



## Affective Commitment of Construction Engineers: Empirical Evidence from Construction Industry

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(Received 30 May 2020, Revised 30 June 2020, Accepted 14 July 2020)

(Published by Research Trend, Website: [www.researchtrend.net](http://www.researchtrend.net))

**ABSTRACT:** In the last two decades, a considerable amount of work has been done to understand how the organizations can form the affective commitment of employees. The practices of human resources management (HRM) do not gain enough attention which they deserve. Specifically, among the construction industry in Jordan, these practices remained ignored by both researchers and academicians from the research point of view towards the development of the working models. There is not any clear evidence on the influences of organizations in affective commitment particularly in terms of construction workers and engineers even with the help of HRM practices. The outcomes predict that these influences are decided by the compassion of employees about the practices. For increasing the performance, the key element is the affective commitment by the employees. So, academics and practitioners are interested in knowing the factors that stimulate the affective commitment. This research is focused on investigating the effect of HRM practices on the devotion of the employees of the construction industry in Jordan. With the help of a structured questionnaire, the data was gathered, and the hypothesized relationship was tested by running the PLS-SEM.

**Keywords:** affective commitment, HRM practices, Construction workers and engineers.

### I. INTRODUCTION

The practices done by the human resource department should be productive and competitive as compare to the business environment so that the company can survive through the challenges and competitiveness of the business environment. A company can produce productive individuals that prove beneficial to the company, by the help of efficient and developed practices of human resource. Bribery and corruption are greatly affected by HRM. It's one of the main functions is to check whether the company is following and operating all the ethical boundaries or not [1]. So, they should have the proper system that properly checks the ethical boundaries to decrease or remove the level of bribery and corruption from the company. The unethical practice of HRM should be replaced by ethical operations according to [2]. The behavior and attitude of human resource in a workplace is the factor that is increasing the competitiveness in the business world. If employees are considered a valuable resource by the employers then automatically, they will become self-satisfied. This will make them emotionally attached to the company and as a result, they will execute organizational commitment in the workplace [3]. Commitment is the main factor that can boost productivity and reduce the cost tolerate of employee turnover [4]. Additionally, organizations fulfill their strategic goals by depending upon the committed human resource [5]. The main cause of organization is the organizational commitment that considers human resources as the main asset [6].

The key factor that links the people and the organization is affective commitment according to the literature of management and behavior science. Committed people

working together with a vision to attain some goal make up the workforce. A lot of attention and work are given at the concept of affective organizational commitment [7, 8]. Furthermore, researchers considered the component of affective commitment among the core One of is human resource example, career development can be utilized to increase employees' skills, modify shortages in job performance and expansion of workforces with new capabilities the employer may demand in the future. The factors that are involved in the improvement of productivity and behavior of employees are studied deeply by [9] and they highlight the significance of incentives and compensation for this purpose.

Additionally, a positive experience in the workplace is created by the social support of both co-workers and supervisors which in return motivates the employees to involve more effectively in their work. The friendly and supportive relationship between the employees highly improves their commitment to their organization. Similarly, personality is the amalgam of well-ordered and lively characteristics which effect the knowledge, reaction in the different situation, and behavior of an individual. These characteristics play a vital role in deciding the success and failure of an employee [10].

HRM practice plays an important role in making and maintaining the effective commitment of employees [11]. In the last two decades, many studies on how corruption and bribery can be handled by affective commitment have been done [12]. Some evidence is provided through these studies [13] that HRM practices can affect the effective commitment of the organization and the way the employees recognize these practices are influenced by these effects. HRM practices encourage

effective commitment and an understanding of those factors that influence affective commitment.

As a result, the current literature focuses on evaluating the role of HRM in enhancing affective commitment. It highlights the four main factors that show a favorable combination of HRM. These factors are training and development, career development, salary and benefits, and performance appraisal and its connection with the affective dedication which deals as a mediating factor. In the last two decades, a considerable amount of work has been done in understanding how organizations can form the affective commitment of employees. The practices of HRM do not gain enough attention that it deserves [14]. There is not any clear evidence that predicts that affective commitment can be influenced by the organization with the help of HRM practices. The outcomes predict that these influences are decided by the compassion of employees about the practices.

