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Human Resource Management Practices and Employee Commitment in Dynamic Business Environment in Burundi

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ABSTRACT: This study examined the effect of Human Resource Management (HRM) practices on employee commitment. Using a quantitative approach, data were collected from 126 employees through a structured questionnaire and analyzed using descriptive statistics, correlation, and multiple regression analysis in SPSS (version 25.0). The findings revealed that HRM practices specifically training and development, performance appraisal, compensation and benefits, and recruitment and selection are positively associated with employee commitment. Regression results showed that training and development, performance appraisal, and compensation and benefits have significant positive effects on employee commitment, with performance appraisal emerging as the strongest predictor, while recruitment and selection was not statistically significant. The model explained approximately 69.6% of the variance in employee commitment. The study concludes that effective implementation of HRM practices plays a critical role in enhancing employee commitment and recommends that organizations prioritize employee development, fair performance appraisal systems, and competitive compensation strategies to strengthen commitment.

Cette étude a examiné l'effet des pratiques de gestion des ressources humaines (GRH) sur l'engagement des employés. Une approche quantitative a été utilisée pour recueillir des données auprès de 126 employés au moyen d'un questionnaire structuré. Ces données ont ensuite été analysées à l'aide de statistiques descriptives, de corrélations et d'une analyse de régression multiple à l'aide du logiciel SPSS (version 25.0). Les résultats ont révélé que les pratiques de GRH, et plus particulièrement la formation et le développement, l'évaluation des performances, la rémunération et les avantages sociaux, ainsi que le recrutement et la sélection, sont positivement associées à l'engagement des employés. Les résultats de la régression ont montré que la formation et le développement, l'évaluation des performances et la rémunération et les avantages sociaux ont des effets positifs significatifs sur l'engagement des employés, l'évaluation des performances se révélant être le facteur prédictif le plus important, tandis que le recrutement et la sélection n'étaient pas statistiquement significatifs. Le modèle explique environ 69,6 % de la variance de l'engagement des employés. L'étude conclut que la mise en œuvre efficace des pratiques de GRH joue un rôle crucial dans le renforcement de l'engagement des employés et recommande aux organisations de privilégier le développement des employés, des systèmes d'évaluation des performances équitables et des stratégies de rémunération compétitives afin de renforcer cet engagement.

KEYWORDS: HRM Practices, Recruitment and selection, Training and development, Performance appraisal, Compensation and benefits, and Employee commitment.

INTRODUCTION

The management of human resources in an organization is the management function that deals with recruitment, replacement, training and development, motivating and promotion or demotion of staff (Birungi, 2006). Human Resource Management consists of a series of steps that are performed on a continuous basis to keep the organization supplied with the right people in the right positions and at the right time. The steps of staffing include Human Resource Planning, Training and Development, carrier development, recruitment, motivation/compensation and benefit, selection, performance appraisals, induction and orientation, transfers, promotions, demotions, separations (Parajuli and Shrestha, 2021). Human Resource Management is the design of formal systems in an organization to ensure effective and efficient use of human talent to accomplish organizational goals (Jackson and Mathis, 2003).

Concepts of Human Resources Management Practices

The definition of human resources management (HRM) requires defining both HR, HRM and HRM practices. Human resources are the key function of any organization that is responsible for the people dimension of the organization (Dessler, 2015). HRM practices refer to organizational activities directed at managing the pool of human resources and ensuring that the resources are employed towards the fulfillment of organizational goals (Wright & Snell, 1991). HRM practices are a process of attracting, motivating, and retaining employees to guarantee the survival of the organization (Hassan, 2016). According to Armstrong (2010), Human Resource Practices are informal approaches used in managing people. Wall and Wood (2005) outline HRM practices as sophisticated selection methods, appraisal, training, teamwork, communications, empowerment, performance related pay and employment security. Huselid (1995) used eleven HRM practices in his study and these include personnel selection,

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performance appraisal, incentive compensation, job design, grievance procedures, information sharing, attitude assessment, labor management participation, recruitment efforts, employee training and promotion criteria.

