International Journal of Engineering & Technology, 7 (4.28) (2018) 415 -421

International Journal of Engineering & Technology

Website: www.sciencepubco.com/index.php/IJET

Research paper



Bundle of Human Resource Practices and Turnover Intentions: Mediating role of Affective Commitment in Hotel Industry, Malaysia

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to test and propose a new framework that examines the three HR practices (motivation, empowerment and skills enhancing practices) with a mediating effect of affective commitment on turnover intentions. The novelty of this study is that it is the first study which examines the impact of three HR practices with its dimensions on turnover intentions along with the mediating effect of affective commitment. This study filled the gap and contributed by investigating the impact of such three HR practices which effect the employees' turnover intentions in Malaysian hotel industry. Data were gathered from a managerial level employees', with a sample of 401. In order to analyze the relationships, this study employed the structural equation modelling. Results portray that two HR practices (motivation and empowerment) are negatively associated with turnover intention while the third HR practice (Skills enhancing) is positively related with turnover intentions. The affective commitment fully mediates between Motivation and turnover intentions while, partially mediates the relationship between two HR practices (Empowerment, Skills) and turnover intentions. Thus, findings indicate that motivation and empowerment enhancing practices enhances the employees' retentions while skills enhancing practices ought to be properly analyzed before implementing as this could be proved as counterproductive for hotels. In addition, against this backdrop the top management of hotels should devise and come up with new proper skills enhancing practices which could lead to lower down turnover intentions of employees. Replication of this study in other sectors like education or hospitals with larger sample size could extent and cross-validate the current study findings.

Keywords: *Motivation; Empowerment; Skills Enhancing; Turnover Intentions; Hotel Industry; SEM.*

1. Introduction

Human resource practices have received much of importance from researchers over the past decades (1). The quest for maximizing the organizational performance along with reducing expenses has been the main goal of human resource management (2). Empirical studies have shown that HRM practices have deep connection with organizational performance, creativity and motivational measures (1, 3-4). In the same way, HRM practices are very important to attract and retain the employees in the tourism and hospitality industry. As Chan & Kuok (5) advocated that to retain employees in the hospitality has become a big challenge for the human resource management. In addition, to deal and manage employees' properly and effectively, the role of HRM is crucial and the tough challenge for hotels managers to cope with (6, 7). Similarly, Malaysian hospitality industry is also a much contributor to the Malaysian economy and is facing problem of employees' turnover (8-10). In the hospitality management literature, the problem of employees' turnover is extensively discussed (11-13). On the same note, in other countries literature is also available on the staff related issues (14-15). In hotel industry, which is service related industry is highly dependent on their employees especially managerial level employees as managerial level employees are involve in strategic decisions of the organization as well as they guide, motivate and rectify the on-going processes and lead all low-level employees (16). Limited studies have been conducted on managerial level employees' turnover in Malaysia, most of the studies focused on the general employees' turnover intentions (5, 9, 17-19). Employee turnover is considered as the movement of employees from one organization to another (20).

In existing literature, most of the studies focused on the job satisfaction, job stress and job stressors factors in work environment led to employees' turnover intentions (21-23). Some of the studies also investigated the organizational factors and as well as the environmental factors (24-25), while the cultural issues are also discussed (26). Effective human resource practices are very important in reducing turnover intentions of employees along with sustaining their commitment (27). Employees play major role in progress and growth of the organization as employees are considered as assets for organization and such assets require proper HR practices to be managed. Turnover of talented employees is harmful to the organization in number of way like productivity, creativity, growth, competition and long term survival, especially the turnover of managerial level employees. The turnover of managerial level employees' is high in Malaysia (19, 28). Management considers the managerial level employees as talented employees, those who are performing managerial roles (29-30). Studies have shown that HR practices like motivation, empowerment and skills enhancing practices are crucial in retaining employees (31-32).

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There is a gap in the literature regarding these three specific HR practices along with affective commitment on turnover intentions of employees in managerial level. Based on the past studies and different reviews of research work, it has been extracted that much of studies have been conducted in western countries and with different set of HR practices in different regions. Furthermore, such studies have suggested the need for further investigation to examine HR practices to address turnover intentions (33). Turnover of employees effected the hospitality industry drastically and there is need of research to find out the factors which cause employees to quit the organization (34).