An organization that deals with the security of employees should focus on the selective hiring of new employees. Employees should only be retained for a long time when their attitudes, behavior, and values get fit with the organization. During the hiring process, these qualities should be identified in future employees [15]. In New Zealand, [16] examined the effect of HRM practices on the attitude of an employee like commitment, etc. Their research shows that practices of HRM play a vital role in the level of commitment. In Chinese firms, [17] studied the connection between affective commitment and HR practices. Their study shows that there is a significant impact of HR practices on the employee's affective commitment.

HRM plays a vital role in the practice as well as in literature [15]. This study investigates the relationship between practices of HRM which includes training and development, career development, salary and benefits, and performance appraisal. For addressing the work issues and developing the career advancement for affective commitment, the organizations are taking interest in adopting these practices [18]. The gap between these practices raised the attention of researchers for conducting the study. The following sections explain the detail of all these practices.

**Human Resource Practices:** authors demonstrated the concepts of human resource practices from a different viewpoint like human resource development as an academic and professional discipline, as assistance to management, as economic and political conflict management between employees and employers, and as a rising movement of workers' involvement which influenced the developments in social and industrial psychology [19]. The practices of staffing and motivating employees are clustered naturally into two bundles. Control strategy controls the first bundle which deals with the philosophy of management asserts managerial control and tries to form the production processes. Human resource practices focus on efficiency and standardization. The commitment strategy controls the second bundle to build a strong link to the firm and guarantees the empowerment of an employee. The main aim of all these actions is to form a sense of commitment and devotion and empowerment of employees.

**Training and Development:** Organizations take conventional steps like training and development so that

employees can fulfill all the job requirements by gaining and learning more skills [20]. When these employees' needs are fulfilled, then, they can contribute in a positive way towards their firm [21]. Training and development is a method in which employees can polish their skills, information, abilities, attitudes, and behavior and development are focused on the learning opportunities that are designed for the employees to help them grow [22]. Dowling and Welch (2004) defined the training process as a method to enhance the current work values and skills and development deals with enhancing the skills suitable for future job and position. For achieving the desirable and goal, organizations relate the training as a skill demanded method. Organizations focus on the training sessions to increase the commitment of employees and a positive effect on the intention of employees towards organizations. Training should be planned as suggested by HRD researchers to enhance organizational commitment. But not all the researchers focus on finding the connection between training and organizational commitment [23].

**Career Development:** Some researchers [23] defined career development as a step taken by the firms to assure the availability of individuals with proper knowledge and skills at the time of need. It also includes the system of training & development sessions, incentives, promotion, and wages in an organization [24]. In order to lessen the turnover of staff for career development, human resource managers should promote managerial learning skills under favorable situations [25, 26]. The role played by the organization and employees towards career development is remarkable. Employees plan their career or destinations and organizations supports those plans [27]. Career development is considered a mutually important effort that benefits both the organization and its employees.

**Performance Appraisal:** Performance appraisal is one of the elements of performance management and it deals with the method that calculates, determines, increases, encourages and rewards the employees for their performance [20]. This system gives feedback and measures the level of employees' performance [28]. In other words, this process is used to measure the progress level of employees' performance of a job by following the prospects and standards set by the organization. This tool not only evaluates job performance but also encourage the workers [29]

The work on the connection between commitment and organizational justice has broadened. Many studies stated that performance appraisal fairness is associated with the commitment of employees and gratification with the firm [30]. Meyer *et al.*, (1997) stated that perceptions on fairness explain that organization is devoted towards its workers [14]. Employees get involved in 'extra-role behavior' when their satisfaction and commitment level increases by attaining the fair decisions [31]. Eventually, the perception of employees on justice is the deciding factor of their performance effect, as a result, the management of the organization should focus and work on changing the perception of employees on the performance measurement. Other than this, [32] identify a significant relation between commitment towards organization and performance appraisals.

