



Analyzing the Influence of High Commitment Human Resource Management Practices on the Performance of University Non-academic Staff in Pakistan: A Two-Stage Mediation and Moderation Study

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ARTICLE DETAILS

History

Revised format: Aug 2023

Available Online: Sep 2023

Keywords

High-commitment HRM

practices, Affective

Commitment, Normative

Commitment, Continuance

Commitment, Employee

Performance.

JEL Classification

M1, M2

ABSTRACT

Purpose: The primary objectives of this study are to examine the relationship between high-commitment and the performance of non-academic staff. This will be achieved by constructing a conceptual model that explores the mediating effects of affective commitment, normative commitment, and continuance commitment on the relationship between high-commitment human resource management practices and the performance of non-academic staff and the moderate impact of human capital factors on the relationship between high-commitment HRM practices and affective commitment, normative commitment, and continuance commitment.

Design/Methodology/Approach: In this study, primary data was gathered by a survey method from a sample of 250 respondents employed as non-academic staff in Higher Education Institutions in Pakistan. To investigate the moderation and mediating operations of variables, a total of 13 hypotheses were formulated based on the conceptual model and existing literature. These hypotheses were then subjected to empirical testing utilizing statistical software such as SPSS 25 and Smart PLS, employing the bootstrapping approach.

Finding:

The results of the study indicate that the carrying out of high-commitment HRM practices has a statistically significant impact on the perspectives of non-academic employees about behavioral outcomes, including affective commitment, normative commitment, and continuance commitment. Similarly, the revealed findings also demonstrate statistical significance, indicating that HC factors have a positive moderating role in the association between high-commitment HRM practices and affective commitment, normative commitment, and continuance commitment.

Implication/Originality/Value: Higher education institutions can enhance the level of organizational commitment among their non-academic staff by implementing high-commitment HRM



practices efficiently.

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Recommended citation: Ahtisham ul Haq, M., John, R., Gul, M. S., and Rao, Z. R. (2023). Analyzing the Influence of High Commitment HRM Practices on the Performance of University Non-academic Staff in Pakistan: A Two-Stage Mediation and Moderation Study. *Journal of Business and Social Review in Emerging Economies*, 9 (3), 301-314.