2. Literature Review

2.1 Employee Turnover Intentions

Turnover of employees are considered as detrimental for the organizational success and survival. Turnover of employees is the primary concern of human resource department, turnover represents the withdrawal of employees from organization while the turnover intentions represents the behavioral intentions to quit the organization. Numerous researchers suggested that turnover intention is the actual predictor of turnover problem (35-36). Turnover intentions considered to be a thoughtful and aware decision to remain member of the organization or to quit (37).

In some Asian countries, the problem of voluntarily quitting become a key issue in Taiwan, Malaysia, and Thailand (38). Moreover, Ramlall (39) mentioned that leaving organization in some Asian countries are become normal norm. Past literature on turnover intention focused extensively on demographics (40-41), job related (42) and organizational factors to reduce turnover intentions.

After reviewing the hospitality literature, it shows that issues related to staff can be grouped; and these are the high employee turnover, issues with selecting, hiring, attracting and retention of skilled workers, poor job commitment and staff shortages but among them, employee turnover is found to be more challenging and high (15).

2.2 Human Resource Practices

The development in the field of HR is now well acknowledged in the literature as business markets have become more international, dynamic and competitive (43). Moreover, the practitioners and academics of HR field are constantly investigating and analyzing the suitable and the best possible HR system and polices for organizations (44).

Over the past two decades the importance of human resource management has grown in both practice as well as in academia because the HR practices influence the behavior and attitude of employees (45). In today's dynamic and competitive environment, the success not only depended on new technology, economies of scale and patent rights but highly depended on the human factor (qualified and skillful employees) and HR practices (46). Organizations need to develop and retain the human capital in order to survive and gain a competitive edge. It's the employees and HR practices which differentiate and unable the organization to perform differently and take it to new place which consequently results in success of the organization.

2.2.1 Motivation Enhancing Practices

Motivation represents "those psychological processes that cause arousal, direction, and persistence of voluntary actions that are goal oriented" (47). According to Guay et al. (48), motivation represents "the reasons underlying behavior." There are two kinds of motivation: intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation (49). Intrinsic motivation can be defined as activities to attain self-satisfaction only. On the other hand, extrinsic motivation is caused by external factors like pay and perks to encourage employees to do their job better. In this study motivation enhancing practices consist of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation.

Motivation enhancing practices assist in motivating, molding behavior, performance, creativity and the discretionary effort to in order to perform work better (50). In this study concept of motivation is tied by different motivation enhancing factors like Salary and perks (51), employee recognition (52), performance feedback (31), job security (53), opportunities for advancement and development (54), and workload (55). Number of studies have mentioned that such factors enhances the motivation and in-turn reduces turnover intentions but this study has taken all these factors and make unidimensional concept of motivation enhancing practices. Another study by DiPietro and Condly (56), investigated the impact of motivation on turnover intentions in hotel industry and found that motivation had negative association with turnover intentions.

Therefore, based on the above, the hypothesis is

H1: There is a negative relationship between motivation enhancing practices and turnover intentions.

2.2.2 Skills Enhancing Practices

Skills enhancing practices are used to improve and develop ability, knowledge and skills of the employees to perform better and contribute better in achieving goals and objectives of the organization (57). Moreover, skills enhancing practices are designed to improve the knowledge, ability and skills of employees through competence development practices (32), on-the-job training (58), Competency development practices (32), Professional training (31), Career development training (59). Moreover, human resource practice studies have suggested that skills enhancing practices lead to the development of a sense of organizational support which in turn enhances the commitment of employees to the organization (60).

A study conducted in Pakistan by Anis et al. (61), using a data of corporate sector with a sample size of 330 participants. They argued that training practices led to employees' retention.

Therefore, based on the above, the hypothesis is:

H2: There is a negative relationship between skills enhancing practices and turnover intentions.

