which raises their job satisfaction level and then leverages up their organizational commitment level and urges them to develop long-term commitment toward the organization.

To retain qualified employees and identify any potential capabilities, GAM conducts performance appraisals (mean=3.14) regularly. One objective of the performance appraisal is to develop succession planning by identifying the career plan and

promotion for the qualified employees (mean=2.86). In 2018, GAM won the Award for Organizational Excellence for the Arab Public Administration, one of the prestigious awards organized by the Dubai Excellence Awards Academy. Performance appraisal is the central element in the practice of HR to recognize performance deficiencies, set corrective actions, and identify the training needs aiming to achieve an excellent performance level.

Salaries, wages, bounces mainly constitute the significant elements of the compensation system. To enhance the employees' attachment, GAM offers a compensation and incentive plan, but results showed that participants have a low level of satisfaction (mean=2.46) toward this aspect of HR practices. The potential reason for this assessment could be the economic constraints and challenges in Jordan, mainly high unemployment rate (25%, 2020), low job security, and lack of suitable jobs; that forces employees to stay at work even if they are not satisfied with their jobs and related benefits.

In the same context, employees also consider promotion and advancement (m= 2.86) to a higher position as necessary to their career since it involves carrying greater responsibilities, receiving higher status, and getting better salaries and benefits. Matzler and Renzl (2006) concluded that satisfied employees, in terms of financial rewards, are more loyal to the organization than those who are dissatisfied. Local administration units in Jordan face unprecedented financial deficits, GAM is no exception to this challenge.

The expected revenues in the GAM budget are 765 million US dollars, with 240 estimated deficits in 2019. There is a high discrepancy in salaries among the GAM, even for the same position with the same skills. The problem is due to the idea that some employees are attracted and hired on the contract base with high extreme salaries and benefits.

On the opposite, some employees with the same qualification and experience who were hired according to the Civil Service Bureau bases often receive meager salaries and benefits compared with those hired on a contract basis. This practice makes employees feel inequity and unfairness, which leads to low satisfaction and commitment at GAM. For example, in March 2018, many employees of the GAM took part in the demonstration and work strike demanding the improvement of their working and living conditions.

Finally, respondents reported a moderate level of job safety (m= 2.94). GAM has main technical jobs such as power and electricity, asphalt paving, opening new roads, building bridges and tunnels, etc. All these jobs require rigorous safety procedures to protect the life of the employees of GAM. During wintertime, GAM has more work pressure due to heavy snowfall and water floods which put the life of employees and citizens at risk. GAM was established in partnership with the German-Jordanian University's Center of Excellence for Public Safety to prepare

employees for such cases. This center aims to train employees how to deal in crises and extreme emergencies and build awareness among citizens about public safety issues.

Participants of the current study reported a high level of commitment ($m=3.62$). Employees feel a clear positive attachment and bond with GAM due to several practices. Employees of GAM have several benefits, mainly saving fund allowances, retirement allowances, health insurance, etc., which is more likely to encourage employees to remain committed members of GAM.

The current study explores how much commitment could be attributed to HRM practices. Step-wise regression reported that HRM practices were significantly predicting organizational commitment, as shown by adjusted R-square. Several reasons might explain this result. The first explanation is based on the argument that committed employees are more likely to be motivated and more willing to go the extra mile of performance.

Secondly, committed employees usually have more responsibility toward their organization that will reduce their need to be closely supervised and monitored by their direct managers. Finally, committed employees are less likely to be involved in withdrawal behaviors and intention to leave, leading to a reduction in recruitment and selection and training costs. Career development and training have emerged as the crucial predictor (.294) of organizational commitment in GAM.

Employees are usually seeking an organization that will provide good opportunities for personal development and career advancement, which ultimately will reduce their intention to leave GAM. HR planning practice added about 6% of the explanation in the variance of employees' commitment. Only 2% of the variance of commitment was explained by performance appraisal. Each job safety and recruitment and selection explained about 2% in the development of commitment by the employees of GAM. These findings are consistent with the results of several studies, mainly Shahnawaz and Juyal (2006), Lamba and Choudhary (2013), and Paul and Anantharaman (2004).

6. Theoretical and Practical Implications

On the theoretical grounds, the current study confirms the focal idea of the social exchange theory. This theory argues that when organizations express their needs and desires to engage in social exchange relationships by devoting competitive HR practices and activities, employees often respond by becoming more compassionate and attached to the mission and vision of their organization.

Regarding the practical implications, local administration units are striving rapidly to meet the needs of their communities. HR managers of the service sectors, such as local administration units, should recognize that customer interaction of employees

is a central part of the perfect customer experience. Consequently, managers should retain job satisfaction, job engagement, and employees' commitment at an optimum level to reach high-performance organizations. HR managers, therefore, should devote their best efforts to establishing a highly motivated and committed HR so that the superior positive customer experience can be guaranteed and improved constantly.

Moreover, mayors of local administration units should pay extra attention to challenges and procedures that deter the performance of employees, ultimately influencing their organizational commitment level. Therefore, HR managers of local administration units should be meticulous while employing and improvising their HR practices and procedures, leading to augmented organizational commitment.

In sum, participants reported that all HRM functions are practiced at a moderate level except for compensation and incentives with a weak level. In addition, they showed a high level of organizational commitment toward the GAM. Stepwise multiple regression analysis found that HR practices (Career Development and Promotion, HR Planning, Performance Appraisal, Job Safety, Recruitment, and Selection) significantly contribute to organizational commitment.

7. Conclusion, Limitations, and Future Research

The study examines the impact of HR practices (HR planning, job analysis, recruitment and selection, training, performance appraisal, compensation and incentives, career development and promotion, and job safety) on employees' commitment to the Municipality of Greater Amman. Findings showed that HRM practices significantly predict organizational commitment.

Accordingly, policy and decision-makers at GAM should develop more practical policies and programs aiming to enhance employees' commitment. One policy that should be considered is the compensation and benefits practices due to respondents' dissatisfaction regarding that. Revising the scale of salaries to be more just and fair for all employees who hold the same position and similar qualifications is a crucial element to enhance commitment.

Furthermore, fair rewards enhance belongingness, attachment, and commitment of employees to GAM. Based on findings, it can be concluded that practitioners should focus upon the proper implementation and employment of HR practices, policies, and procedures because they create positive and constructive work attitudes stemming out of the workforce.

Therefore, HR managers should mainly focus on HRM practices and procedures during recruitment and selection, training, performance appraisal, and providing the candidates or employees with a feasible and realistic working environment that enhances their long-term organizational commitment.

The authors of this study encountered several limitations. First, the study relied mainly on the survey to examine the study variables as a sole tool to investigate the attitudes of the participants of GAM. Future research is highly encouraged to use other data collection tools such as interviews and focus groups on getting deeper information about the HR practices and commitment in GAM.

Second, the current study was conducted in GAM, which is considered a particular case of local administration units in Jordan, as explained in the methodology part. Accordingly, generalizing the findings might be limited to other municipalities in Jordan.

Third, future research is highly needed to examine different types and levels of local administration units to be more realistic in developing policies and programs related to municipalities. Since analysis showed that about 41% of the change in practicing organizational commitment resulted from HR practices, other factors such as leadership style, job satisfaction, and citizenship behavior are highly needed to be examined to enhance commitment.

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