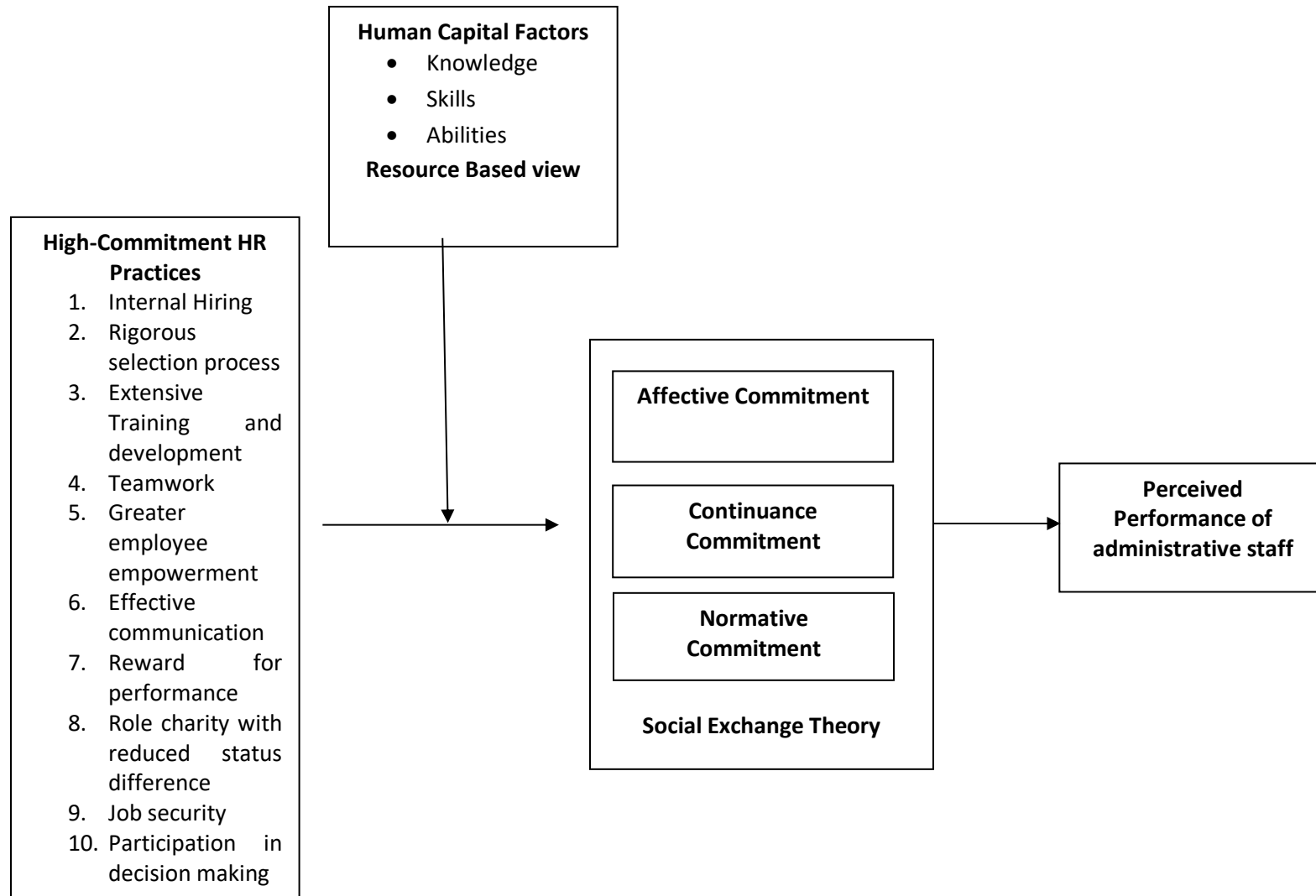
Introduction

Education is the key to the success of a nation and plays a leadership role in society. In this modern era, universities all over the world are facing challenges regarding excellence in teaching and research. The number of increasing specialisations and disciplines in educational programmes makes the universities give further attention to teaching and research quality (Smeby, 2003). This shows that an increasing number of students need higher education learning in which universities overlook the ways of managing higher education. The administrative staff is responsible for the perfection or consistency of quality education and ideas of discovery learning such as vision, competence, student's satisfaction, support in academic activities, leadership ability, clear institutional mission, commitment to quality of administrator, and cultural openness, all rated highly (Ahtisham-ul-Haq et al., 2022). Therefore, the present administrators' indispensable issue of managing and organising the HR efficiently and effectively for the institution's betterment is greatly discussed. In pursuit of worldwide realization, HR shaped the critical assets for the effectiveness of the institution; the same attitude didn't go well with the HR department in Pakistan's HEI. Unfortunately, the HEI of Pakistan does not yet have a critical policy on HRM that could improve the prevalent situation in a dramatic manner. It is the reason why HEI's cannot be able to fulfil the objectives of their institution and raise the performance of their administrative staff that is needed in this world (Qureshi, 1994).

In Pakistan, HE appears to be neglected (Government of Pakistan, 2002), and does not meet the standards set at international level (Time Higher Education Supplement's World University Ranking, 2004). As Hoodbhoy (2009), a well-known Pakistani scholar pointed out the problems of low academic competence that HEI Pakistan is facing. Another study supported the Hoodbhoy's statement and further explores that in Pakistan, administrative and educational staff have not been rationalised with their jobs and professions. Researchers claim that high-performance HR practises perform in a straight-way through employee behaviours and attitudes such as affective commitment, job satisfaction (Ahtisham-ul-Haq et al., 2022; Gong et al., 2009), turnover, job-oriented citizenship behaviour (Messersmith et al., 2011), and social exchange theory (Takeuchi et al., 2007). Recent theoretical work on the chain of causality in terms of HR performance claims that these studies can simplify the connections between HR practises and employee performance, e.g., (Ul haq et al., 2018; Nishii et al., 2008).