2.2.3 Empowerment Enhancing Practices

In the past two decades, the concept of empowerment has gained much popularity. Some of the researchers refer to empowerment as the delegating authority and power throughout an organization from higher level staff to the lower level staff (62). Moreover, Harley (63) defines it as "empowerment involves delegation of responsibility from management to employees, non-hierarchical forms of work organization and sharing of information between and within different levels of the organization." (p. 43).

Empowerment enhancing practices are those designed to improve the employees' performance and their contribution in the success of an organization. Empowerment enhancing practices serve as an allowance for employees to be a part in central decision making process (64), to give authority to influence at work (65), sharing information of the organization (66), communication system (67) and autonomy (68). In the same way, Erturk and Vurgum (69) stated while using data of IT professional in Turkey from private companies that empowerment negatively related to turnover intentions.

Therefore, based on the above, the hypothesis is

H3: There is a negative relationship between empowerment enhancing practices and turnover intentions.

2.2.4 Affective Commitment

In order to gain competitive edge in today's dynamic and competitive world, the role of employees' commitment is very crucial and needs to be given proper attention by organizations (70). By 1960s, the concept of commitment was identified by Becker (71)

which he defined as "consistent lines of activity". Further, Meyer and Allen (72) developed a Three Component Model (TCM). they conceptualized the construct into three components: Affective, continuance and Normative. Moreover, Meyer and Allen (72), defined affective commitment as "individual's emotional attachment with the working organization, emotionally attached individual's do not think to leave their organization because they want to continue with it." A study conducted by Gautam et al. (73) investigated the role of organizational commitment and found that most significant predictor of turnover intentions was affective commitment as compare to continues and normative commitment. In the light of these considerations, this study includes the role of affective commitment on the relationship between HR practices and turnover intentions.

2.2.5 Relationship between three HR practices, Affective commitment and Turnover intentions

Empirical researches revealed negative relationship between turnover intentions and motivation. "Motivational factors" play an important role to quit or not to quit the job (74). Furthermore, in explaining the motivation enhancing practices the Gardner et al., (31) investigated the three HR practices in order to reduce the turnover intentions of employees. For their study, they collected a data from 20 top HR managers and 1748 employees from different 93 jobs groups and found that motivation enhancing practices had significant negative impact on turnover intentions of employees. Another study Moynihan and Landuyt (75) portrayed that there was a negative relationship between empowerment and turnover intentions correspondingly by using data of state government employees with a sample of 34,668 employees. Similarly, Kim and Stoner (76), conducted a study on social workers in state of California with a sample of 346 social workers out of 1500 social workers. They argued that job autonomy may lead to positive work related outcomes and found a negative relationship between empowerment (in the form of job autonomy) and turnover intentions of employees. Different studies have mentioned that training is considered as an important factor and received much recognition in human resource practices that it may result increasing job satisfaction and which in-turn lowers down turnover intentions (77). A study conducted in Pakistan by Anis et al. (61), using a data of corporate sector with a sample size of 330 participants. They argued that training practices led to employees' retention. A study conducted by Costen and Salazar (78) in USA in hotel industry, advocated that training programs lead to employees' satisfaction which in turn result in reducing turnover intentions. Various studies investigated the mediating role of affective commitment for example (79-80). Another study by Galletta et al. (81) investigated the mediating role affective commitment in a hospital with a sample size of 442 nurses and found a mediating role of affective commitment between HR practices and turnover intentions.

Keeping in view the above empirical evidences in summary, the researcher posits that:

H4: Affective commitment mediates the relationship between motivation enhancing practices and turnover intentions

H5: Affective commitment mediates the relationship between skills enhancing practices and turnover intention.