HRM practices are defined as a system that fascinates, improves, inspires, and keep employees in the organization for a long time to make sure the effective carrying out the operations of the organization (Wood & Wall, 2002; Ahmed, et al. 2020; Da Silva, et al. 2020, and Amin & Rubal, 2020). HRM practices can be defined as the linking of human resources with strategic goals and objectives to improve the organizational performance (Sims, 2007). It is concerned with the human dimension in management (Rondeau & Wagar, 2002) and refers to a set of programs, functions, and practices prepared and conducted to maximize both employee and organization performance (Aswathappa, 2007).

Sanders, et al. (2008) delivered a definition of HRM practices as: "High commitment human resource management (HRM), (e.g. selective hiring, career opportunities, performance appraisal, and participation in decision making), is defined as a bundle of HRM practices.

Measurement of Employee Commitment

As defined by Porter et al. (1974), commitment is the relative strength of the individual's identification with, and involvement in, a particular organization. It consists of three factors such as a strong desire to remain a member of the organization, a strong belief in, and acceptance of, the values and goals of the organization, and a readiness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization. With Meyer & Allen (1997), commitment refers to a person's dedication to a person, job, or organization. It is reflected in the person's intention to persevere in a course of action. Soliven (2009) defines it more strongly as a sacred covenant, without which life is unimaginable. Commitment is considered to be psychological immersion of an individual with his institute through sense of belonging, ownership of organizational goals and being ready to accept challenges (Dolan, Tzafrir, & Baruch, 2005). Building a committed and motivated workforce is considered as the main objective, and a key to success in the competitive environment (Mohsen, et al., 2004). Commitment has a rational component; many individuals knowingly decide to make commitments, and then they attentively plan and perform the activities needed to accomplish them (Armstrong, 2010). Committed employees will be able to perform their jobs more than management expectations (Bragg, 2002).

According to Anwar & Louis (2017), employee commitment is in respect to the laborers' connection to or support in the organizations in which they employed. According to Prabhu, et al. (2020), commitment includes elements of desires, needs, and obligations. Quevedo (2006) measured it along three domains, namely, sense of identification with the organization's goals, feeling of involvement in organizational duties and feeling of loyalty for the organization. Lai (2001), Cabautan (2002) and Daylo (2008) measured it in terms of affective, continuance and normative commitment. Meyer and Herscovitch (2001) identify more than 25 employee commitment concepts and measures. Arguing that conceptual redundancy exists across these, they group them into three foci, as commitment to work/job, commitment to career/profession and commitment to organization. Meyer and Allen (1997) present these three approaches and constructed a Three-Component Model (TCM) of commitment, which measures three forms of organizational commitment: affective commitment, normative commitment, and continuance commitment. These three are characterized by three different mindsets: desire, obligation, and cost. Affective commitment refers to the employee's emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in, the organization based on positive feelings, or emotions, toward the organization. Continuance commitment refers to commitment based on the costs that the employee associates with leaving the organization due to the high cost of leaving (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Normative commitment refers to an employee's feeling of obligation to remain with the organization based on the employee having internalized the values and goals of the organization. Some people are committed to their jobs because they love what they do (Anwar & Balcioglu, 2016) or because their goals align with those of the company. Others might stay because they fear what they could lose if they leave (Abdullah & Abdul Rahman, 2015). Still others might stay because they feel obligated to the company, or to their manager (Faraj, et al. 2021). Continuance Commitment-costs connected with leaving the organization; and Normative Commitment-saw commitment to stay with the association have suggestions for the proceeding with investment of the person in the organization (Abdullah, 2018). The higher an employee's level of instruction is, the lower that individual's level of organizational commitment (Saleh, et al. 2021).