As a result, there are gaps in our understanding of the mechanisms that link HR practises and performance. As a result, many scholars, for example (Naveed & Jadoon, 2012), argue in the HRM literature that there is a need for research attention in the perspective of Pakistani HEIs because very little research has been conducted in this perspective. In the Pakistan context, the practises of HRM were investigated by researchers, i.e., (Ahtisham-ul-Haq et al., 2021), and they explained a requirement for organisational development by employing the HR practises, i.e., career development, performance appraisal, and employee benefits, but the research to find the impact of HR practises on the administrative staff of HEI of Pakistan is rare.

Proposed Conceptual Model 1



Literature Review

High commitment HRM Practices and Employee Performance

A literature review of several studies has moved the HRM topic into the spotlight to make it more visible or prominent (Rehman & Hameed, 2011). The "high commitment HR practises" bundle is studied to choose and comply with the ten best practises of HR for the workplace (Gould-Williams, 2004) that are: 1) panoptic training and development; 2) effective communication; 3) internal hiring; 4) employee empowerment; 5) team work; 6) selection process; 7) job security; 8) clear role with lack of status differences; 9) payoffs for performance; and 10) decision making participation. The panoptic empirical work of high-commitment HRM has brought into focus for empathise how combined HR practises are related to the resultant variable of employee performance in HEIs. The HRM valuation is fully justified in terms of practise effectiveness and impact on employee performance. Researchers have made discrimination in studying high-commitment HRM practises and employee performance. This is significant because it highlights the fit and detail association between best HR practises and organisational resultant variables (Becker & Gerhart, 1996; Iftikhar et al., 2021; Pfeffer & Veiga, 1999).

Several scholars have studied the relationship between employee performance and HR practises, but the attention of the research has been limited in developed countries (Ahtisham-ul-Haq, 2020; Aycan, 2000). This research was limited to the public sector of universities in Pakistan. However, Shahzad et al. (2008) proved that HR practises had a strong positive link with employee performance in developing nations like Pakistan. The percentage of people in Pakistan who are literate is dismally low. According to Shahzad et al. (2010) inadequate performance is one of the many contributing elements to this issue; yet, it is regarded the primary reason. Pakistan is recognised as an "under-researched" country in the field of HRM (Aycan, 2000). The study found that in developing countries like Pakistan, most firms do not practise the HRM system.

Human Capital

Mainly, they found that HEIs have a quality of education due to the HC that is difficult to simulate or copy (Szelagowskarudzka, 2019). They also ascertained the HC as non-sustainable. Likewise, in another study, researchers argued that if an HEI has a combination of human capability and resources, then a university will probably attain a competitive advantage (Gwizdała, 2011). Takeuchi et al. (2007) explain that HC factors (knowledge, skills, and abilities) specific HEIs always earn a stable profit for a long period from their HC rather than their typical resources employed. Peters (2013) investigated that in order to gain a competitive advantage (knowledge, skills, abilities) and address their objectives in the HEI setting, universities must adopt strategies and leverage their HCR. In this competitive environment, it is essential for the administrative staff to provide superior service and quality of education within the university. A study has been conducted on the HEIs competitiveness in different countries, which found that the main objective of enhancing national HEIs competitiveness (knowledge, skills, and abilities) is to enhance the competitiveness of the country (Svobodova, 2016; Zhu et al., 2017). This goal is achieved by the development of HC through the factors of human capital via knowledge, skills, abilities, health and other characteristics. Higher education plays a role in a centre of excellence, which must be capable of generating high-quality human capital to meet the challenges of growing competition in this globalisation era (Li & M, 2022; Mattjik et al., 2020). These authors claimed that HEIs must carry out HC factors (knowledge, skills, and abilities). These characteristics are fully understood by the faculty members and administrative staff of a university.

HRM and Organizational Commitment

HRM practises bring forth the mechanisms by which HEIs have the power to influence the behaviours and attitudes of employees to attain the high quality of HEIs in Pakistan (Iqbal & Abbas, 2011). In addition, Iqbal & Abbas (2011) suggested, based on the assumption of HRM practises, focus on the recruitment, development, managing, and empowering of university employees, alongside with particular requirements that would direct them towards improving the positive behaviour and innovation that promote HEIs in the development of HR. Regardless of this, there is a great need to bear in mind the fairness and bias of employee perceptions (Muhammad Adnan Sial et al., 2011).