H6: Affective commitment mediates the relationship between empowerment enhancing practices and turnover intentions

3. Conceptual Framework

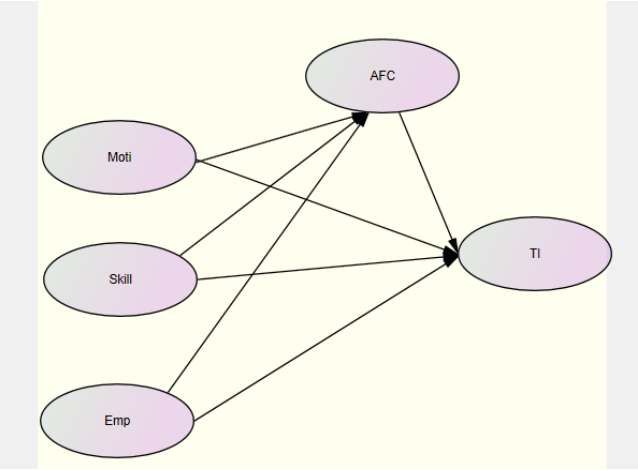


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 depicts the relationships between independent variables and independent variables. First, is the direct relationship of motivation, skills and empowerment enhancing practices on turnover intentions. Second, the affective commitment plays a mediating role between motivation, skills & empowerment enhancing practices and turnover intentions.

4. Theoretical Foundation

The above framework has been developed after a thorough literature review and based on social exchange theory (SET). Social exchange theory states that if both parties (employer and employees) abide by rule of exchange then the relationships evolve with the passage of time into trusting, mutual commitment and loyalty (82-83).

5. Methodology

Middle managers working in hotel industry in KL, Malaysia were the unit of analysis of this study and those hotels were selected which are registered under MAH,(84). Data were collected from three star, four star and five star hotels. Out of 135hotels, 51hotels were selected and agreed to participate in the study. In these 51hotels each star category has been taken according to their proportion in total population of hotels while all sample number of managers were selected. 560questionnaires were distributed in 51hotels human resource department and a total of 425 questionnaires were received, out of which only 401 were usable.

6. Data Collection and Measurement of Variables

In order to measure the variables, the questionnaire consisted of 35questions related to motivation, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102 16 questions to empowerment 103, 104, 105, 106, 23 questions to skills 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 7 questions to affective commitment 114 and 4 questions related to turnover intentions115. Such measures are adopted from the studies. All the items have been measured by using five point Likert scale, where 1 from strongly disagree to 5 strongly agree.

7. Data Analysis

SPSS were employed for descriptive analysis. The value of mean, minimum, maximum and standard deviation of the date are depicted in table 1. In order to test the hypothesis, the structural

equation modelling (AMOS) was employed. Moreover, to ensure the construct validity the discriminant and convergent validity were ascertained while to ensure reliability Cronbach's alpha, average variance extracted (AVE) were ascertained, it can be seen in table 2

Table 1: Descriptive Statistic

Variables	Mean	Maximum	Minimum	Number	SD
Motivation	3.50	5	1	401	.986
Skills	3.66	5	1	401	.794
Empowerment	3.48	5	1	401	.901
Affective Commitment	3.64	5	1	401	.880
Turnover Intentions	3.07	5	1	401	.684

Table 2: Construct Validity

Construct	Number of dimension	Factor Loading	AVE	CR	CB alpha
Motivation	M_EMP	0.87	0.63	0.91	0.91
	M_SLNP	0.89			
	M_PERFRC	0.86			
	M_JOBSEE	0.78			
	M_WRK	0.78			
Empowerment	E_INFRSH	0.64	0.58	0.87	0.88
	E_PARDM	0.75			
	E_INFLU	0.80			
	E_COMM	0.87			
	E_AUTON	0.79			
Skills enhancing	S_COMPDP	0.74	0.60	0.88	0.87
	S_ONJTR	0.77			
	S_PROT	0.85			
	S_DURT	0.73			
	S_CREDP	0.70			
Affective Commitment	AC1	0.88	0.57	0.86	0.87
	AC2	0.86			
	AC3	0.71			
	AC4	0.55			
	AC5	0.54			
Turnover Intentions	TOI1	0.52	0.59	0.82	0 0.89
	TOI2	0.87			
	TOI3	0.83			
	TOI4	0.88			

Table 3: Multiple correlation and squared root average variance extracted

	CR	AVE	MSV	ASV	AFC	MOTI	SK	EM	TI
AFC	0.844	0.526	0.458	0.337	0.725				
MOTI	0.882	0.601	0.506	0.373	0.677	0.775			
SK	0.902	0.652	0.506	0.291	0.586	0.711	0.807		
EM	0.894	0.631	0.458	0.313	0.604	0.677	0.557	0.794	
TI	0.913	0.724	0.183	0.094	-0.428	-0.264	-0.067	-0.345	0.851

In SEM, it is conducted in to steps, first to ascertain the CFA and another is to validating the structural model. All constructs were subjected to CFA Figure 1 in order to validate the goodness of fit table 4.