Relationship between HRM Practices and Employee commitment

Various studies were undertaken on the relationship between HRM Practices and Employee commitment. Razzaq, et al. (2017), Fihla and Chinyamurindi (2018), and Parajuli and Shrestha (2021) found that HRM practices tremendously affect employee commitment. The study of Shahnawaz and Juyal (2006) compared various HRM practices in a research-based organization and a fashion firm. HRM practices were found significantly different in two organizations and mean scores on various HRM practices were found more in the fashion organization. Regression results showed that various HRM practices were significantly predicting commitment in both organizations and when they were combined. Performance appraisal and 'attitudes towards HRM department' were the significant predictors of commitment in both the organizations. Yamao and Sekiguchi (2014) explored the factors influencing employee commitment for Japanese workers; the outcomes demonstrate that HRM practices that encourage the learning of English, for example, language training and setting language abilities as a basis for promotion and recruitment, have an effect on the affective and normative commitment of workers to their organizations' globalization. Moreover, Fesharaki and Sehhat (2017) explored the idea of Islamic management of human resources and measured its effects on employee's commitment. The outcomes demonstrate that remuneration and compensation, training and development, recruitment, and selection positively affect employee's commitment.

Thus, Dheera and Krishnan (2020) demonstrated that HRM practices decidedly influenced employee commitment towards their employment and organization. Besides, Shipton et al. (2016) found that HRM can enhance employee commitment and, from that point, improve execution. Considering the impact of a financial squeeze on employee commitment, the profile of employee commitment might depend on the mindboggling blend of environmental factors, such as financial conditions, and HRM practices (Meyer, Morin, & Wasti, 2017). However, the literature suggests that HRM Practices play an important role in the management of employees in order to accomplish the objectives of the organization. The practices namely recruitment, training, performance appraisal, compensation and benefits are key predictors of attracting, motivating, and retaining talented employees. The effective implementation of HRM practices align human resources with strategic goals and enhance employee commitment.

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Theoretical perspective

The study was underpinned by Havard Model and Guest model. The Harvard Model was developed from what Boxall (1993) calls the 'Harvard framework', by Beer et al. in 1984. The Harvard model works as a strategic map to guide all managers in their relations with employees and concentrates on the human or soft aspect of HRM. It works on the premise that employees needed to be congruent, competent, and cost effective (Beer, et al., 1984). Beer proposes that many diverse personnel and labor relations activities may be subsumed under four human resource policy areas, which are Employee Influence, Human Resource Flow, Reward Systems, and Work Systems. Huczynski and Buchanan (2001) and Loosemore, et al. (2003) added that, the Harvard Model provided the needed link between "SHRM decisions, the business environment and an organization's performance. It provided a more open system model of how Strategic HRM policy influences other organizational functions and is constrained by stakeholders and situational factors. The Situational Factors includes the internal and external factors that impact an organization's HR policies and practices, such as the company's size, industry, and competitive environment.

Secondly, the Harvard Model recognizes that there are many different stakeholders in an organization not just shareholders. It emphasizes the importance of considering the needs and interests of all stakeholders, including employees, customers, and communities. Another key component of the Harvard model is the HRM Policy Choices. These are the specific HR policies and practices that an organization decides to adopt, such as recruitment and selection, training and development, compensation and benefits, and performance management. Finally, the Harvard Model suggests that effective HR management can lead to improved outcomes for both the organization and its employees, such as increased productivity, higher employee satisfaction, and greater competitiveness.