Affective commitment is considered a psychological bond to an organisation and is delineated as positive feelings, affection or emotion towards an organization, bringing back the wish to see the success of organisational goals with pride feelings as related to the organisation (Chambel & Carvalho, 2022; Cohen, 2003). It is also defined as the employees' emotional attachment to identify what is relevant to the organization. This type of employee, having an affective commitment, proceeds with their job in the same organisation and they remain in this organization. Meyer & Allen (1997) have described many mental processes (i.e., rationality, retrospective, personnel fulfillment, casual attribution, and classical conditions that bring about affective commitment development. The feeling that one is obligated to continue in their current job or occupation is a depiction of normative commitment. Employees' intuition about that they are obliged and have debt and express their desire to stay within the organization. Culture, individual family systems, and the socialisation process of an organisation are absolutely necessary in developing the normative commitment of employees. By means of conditioning (punishment or rewards) and modelling (limitations and observations of others), people ascertain their values (Herrera & De Las, 2021; Meyer & Allen, 1997). Researchers such as (Harr & Spell, 2004) discovered organisational supportive practises and their broad significance for employees in inducing normative commitment.

Continuance commitment is described as a cost related to quitting the organization. Researchers, i.e., (Culibrk et al., 2018; Meyer et al., 1993), have defined the continuance commitment as an employee's awareness of the organization's leaving cost. When employees acknowledge the continuance commitment, then it is difficult to leave the job because of their concern about opportunity costs that are incurred when an employee leaves the organization. Nagar (2012) claimed that employees who have a high level of continuance commitment thus stay in the organisation due to their need to stay there.

Social exchange theory explains that HRM practises have a positive relationship between employers and employees. This theory asserts that the needs of employees are considered when they act and perform with favourable and behavioural attitudes (Gould-Williams & Davies, 2005). SET determines trust and understands organisational support as some negotiators by which HRM accelerates work outcomes and favourable attitudes (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). As described in the SET, the reciprocity norm is the basis of normative commitment and an employee experiences in a specific way how he/she should behave depending on the organisational actions. Molm (2000) defined behavioural commitment as a method of participating in an exchange process by repeating the same action regardless of exchange partner availability in alternative.

Administrative Staff Performance is a Major Challenge for Pakistani HEIs.

Researchers have pointed out this state of inadvertence as an organisational or university faculty cannot complete the university's objectives successfully for an intellectual student and for its development without others' cooperation because students spend most of their time with administration staff and they work together (Banata & Kuh, 1998). Stedman & Coaldrake (1999)

have pointed out the blurred gap in the capabilities of academic as well as non-academic staff. Researchers have made arguments in different studies that the fundamental functions, responsibilities, and roles of administrative staff have become more complex due to the fact that their types of work have shifted to academic work and they are functioning independently (Whitchurch, 2006). Such advancement in administrative staff work is emphasised by a subsequent move for a university's administration to be determined as its right (Conway, 2000). Furthermore, the administrative staff's discretionary performance is greatly ignored while the overall performance of the administrative staff is measured (Ahmad et al., 2017; Khurram Shahzad et al., 2016). These mistakes, due to the inattention in the performance of the management system, eventually have a negative effect on the administrative staff's performance. In spite of this fact, HEC is endeavouring to deal with the challenging performance of administrative staff successfully (Aziz et al., 2014). But still, there is a great need to distinguish other factors that may contribute positively to the administrative staff's performance. Past reviews of literature have highlighted the substantial effect of HRM on performance (Amin et al., 2013). While succeeding sections exhibit the words basically on the HRM's role and its impact on the employee's performance specifically, In Pakistan, education has become important as experts propose investing more in the educational sector in order to bring success and prosperity to the state (Sial et al., 2011). According to the World Bank report, higher education pointed out that the Pakistani education sector is undergoing numerous issues, with the top priority being the excellence of its academic and non-academic staff (Shahzad et al., 2010).