According to Hair et al., (85), results of confirmatory factor analysis showed that model had appropriate goodness of fit. The values of GFI, CFI, RMSEA are; [GFI=.873; CFI=.889; RMSEA=.062; $\chi 2/df$=3.571] which confirm the model appropriateness table 4.

8. Hypothesis of the Study Area:

H1: There is a negative relationship between motivation enhancing practices and turnover intentions

H2: There is a negative relationship between skills enhancing practices and turnover intentions

H3: There is a negative relationship between empowerment enhancing practices and turnover intentions

H4: Affective commitment mediates the relationship between motivation enhancing practices and turnover intentions

H5: Affective commitment mediates the relationship between skills enhancing practices and turnover intentions

H6: Affective commitment mediates the relationship between empowerment enhancing practices and turnover intentions

In order to achieve the objectives of this study, structural equation modelling was employed and to test the mediation effect the, researcher adopted the (86-87) approach. While, to test the significance of indirect effects, bootstrapping is performed as literature also supports the use of bootstrapping to check the indirect effect significance (88-89). A total of 3 hypotheses have been developed for direct hypothesis and 3hypothesis for indirect effects. Two structure models were employed to test these 6hypothesis, results of the SEM analysis depicted in table 7 and table 8.

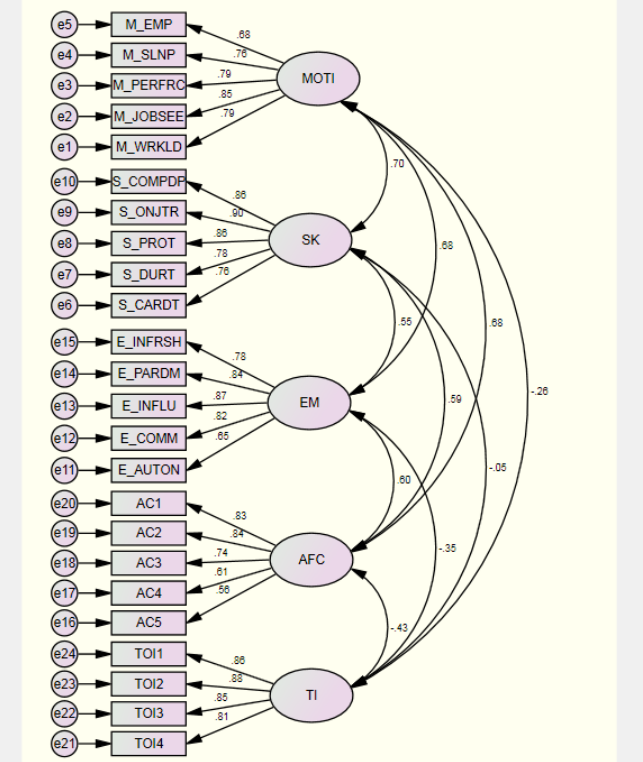


Figure 2: **CFA**

Table 4: Goodness of Fit of CFA

CFA	GFI	CFI	RMSEA	$\chi 2/df$
Moti, SK, & Em, AFC & TI	0.873	0.889	0.062	3.571

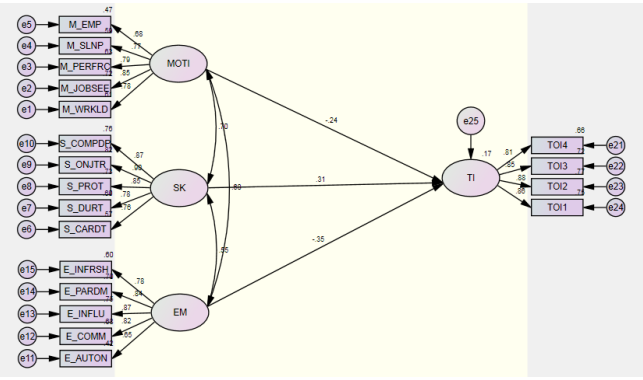