The Guest Model was developed by David Guest at King's College London in 1997, the Guest comparative model works on the premise that a set of integrated HRM practices will result to superior individual and organizational performance. It emphasizes the importance of integrating HR policies and practices with an organization's overall strategy and goals and holds that HRM strategies like differentiation, innovation, the focus on Quality and cost reduction will lead to practices like better training appraisal, selection, rewards, job designs, involvement, and security leading to more quality outcomes, commitment, and flexibility. However, The Harvard and Guest models of Human Resource Management (HRM) both emphasize the strategic role of HR practices in enhancing organizational performance, though they differ in focus. The Harvard Model (Beer, et al., 1984) highlights the human aspect of HRM, advocating for employee commitment, stakeholder consideration, and alignment of HR policies such as recruitment, training, compensation, and performance management with organizational goals, while accounting for situational factors like industry and company size. It suggests that effective HRM can improve outcomes for both employees and the organization. Similarly, the Guest Model (1997) links integrated HR practices to superior individual and organizational performance, emphasizing alignment with strategy and the use of HR policies to enhance productivity, innovation, and employee commitment. However, Guest primarily measures organizational performance through financial indicators.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a quantitative approach and applied both descriptive and correlational research designs. From a total population of 472 employees, a sample of 126 was drawn using probability sampling, specifically simple random sampling. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire. The reliability of the research instrument was confirmed through a pilot study, where all Cronbach's Alpha values exceeded 0.70. Content validity was ensured through expert evaluation. The collected data were systematically coded and analyzed using SPSS version 25.0, employing both descriptive and inferential statistical methods.

RESULTS

Descriptive and Inferential statistics were computed based on the study variables and relationship statistics as given by correlation analysis, coefficient of determination, analysis of variance and regression coefficients. Correlation was computed to examine the relationship between each of the aspects of Human Resource Management Practices and Employee Commitment. Pearson Correlation Coefficients were derived at 99% confidence level, 2-tail test.

Table 1. Descriptive results of the study variables

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Recruitment and Selection	4.35	.545	-.744	.216	-.068	.428
Training and development	4.20	.623	-.734	.216	.514	.428
Performance Appraisal	4.38	.578	-1.092	.216	.358	.428
Compensation and Benefits	3.87	.730	-.550	.216	.226	.428
Employee Commitment	4.27	.594	-1.043	.216	.544	.428

The results indicated that employees generally rated HRM practices aspects and employee commitment positively. Performance Appraisal (Mean = 4.38) and Recruitment and Selection (Mean= 4.35) received the highest mean scores, while Compensation and Benefits had the lowest mean (Mean = 3.87), suggesting comparatively lower satisfaction in this area. Standard deviations ranged from 0.545 to 0.730, reflecting moderate variability in responses. All variables exhibited negative skewness, particularly Performance Appraisal (Skewness = -1.092) and Employee Commitment (Skewness = -1.043), indicating a tendency for respondents to report above average values. Kurtosis values were within acceptable limits, suggesting the distributions are relatively normal. Overall, the results reflect generally favorable perceptions of HRM practices and a high level of employee commitment among the participants.

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Table 2. Correlation Analysis

		Recruitment and Selection	Training and development	Performance Appraisal	Compensation and Benefits	Employee Commitment
Employee Commitment	Pearson Correlation	.609**	.734**	.720**	.664**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	126	126	126	126	126
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).						

All variables used were found to be positively correlated to dependent variable (Employee commitment). The results indicated a moderate positive relationship between recruitment and selection and employee commitment (r=.609**); a strong positive relationship between training and development and employee commitment (r=.734**); a strong positive relationship between performance appraisal and employee commitment (r=.720**); a moderate relationship between compensation and benefits and employee commitment (r=.664**). The results show that all examined HRM practices are positively linked to employee commitment, with training and development and performance appraisal having the strongest influence, while recruitment and selection and compensation and benefits also contribute moderately to enhancing commitment.