Summary of Hypothesis

Based on the theoretical framework and the findings of the previous research, 13 hypotheses have been proposed. These hypotheses are listed below:

- H1:** High-commitment HRM practices have positive effect on affective commitment.
- H2:** High-commitment HRM practices have positive effect on normative commitment.
- H3:** High-commitment HRM practices have positive effect on continuance commitment.
- H4:** Affective commitment has influence significantly to perceived employee performance.
- H5:** Normative commitment has influence significantly to perceived employee performance.
- H6:** Continuance commitment has influence significantly to perceived employee performance.
- H7:** High-commitment HRM practices have positive effect on perceived employee performance.
- H8:** Affective commitment mediates significantly to the relationship between high-commitment HRM practices and perceived employee performance.
- H9:** Normative commitment mediates significantly the relationship between high-commitment HRM practices and perceived employee performance.
- H10:** Continuance commitment mediates significantly the relationship between high-commitment HRM practices and perceived employee performance.
- H11:** Human capital factors moderate significantly the relationship between high-commitment HRM practices and affective commitment.
- H12:** Human capital factors moderate significantly the relationship between high-commitment HRM practices and normative commitment.
- H13:** Human capital factors moderate significantly the relationship between high-commitment HRM practises and continuance commitment.

Materials and Methods

In this research, we adhere to the positivism paradigm. We used a quantitative paradigm in this research to determine the 13 hypotheses, determining whether or not there is a relationship between the variables. Respondents for this research include non-academic employees from Pakistan's private and public universities. Moreover, the methodology employed in this study utilises a random sample strategy, ensuring that every participant has an equitable opportunity to be selected for inclusion in the research. A sample comprising 250 respondents from the Pakistani university sector was selected to reflect the larger community. This study employed the

usage of the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) method to assess the measurement model's validity. Additionally, Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) was utilised to evaluate the reliability, validity, and discriminant validity of the instrument. In addition, the strength of the framework model for the collected data was estimated and tested using CFA (Tanakinjal et al., 2010). Convergent validity was employed to estimate factor loading range, discriminant validity, measure composite reliability, the heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT).

Result and Analysis

Demographic Profile

Table1		Respondents' Demographic Profile	
Respondent's	Demographic Detail	Frequency	%
Gender (N = 250)			
	Male	169	68
	Female	81	32
Age (N = 250)			
	Under 30	144	58
	30 – 39	79	32
	40 – 49	10	4
	50 – 59	12	4
	Above 60	5	2
Qualification (N = 250)			
	Others	1	1
	High school	7	3
	Associate degree	97	39
	Bachelor Degree	117	48
	Master's Degree	28	11
	MPhil or PhD	-	
Sector (N = 250)			
	Public	181	73
	Semi govt	9	4
	Private	60	23
Staff Rank (N = 250)			
	Manager/Supervisor	2	1
	Officer	26	10
	Assistant Officer	75	33
	Others	147	59
Type of contractual appointment (N = 250)			
	Permanent staff	207	72
	Part time Staff	39	27
	Daily wages staff	4	1
Salary in Rupees (N = 250)			
	Below Rupees 25,000	82	33
	Rupees 25,000- Rupees 40,000	124	49
	Rupees 40,000- Rupees 70,000	30	13
	Above Rupees 70,000	14	5

In Table 2, you can see that the items in the construct were loaded correctly. Based on Table 2, it has all of the items in the factor loading range with a suggested cut-off value of 0.5. The construct was defined and measured, and the factor loading number obtained as a result ranged from 0.755 to 0.936. Items with value less than 0.5 were eliminated, allowing for the achievement of a large threshold for item internal consistency. Unless the reflection scale achieves the criterion of adequate internal consistency, it cannot change the conceptual significance of the items. More than 0.7 was found in the CR factor loading value, which was between 0.931 and 0.966 (Hair et al., 2010). Table 2 shows the convergent validity, which means that all of the latent constructs had AVE resultant values higher than the normal level of 0.5. The

resultant values were between 0.669 and 0.848. AVE showed that the latent construct explained more than half of its factors; the number was greater than 0.5. All of the HTMT values for first-order constructs in Table 3 were less than 0.90, which means they met the HTMT 0.90 standards (Gold et al., 2001). Discriminant validity for the first set of notions was thus demonstrated by the results.