Figure 3 Direct effects

Table 5: Goodness of Fit of direct hypotheses. 1b, 2b, 3b

Path	GFI	CFI	RMSEA	$\chi 2/df$
Moti, SK, & Em, & TI	0.893	0.905	0.067	3.731

Insert Figure 4

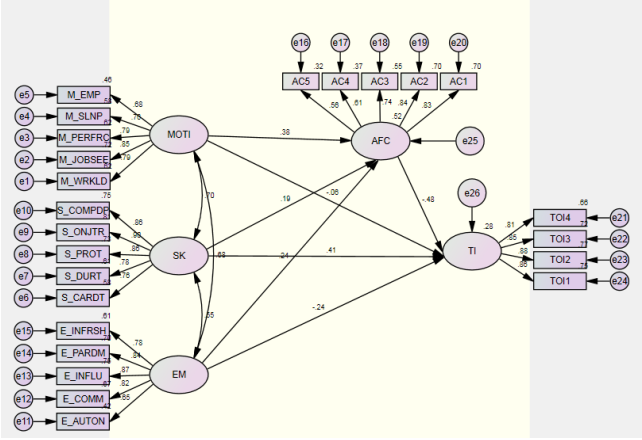


Figure 4: indirect effects

Table 6: Goodness of Fit of indirect hypotheses. 1b, 2b, 3b

Path	GFI	CFI	RMSEA	$\chi 2$/df
Moti, SK, & Em, & TI	0.889	0.880	0.072	3.571

Table 7: Hypothesis Testing of direct hypotheses

Hypothesis	Path	β	S.E	Standardized Estimates	C.R	P-Value	Decision
H1	Moti→TI	-0.265	0.118	-0.243	-2.245	0.025	Accepted H1
H2	SK→TI	0.360	0.106	0.310	3.396	0.003	Rejected H2
H3	EMP→TI	-0.435	0.114	-0.352	-3.831	0.005	Accepted H3

Table 8: Mediation analysis (Indirect effect)

No	Hypothesis	Direct without mediator	Sig	Direct with mediator	Sig	Indirect effect	P-value (bootstrap)	Mediation	Decision
H4	Mot→AFC→TI	-.24	-2.245 (0.025)	-.06	-.562 (0.574)	-0.183	0.020	Full Mediation	Accepted H4
H5	SK→AFC→TI	.31	-3.396 (0.003)	.40	-4.495 (0.03)	-0.093	0.018	Partial Mediation	Accepted H5
H6	EM→AFC→TI	-.35	-3.831 (0.005)	-.23	-2.683 (0.007)	-0.116	0.020	Partial Mediation	Accepted H6

9. Results of the Structure Models

The results depicting the acceptance of H1 and H3 while H2 has been rejected in table 7. It indicates that motivation enhancing practices and empowerment enhancing practices have negatively effect on turnover intentions. However, the skills enhancing practices has positive effect on turnover intentions. In addition, in figure 3, the model goodness of fit were; [GFI=.893; CFI=.905; RMSEA=0.067; $\chi 2$/df =3.731] showed model appropriateness. Finding of this study is also consistent with Gardner et al. (31); Zhang and Agarwal (90). ADD references.