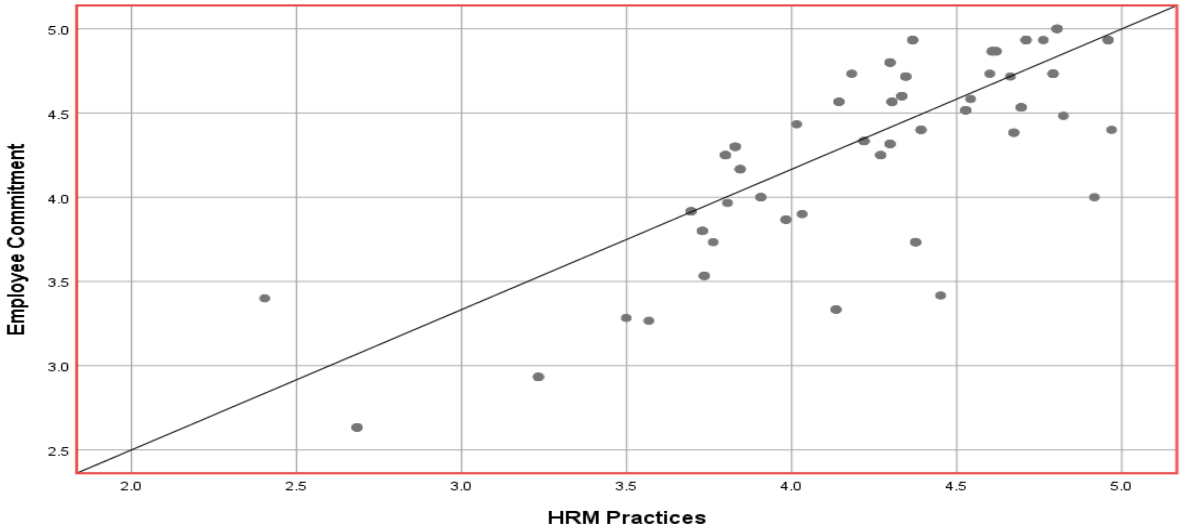


Figure 1. Scatter plot of HRM Practices and Employee Commitment

The scatter plot shows a positive relationship between HRM Practices and Employee Commitment, with most data points clustering near the trend line, indicating that stronger HRM Practices are generally associated with higher employee commitment.

Table 3. Test of Normality

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
HRM Practices	.140	126	.000	.913	126	.000
Employee Commitment	.154	126	.000	.901	126	.000
a. Lilliefors Significance Correction						

The normality of the study variables was assessed using the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test with Lilliefors correction and the Shapiro–Wilk test. The results indicated that HRM Practices significantly deviated from a normal distribution (Kolmogorov–Smirnov = .140, $p < .001$; Shapiro–Wilk = .913, $p < .001$). Similarly, Employee Commitment was not normally distributed (Kolmogorov–Smirnov = .154, $p < .001$; Shapiro–Wilk = .901, $p < .001$). As the significance values for both tests were below the conventional threshold of .05, the null hypothesis of normality was rejected. Thus, the assumption of normality was violated, and non-parametric statistical techniques were considered appropriate for subsequent analyses. The results indicate that both HRM Practices and Employee Commitment deviate from a normal distribution, suggesting that the assumption of normality is not met. As a result, parametric tests may not be appropriate, and non-parametric statistical methods should be used for subsequent analyses to ensure valid and reliable results.

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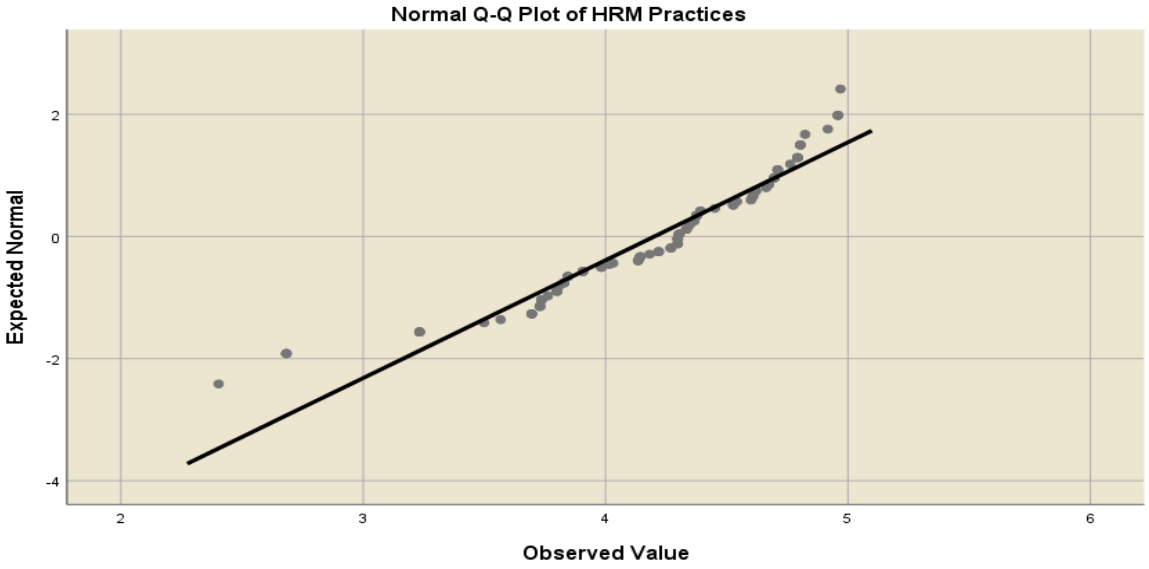