Table 2: Factor Loading

1 st Construct	Order	2 nd Construct	Order	Items	Loadings	CR	AVE
High-commitment HRM practises				HCHRM 1	0.855	0.955	0.680
				HCHRM 2	0.863		
				HCHRM 3	0.857		
				HCHRM 4	0.852		
				HCHRM 5	0.863		
				HCHRM 6	0.861		
				HCHRM 7	0.654		
				HCHRM 8	0.755		
				HCHRM 9	0.804		
				HCHRM 10	0.844		
Human Capital Factors				HC 1	0.864	0.931	0.770
				HC 2	0.892		
				HC 3	0.884		
				HC 4	0.865		
Affective Commitment				AC 1	0.804	0.948	0.696
				AC 2	0.854		
				AC 3	0.867		
				AC 4	0.834		
				AC 5	0.834		
				AC 6	0.822		
				AC 8	0.844		
Normative Commitment				NC 1	0.794	0.942	0.669
				NC 2	0.824		
				NC 3	0.839		
				NC 4	0.825		
				NC 5	0.834		
				NC 6	0.819		
				NC 7	0.796		
				NC 8	0.817		
Continuance Commitment				CC 1	0.865	0.966	0.781
				CC 2	0.892		
				CC 3	0.905		
				CC 4	0.906		
				CC 5	0.897		
				CC 6	0.879		
				CC 7	0.871		
				CC 8	0.861		
Employee Perceived Performance				EP 1	0.936	0.957	0.848
				EP 2	0.928		
				EP 3	0.921		
				EP 4	0.902		

Table 3: Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio

	AC	CC	EPP	HC	HCHRM	JS
AC						
CC	0.324					
EPP	0.439	0.311				
HC	0.491	0.275	0.404			
HCHRM	0.487	0.332	0.464	0.511		
JS	0.413	0.298	0.381	0.434	0.475	
NC	0.392	0.382	0.377	0.378	0.423	0.298

Figure 2 depicts the path coefficients. Figure 2 and Tables 6 illustrate the bootstrapping results. The detailed results are as follows:

Testing Direct Effect

Table 4 reveals a significant positive relationship between HCHRM practises and affective, normative, and continuance commitments ($\beta = 0.347$, $t = 7.11$, $p < 0.05$; $\beta = 0.304$, $t = 5.75$, $p < 0.05$ for the algorithm and bootstrapping PLS-SEM). As a result, Hypothesis 1, 2 and 3 is accepted. Table 6 reveals a significant positive relationship between affective, normative, and continuance commitments on employee perceived performance ($\beta = 0.216$, $t = 4.48$, $p < 0.05$, $\beta = 0.139$, $t = 4.88$, $p < 0.05$, $\beta = 0.102$, $t = 2.30$, $p < 0.05$). Therefore, Hypotheses 4, 5, and 6 are accepted. In Table 6, the algorithm and bootstrapping PLS-SEM indicate a significant positive relationship between HCHRM practises and employee performance ($\beta = 0.287$, $t = 9.33$, $p < 0.05$). So Hypothesis 7 is accepted.

Table 4 Direct Relationship

Effects	Relationships	Beta	Mean	(STDEV)	t-Value	P Value
H1	HCHRM-> AC	0.347	0.347	0.049	7.111	0.000
H2	HCHRM->NC	0.304	0.305	0.053	5.754	0.000
H3	HCHRM->CC	0.195	0.192	0.050	3.866	0.000
H4	AC-> PEP	0.216	0.217	0.048	4.486	0.000
H5	NC-> PEP	0.139	0.137	0.048	2.885	0.004
H6	CC-> PEP	0.102	0.103	0.044	2.307	0.021
H7	HCHRM-> PEP	0.387	0.387	0.041	9.339	0.000

Testing Indirect/Mediating Effect

The findings of the mediation analysis are displayed in Table 7. The results of the research on the mediating hypotheses are presented in Table 7, which shows both their acceptance and their rejection.