**Affective Commitment:** The affective element of an

organization's commitment is an affective commitment which is defined as a level of organizational identification in terms of employees, their feelings for the organization, and a high level of participation within the firm [33]. Other than this, there are two forms of organizational commitment such as continuance and normative commitment. As compared to all the types of organizational commitment, affective commitment is considered as the powerful predictor which serves the organizations in many ways and affects many factors like turnover intentions, absenteeism, work performance, and behavior of the working environment [34]. As well as it is the only type that is directly related to the positive influences of employees and enhances the well-being as compared to negative effects that lead to both stress and work-family conflict. Organizational initiatives benefit both the organization and their employee by enabling the positive impact on affective commitment.

**Relationship between Training & Development and Affective Commitment:** According to previous researches such as the impact of training and development proves beneficial in increasing their commitment level and developing their intention to remain in the organization. This concludes that organizational turnover can be reduced by the training. This is mainly because training is considered as a symbol of an employer's dedication to their staff from the employee's opinion. The productivity of an organization will increase if the training sessions are designed in such a way that they focused on developing the specified skill sets beneficial for the organization Johari *et al.*, (2012) stated that effective training is not only useful for the employee in terms of more knowledge and skills useful for accomplishing the job but it also helps in achieving the overall objectives of the organization by satisfying and empowering the employees [35]. By developing and learning new skills, employees can activate more interest in their jobs. These experiences help the employee in interacting with other mates and foster higher involvement. Based on previous literature and outcomes, this study gives the following hypothesis:

*H1: There is a positive relationship between training and development and affective commitment of employees*

**Career Development and Affective Commitment:** Career development is considered as a direct approach of organization, according to [24] which ensures the availability of people having the proper skills set, experience, and qualification in time unfavorable conditions. The danger of an unacceptable and decreasing workplace of an organization is avoided by the factor of career development. Also declared that career development act as a direction for the activities of human resource development. The work that employees wish to do changes as they grow and flourished. Employees can make themselves more effective when employers help them in making decisions about future work while taking new positions. This can also benefit employers in planning the needs of human resources [24].

Cowden and Cummings (2012) find out that the availability of opportunities and meaningful work for growth is the element that positively impacts the commitment of employees to remain in the firm [36].

The affective commitment is also affected significantly by the measuring criteria of promotion and the reward system. Those employees stay with the organizations that considered themselves an important part of an organization. Similarly, employees who feel the more possibility of promotion prefer to stay in the organization. Career development will not only develop a sense of gratitude and appreciation but also control their decisions on retention and demission. Based on all the above discussion the hypothesis was proposed as:

*H2: There is a positive relationship between career development and affective commitment of employees.*

**Relationship between Performance Appraisal and Affective Commitment:** The performance of an employee is evaluated by the process known as performance appraisal. It is considered as a measured, improved, encouraged and rewarded process. It reviews and examines the performance of an employee repeatedly [28]. We can say that it is a process that measures how the tasks are performed in line having some standards and expectations of organizations. This tool is not only useful in measuring the job performance of an employee but it also encourages and motivates the employees [29] Employees will get acknowledged about their performance level through this process and will get able to realize their weak points with the help of guidance and feedback from the top management. As a result, they will work to enhance their performance level and commitment. So, it is important to carry out this process with certain time restraints to develop the human capital. The outcome of this process helps the top management in deciding about compensation allocations, promotions, terminations, transfers, recognition awards, and training opportunities that can influence the satisfaction of employees and chances for career advancement. Many organizations considered performance appraisal as an important tool for determining and developing the potential of employees and measuring the performance of employees which is an important factor for the success of an organization and increasing affective commitment [37].

A formalized process is represented by performance appraisal that guides the workers and it is the purposeful tool that helps to improve the productivity and performance of employees [38]. This system improves the commitment of employees, productivity, and intention to remain in the organization. The chances of performance appraisal are increased by complementary HRM practices according to [38] as it will enhance the commitment level. These practices are as formal training and stimulant pay.

The intention of employees to remain in an organization can get clear through their perception of performance appraisal. The effective appraisal and planning systems can increase the level of affective commitment as they contribute towards the employees' perceptions of fairness.