Figure 2. Q-Q Plot of HRM Practices

The Normal Q–Q plot shows that HRM practices data generally follow a normal distribution, as most points align closely with the reference line, particularly in the central region. Minor deviations at the lower and upper tails suggest slight skewness or the presence of outliers; however, these departures are modest and do not indicate a serious violation of the normality assumption. Overall, the data can be considered approximately normal and suitable for parametric statistical analysis.

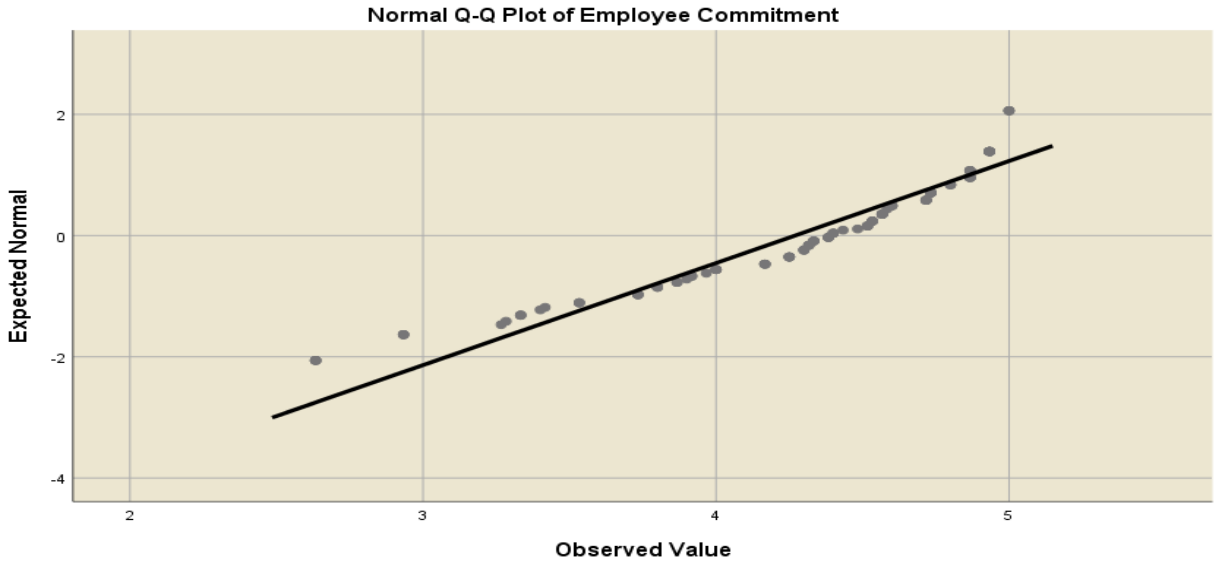


Figure 3. Q-Q Plot of Employee commitment

The Normal Q–Q plot for employee commitment indicates that the observed values closely follow the theoretical normal distribution, as evidenced by the alignment of most data points with the reference line. Minor deviations at the lower and upper tails suggest slight departures from normality, potentially due to mild skewness or a small number of outliers. Nevertheless, these deviations are not substantial, and the distribution can be considered approximately normal and suitable for parametric statistical analyses.