According to the findings in Table 5, affective commitment, normative commitment and continuance commitment mediates the relationship between HCHRM practises and employee perceived performance. The indirect influence of affective commitment ($\beta = 0.047$, $t = 3.20$, $p < 0.05$), normative commitment ($\beta = 0.030$, $t = 2.32$, $p < 0.05$) and continuance commitment ($\beta = 0.015$, $t = 1.77$, $p > 0.05$) between HCHRM practises and employee perceived performance indicates partial mediation in the structural model. As a result, the acceptance of Hypotheses 8, 9, and 10 emerges clearly.

Table 5 Mediation Analysis

Effects	Relationships	Beta	Mean	(STDEV)	t-Value	P Value
H8	HCHRM->AC->PEE	0.047	0.047	0.015	3.209	0.001
H9	HCHRM->NC->PEE	0.030	0.030	0.013	2.326	0.020
H10	HCHRM->CC->PEE	0.015	0.014	0.008	1.777	0.076

According to the findings in Table 6, human capital moderates the relationship among HCHRM practises and affective commitment ($\beta = 0.130$, $t = 5.47$, $p < 0.05$), normative commitment ($\beta = 0.086$, $t = 3.567$, $p < 0.05$) and continuance commitment ($\beta = 0.086$, $t = 3.567$, $p < 0.05$) as interaction term of HCHRM practises and human capital factors is significant. Hence, Hypothesis 11, 12 and 13 is supported.

Table 6 Moderation Analysis

Effects	Relationships	Beta	Mean	(STDEV)	t-Value	P Value
H11	(HCHRM*HC)->AC	0.130	0.129	0.024	5.470	0.000
H12	(HCHRM*HC)->NC	0.086	0.085	0.024	3.567	0.000
H13	(HCHRM*HC)->CC	0.051	0.051	0.023	2.238	0.026