Employees who feel that they are being treated fairly by their employers are more like to keep their job, compared to those who feel that they have been unfairly treated by their employers. Based on the aforesaid findings, it can be theorized that performance appraisal and achievement have an impact on employee performance as well as retention in an organization. Hence, this study hypothesizes that:

H3: There is a positive relationship between performance appraisal and the affective commitment of employees.

## II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Data were collected from the employees working in the construction sector of Jordan. At the end of the data

collection procedure, we were able to collect 221 usable questionnaires. The following section illustrates the data analysis procedure.

**Descriptive statistics:** Following tables presents the descriptive statistics of the study conducted.

**Table 1: Descriptive Statistics (Means, Std. Deviation, Skewness, and Kurtosis) for Study Variables.**

Item	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
AC1	5.01	1.200	-.775	.199	.533	.395
AC2	5.22	1.213	-1.126	.199	1.506	.395
AC3	5.03	1.317	-1.087	.199	1.041	.395
AC4	4.28	1.465	-.266	.199	-.981	.395
AC5	2.70	.934	.674	.199	.606	.395
AC6	2.38	.990	1.790	.199	4.890	.395
CD1	3.52	1.659	.722	.199	-.640	.395
CD2	5.31	1.114	-.993	.199	1.442	.395
CD3	5.14	1.263	-.637	.199	.203	.395
CD4	5.40	1.114	-.983	.199	1.092	.395
CD5	4.47	1.540	-.533	.199	-.494	.395
PA1	5.79	1.094	-1.195	.199	1.706	.395
PA2	5.26	1.291	-1.245	.199	1.373	.395
PA3	5.40	1.132	-.942	.199	.997	.395
PA4	4.36	1.616	-.616	.199	-.596	.395
T&D1	5.22	1.294	-1.010	.199	.848	.395
T&D2	4.83	1.517	-.970	.199	.207	.395
T&D3	4.23	1.583	-.601	.199	-.632	.395
T&D4	4.82	1.310	-.682	.199	-.316	.395
T&D6	4.58	1.264	-.604	.199	-.072	.395

From the above table, we can see that the data is normally distributed and hence prove the normality test. We formulated the following equation to analyze the data

$$AV = \alpha + \beta_1 (TND) + \beta_2 (PA) + \beta_3 (CD) + \epsilon$$

The study used untitled structural equation modeling (SEM) technique to run the analyses and SmartPLS software was used. The results of the two-stage PLS-SEM analysis are given under.

PLS-SEM has become a very popular data analysis technique and is widely used in management research [6, 18, 47, 48, 39–46].

**Measurement model evaluation.** In this stage, the validity and reliability of the collated data were tested. The following tables present the results of this stage. From the table, we can see that the threshold value for factor loadings, AVE, and CR was achieved. Hence the model is appropriate for the next stage analysis.

**Table 2: Measurement model evaluation.**

1st order	Items	Loadings	AVE	CR
Affective commitment	AC1	0.7583	0.5046	0.7532
	AC2	0.7662		
	AC3	0.7424		
	AC4	0.6995		
	AC5	0.6405		
	AC6	0.8196		
Career development		0.7662	0.5345	0.8129
	CD1	0.8365		
	CD2	0.8284		
	CD3	0.6195		
	CD4	0.8044		
Performance appraisal		0.7922	0.6639	0.8868
	PA1	0.6842		
	PA2	0.8782		
	PA3	0.8686		
Training and Development		0.8135	0.649	0.8753
	T&D1	0.7405		
	T&D2	0.8196		
	T&D3	0.8858		
	T&D4	0.8735		
	T&D6	0.874		

**Table 3: Discriminant validity.**

Constructs		1	2	3	4
1	AC	<b>0.71</b>			
2	TD	-.65	<b>0.80</b>		
3	PA	-.50	.70	<b>0.81</b>	
4	CD	-.66	.70	.71	<b>0.73</b>

**Note:** AC: Affective commitment; TD: Training and development; PA: performance appraisal; CD: Career Development.

**Table 4: Hypotheses Testing.**

Hypothesis	Statement	Beta	T statistics	Decision
Hypothesis 1	T&D and AC	0.0.04	0.9	Not Supported
Hypothesis 2	CD and AC	0.295	3.02	Supported
Hypothesis 3	PA and AC	0.199	2.65	Supported

After establishing the Composite reliability and convergent validity, next, we tested the discriminant validity of the construct through Fornell Larcker criteria Table 3 presents the results of discriminant validity.