In order to investigate the mediation effect, this study proposed H4, H5 and H6 hypothesis in table 8. H4 proposes that Affective commitment mediates the relationship between motivation enhancing practices and turnover intentions. in order to test this hypothesis, the study follows the Preacher and Hayes (86) approach which is in two stages. At first, the direct effect is calculated without mediator which is .24 with t-value (2.245) and p-value 0.025, in Figure 3, which depicts that direct effect is significant, in second stage, mediator is entered in the model and the direct effect reduced the coefficient to .06 and p-value (0.574), which shows that direct effect becomes insignificant after mediator enters into the model, the next step to calculate the indirect effect MOTI→AFC→TI. Figure 4, portrays the indirect effect. Table 8 illustrates the indirect effects of 'motivation' on 'Turnover intentions' through 'affective commitment' is -0183. Table 6, the results [GFI=.889; CFI.880; RMSEA=0.072; $\chi 2$/df =3.571] shows model appropriateness. Furthermore, in order to test whether the indirect path is significant or not, the researcher uses bootstrapping as prescribed by Preacher and Hayes (86), with 1000 iteration to test the p-values. The p-value of indirect path was 0.025 which is less than 0.05. Results shows acceptance of H4, while illustrating that affective commitment mediates the relationship between motivation and turnover intentions. Moreover, this mediation is full mediation as suggested by Baron and Kenny (87); the Table 8 shows the mediation analysis.

Same procedure was applied to test the hypothesis H5 and H6 and it was found that they were also mediated the relationship between skills enhancing, empowerment and turnover intentions, but the mediation of these two are partial mediation, table 8 shows the details.

10. Discussion and Conclusion

This study enhances the better understanding of such three practices and mediating effect of affective commitment on turnover intentions. it depicts that motivation and empowerment has direct negative relationship with turnover intentions, while skills enhancing has positive relationship with turnover intentions. In addition, another interesting finding is that affective commitment found to full mediator between motivation and turnover intentions while partially mediator between empowerment, skills and turnover intentions. This indicates that skills enhancing practices needs to be considered with more careful selection process which are company oriented not the general skills enhancing practices because general skills enhancing practices increase the marketability of the employees and then they are head haunted by the competitors as their skills can help the competitor in achieving the competitive edge. Another interesting finding of the study is that motivation enhancing practices become insignificant in the presences of mediating variable of affective commitment which indicate that such motivation enhancing practices needs to be developed with proper implementations as they have no impact on affective commitment. In this case, the management needs to ensure the such motivation enhancing practices are reviewed and implemented properly which could lead to the development of the emotional attachment towards the organization. in the same way empowerment enhancing practices have significant impact direct and indirect, so such practices need to be implemented with careful attention. The indirect effect of skills enhancing practices on turnover intentions is significant which portrays that skills enhancing leads to development of emotional attachment to the organization.

11. Implications, Limitations and future research

11.1 Theoretical contribution

This study developed the conceptual framework after a thorough literature review and contribute to the body of knowledge about such three HR practices along with affective commitment on turnover intentions in the Malaysian hotel industry, furthermore, this

study also confirms the Social exchange theory which states that employees reciprocate the relationship.

11.2 Managerial implications

Results of the study portray some important practical implications for HR practitioners and Hotels top management.it is important to understand and acknowledge the impact of motivation, empowerment and skills enhancing practices on turnover intentions along with affective commitment, to compete and strive hard to win the war of talent retention (91). Top management should carefully analyses the impact of skills enhancing practices as every training development practices do not reduce the employees' turnover intentions rather lead to increase it. Skills building improve employee's marketability and competitors can head haunt such already skilled employees. Top management should come up with company oriented and specific skills enhancing practices which employee can only use in such organization. Moreover, affective commitment played important role in reducing turnover intentions, hotels management should build affective commitment as employees with affective commitment as emotional attached with organization and hardly tend to quit the organization.

12. Limitations and future recommendations

First limitations of the study is, it has targeted those hotels which are located Klang Valley of in KL. Secondly, this study has focused the managerial level employees. thirdly, this data is cross sectional which indicates that it has been collected at single point of time. Future study can conduct the same study with same framework in other states of Malaysia. Furthermore, future study can conduct longitudinal or experimental design. Moreover, other employee level for instance, the junior or front line employees' can also be targeted for future study with same conceptual framework. Similarly, the same framework in other sectors like education, health sector can also be investigated.

Acknowledgments

We gratefully acknowledge the funding for publication of this article by Population Studies Unit, University of Malaya under the grant from United Nations Population Fund.

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