Regression analysis

Regression analysis was used to examine the effect of HRM Practices Aspects on Employee commitment. The results were presented in tables below as follow:

Table 4. Coefficient of Determination

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.834[a]	.696	.686	.333
a. Predictors: (Constant), Compensation and Benefits, Performance Appraisal, Recruitment and Selection, Training and development				

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The results in the table above show an R-Square of 0.696 with the standard error of the estimate being 0.333. This implied that Human Resource Practices Aspects (Recruitment and selection, training and development, performance appraisal, and compensation and benefits) explain changes in Employee commitment up to 69.6 %. The remaining 30.4% is explained by other factors that are not considered in this study.

Table 5. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	30.695	4	7.674	69.239	.000[b]
	Residual	13.410	121	.111		
	Total	44.105	125			
a. Dependent Variable: Employee Commitment						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Compensation and Benefits, Performance Appraisal, Recruitment and Selection, Training and development						

As indicated in the table above, F-ratios in the ANOVA tests whether the overall regression models were a good fit for the data. Statistically, the result showed that Human Resource Management Practices aspects predicted significantly the Employee commitment ($F.05(4,121) = 69.239$; p-Value=0.000<0.05). Therefore, the regression was a good fit of the data.

Table 6. Regression Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	.263	.271		.968	.335	-.275	.800
	Recruitment and Selection	.070	.079	.064	.884	.378	-.087	.227
	Training and development	.270	.078	.283	3.474	.001	.116	.424
	Performance Appraisal	.416	.066	.404	6.340	.000	.286	.546
	Compensation and Benefits	.193	.060	.237	3.237	.002	.075	.311
a. Dependent Variable: Employee Commitment								

The results in the table above indicate that when all the predictors are held constant, employee commitment would remain at 0.263. Recruitment and Selection does not have a statistically significant effect on employee commitment (β=0.070, p=.378). This means that improvements in recruitment and selection practices do not meaningfully change employees' level of commitment in this model. When recruitment and selection increase by 1 unit, employee commitment increases by 0.070 units. Training and Development has a significant positive effect on employee commitment (β=0.270, p=.001). This indicates that when training and development increases by 1unit, employee commitment increases by 0.270 units, holding other factors constant. Performance Appraisal has a strong and significant positive effect on employee commitment (β=0.416, p< .001). It is the most influential predictor, meaning effective and fair performance appraisal systems greatly enhance employee commitment. This implied that when performance appraisal increases by 1 unit, employee commitment increases by 0.416. Compensation and Benefits also show a significant positive effect on employee commitment (β=0.193, p=.002). This meant that when compensation and benefits increase by 1, employee commitment increases by 0.193 units.

The model can be summarized as follows: $Y=0.263+0.070X_1+0.270X_2+0.416X_3+0.193X_4$. Where Y is the employee commitment, X_1=Recruitment and selection, X_2= Training and development, X_3= Performance appraisal, X_4=Compensation and benefits.

CONCLUSIONS

The findings of this study indicate that several Human Resource Management (HRM) practices including training and development, performance appraisal, compensation and benefits, and recruitment and selection are positively related to employee commitment. Among these practices, training and development as well as performance appraisal emerged as the strongest predictors of employee commitment. Despite the violation of the normality assumption, the data were considered appropriate for analysis, and the regression model accounted for approximately 70% of the variance in employee commitment. These results underscore the significant role of HRM practices in promoting employee dedication and emphasize the importance of implementing effective HRM strategies to enhance organizational commitment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the researcher recommends that: Management should strategically invest in training and development initiatives and implement structured, transparent performance appraisal mechanisms. These practices have been shown to exert the most substantial influence on employee commitment and are essential for fostering a motivated and dedicated workforce. The top management should maintain the competitive and well-structured compensation and benefits packages.

AUTHORS` DECLARATION

I declare that this study is original research and I agree to publish it in the journal.

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