**Assessment of structural model:** After establishing the measurement model validity and reliability, next, we run the PLS bootstrapping function to test the hypothesized relationships. Following Table 4 presents the results and shows that except hypothesis 1, the rest of the hypothesized relationships were accepted.

From Table 2, we can see that there is no significant connection between training & development and affective commitment. It shows ( $\beta = -0.04$ ,  $t$  value= 0.90,  $p < 0.05$ ) at the 0.01 level of significance, and thus it rejects the Hypothesis. The significant connection is found between career development and affective commitment at ( $\beta = 0.295$ ,  $t$  value= 3.02,  $p < 0.01$ ) and thus supported Hypothesis. In the end, the relation of performance appraisal and affective commitment is remarkable at ( $\beta = 0.199$ ,  $t$  value=2.65,  $p > 0.01$ ) and thus, the Hypothesis is supported.

### III. DISCUSSION

During one of the hypotheses, training and development and affective commitment staff in Jordan are positively linked. The positivity found between these two variables is at the level of 0.37 ( $\beta = 0.04$ ,  $t$  value= 0.90,  $p < 0.05$ ). This insignificant outcome suggests that T&D does not affect the employee's intention to stay and enhance their commitment. This may be because their current training sessions do not activate any new interest in their employees regarding their current job. Therefore, specific training should be developed that focused on the development of specific skills for the employees that benefit the organization. These findings are examined and found to be consistent with previous studies in other countries [14, 23, 27].

A positive relationship between affective commitment and career development is proposed by this study. The value of a positive connection is at 0.00 ( $\beta = 0.16$ ,  $t$  value= 3.02,  $p < 0.01$ ) indicating that the hypothesis is supported. The importance of these two variables is caused by the fact that the behavior of individuals is influenced by their commitment to career development. The focused individuals spend their time more in skills development and low tendency towards withdrawing from their careers. Such individuals leave the organizations if they found fewer career opportunities in it. The findings of the study showed similar results as found earlier [33, 39, 44].

A positive connection between an appraisal and affective commitment has been proposed by researchers that exist among the staff.

A significant impact of performance appraisal is obtained by the outcomes on the affective commitment. It shows 0.00 ( $\beta = 0.17$ ,  $t$  value= 3.22,  $p < 0.01$ ) – an outcome that supports the hypothesis. It can relate to the chances of an increment in performance appraisal by complementary practices of HRM which can increase the commitment level. These practices are as formal training and incentive pay. As a result, the performance appraisal can change the way of working frequently, and in enhancing their performance, encouragement, and guiding their progress [49]. Some opposite results were also examined during the literature review for this study in the literature review part [15, 27, 31].

### IV. CONCLUSION AND FUTURE SCOPE

The paper aimed to investigate the impact of certain HR practices on the affective commitment of employees working in the construction industry of Jordan, The results presented above showed that training and development have no impact on the affective commitment of the employees, contrary to this, performance appraisal and career development were found to be positively associated with affective comments, which show that employees in the construction industry of Jordan are more concerned by the financial part of HR practices. Therefore, managers in the construction industry should focus on this aspect. As limited literature is available from Jordan; therefore, future directions of the studies could be multiple; the most significant is to conduct the same studies in other industries to see the similarity of disparity on results. This study can further be enhanced by added more variables that can impact the commitment of the staff.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This is the original writing, neither submitted anywhere nor funded by any agency or institute.

**Conflict of Interest.** No.

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**How to cite this article:** Alzubi, Y. Assbeihat, J. M., Adwan, J. and Malkawi A. B. (2020). Affective Commitment of Construction Engineers: Empirical Evidence from Construction Industry. *International Journal on Emerging Technologies*, 11(4): 510–516.