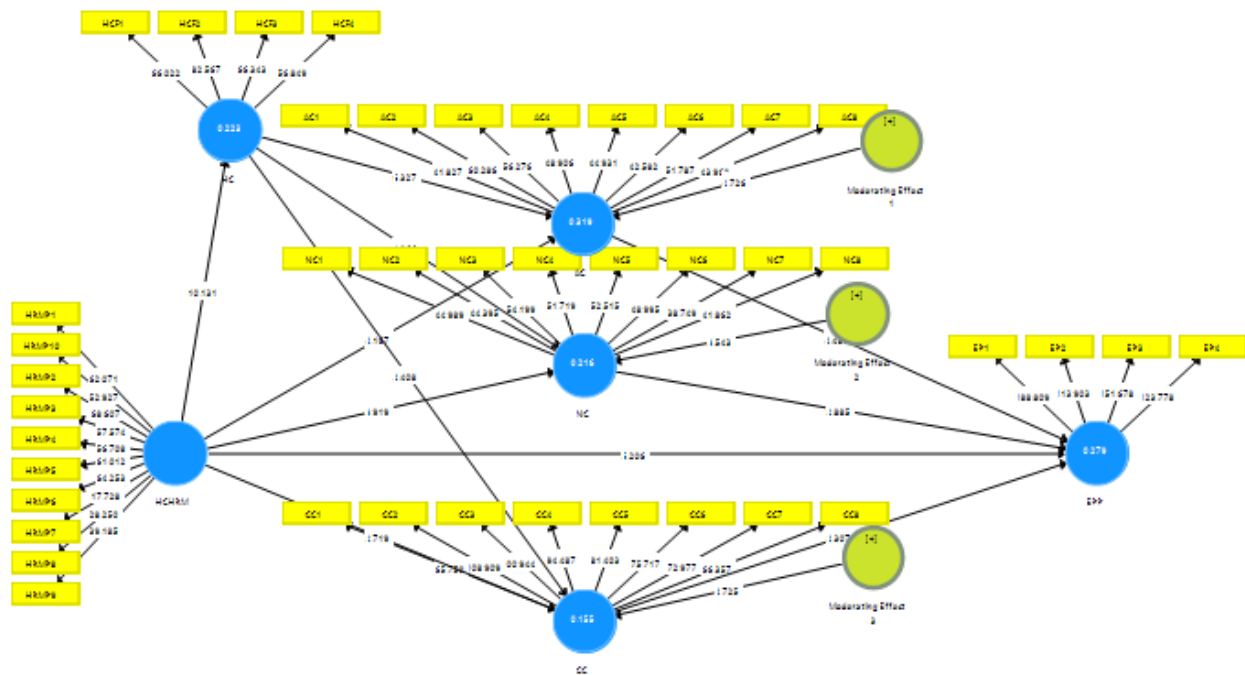


Figure 2: Result of Analysis

Discussion

This study explored the mediating and moderating effects of organisational commitment and human capital on perceived employee performance triggered by HCHRM practises within the HEI sector of Pakistan. Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that affective commitment, normative commitment, and continuance commitment play a partial mediating role in the relationship between high-commitment human resource management practises and perceived employee performance. These findings provide support for the existence of a mediation relationship (Metin & Asli, 2018; Piyasena, 2016). Moreover, human capital moderates the relationship between HCHRM practises and affective commitment, normative commitment, and continuance commitment. This result is coherent with past research (Khan et al., 2010; Lau, 2011). The results affirm the SET notion that carrying out HCHRM practises in the workplace signifies the challenges and investment in workers. Subsequently, employees responded in the form of affective, normative, and continuance commitment and improved employee performance. The craving to attain the predicted performance objective enables them to complete the tasks and also enhance their knowledge, skills, and abilities, which ultimately leads to the competitive advantage. As a result, it is expected that administrations will be urged to stimulate employee innovation in order to improve self-perception in terms of organisational commitment. The results demonstrate that the set of HCHRM practises affect the administration's organisational commitment (affective, normative, and continuance commitment), which is manifested via

satisfied discretionary and employee performance. Proper outcomes may be achieved when an appropriate process system outline with regard to commitment is used. As non-academic staff are answerable for the daily operation of the university, organisational plans like employee commitment, which motivate initiatives and creative behaviour among employees, might contribute to the enduring survival of the university in this modern-era competitive environment. Non-academic staff at the university are concerned with important responsibilities that include interacting and coordinating with students, faculty, parents' stakeholders, and local and foreign policymakers (Adejare et al., 2020). Thus, understanding HEIs' employees' performance in the context of Pakistan and understanding the factors that contribute to it will be of maximum benefit and will help the HEIs to further strengthen and develop employee performance. This will remove the negative perceptions of the employees about the organization, thus enhancing the work performance of the employees and contributing to the development of their positive behaviour.

Conclusion

The present study identifies a mediating relationship involving HCHRM practises, affective, normative, and continuance commitment, and employee perceived performance. Additionally, the study reveals that HCHRM practises, human capital factors, affective, normative, and continuance commitment moderate this relationship. Furthermore, the study establishes a positive direct relationship between HCHRM practises and employee perceived performance. Consequently, the findings of this study address the researchers anticipates regarding the lack of consensus in the existing literature regarding the association between HRM-employee performance and employee performance. Unlocking the mediation mechanism, or black box, in the setting of HEIs in a non-Western country like Pakistan, has made an important empirical and theoretical addition to the HRM literature. The empirical evidence presented in this study supports the causal relationship between high commitment human resource management and employee performance within the higher education institutions of Pakistan. Additionally, the study examines the impact of HR practises on employees' perceived performance by analysing their effects on attitude and behavioural outcomes. These outcomes include affective commitment, normative commitment, and continuance commitment among non-academic employees. The research findings underscored the necessity of integrating relationships into the realm of human resources instead of relying solely on high-commitment HRM practices in isolation. Additionally, research is being done on the mediating role that high-commitment HRM practises play in non-academic staff performance.

It is noted that there is a need to conduct a performance review of non-academic staff in order to deal with diverse, commercialised goals and the contemporary expansion of HEIs. The perspectives of social exchange theory have offered robust theoretical underpinnings for comprehending the causal relationship.

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