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## Article

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# Human resource development practices and employee engagement: the mediating role of organizational commitment

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## Abstract

**Purpose** – Highly committed, motivated and engaged employees assure organizational success and competitiveness. The study aims to examine the association between human resource development (HRD) practices and employee engagement with organizational commitment as a mediating variable.

**Design/methodology/approach** – Data were collected from 760 employees of 13 star-rated hotels comprising 5 (five-star) and 8 (four-star). The data supported the hypothesized relationships. Structural equation modeling was used to evaluate the proposed model and hypotheses. Construct validity and reliability were established through confirmatory factor analysis.

**Findings** – The results indicate that HRD practices and affective commitment are significantly associated. HRD practices and continuance commitment were shown to be non-significantly associated. HRD practices and normative commitment were shown to be non-significantly associated. Employee engagement and organizational commitment are significantly associated. The results further show that organizational commitment mediates the association between HRD practices and employee engagement.

**Research limitations/implications** – The generalizability of the findings will be constrained due to the research's hotel industry focus and cross sectional data.

**Practical implications** – The study's findings will serve as valuable pointers for stakeholders and policymakers of the hotel industry in the adoption, design and implementation of proactive HRD interventions to keep highly engaged and committed employees for organizational competitiveness and sustainability.

**Originality/value** – By evidencing empirically that organizational commitment mediates the nexus between HRD practices and employee engagement, the study extends the literature.

**Keywords** HRD practices, Employee engagement, Organizational commitment, Hospitality industry, Hotel industry

**Paper type** Research paper

## Introduction

The contribution of the tourism industry to national and economic growth is widely acknowledged (Ahmad *et al.*, 2020; Jones and Comfort, 2019; Rabiul and Yean, 2021). The hospitality industry is an essential component of the tourism industry and is becoming more widely acknowledged as a global industry (Lee *et al.*, 2020; Murphy *et al.*, 2018; Xu *et al.*, 2020). The hospitality industry encompasses a variety of pursuits and functions, such as catering,



accommodation and other facilities besides hotels (Madera *et al.*, 2017; Marco-Lajara and Ubeda-García, 2013; Yang *et al.*, 2018). The hotel industry represents a key segment of the hospitality industry (García-Lillo *et al.*, 2018; Tracey, 2014; de Souza Meira *et al.*, 2022).

The hotel industry is extremely competitive as a result of customer expectations and their substantial influence on the economies of the world (Calero and Turner, 2020; Law *et al.*, 2021; Rabiul *et al.*, 2021). The hospitality and tourism industry in Ghana has grown to be one of the most major economic pillars and makes a significant contribution to the country's gross domestic product (GDP) (Aduhene and Osei-Assibey, 2021; Otoo, 2019a, b). The industry contributed GHC11,542.0mn (USD2,967.1mn) in total to the country's GDP and supported over 693,000 employment in 2016 (WTTC, 2017). The hotel industry is a people industry where employees are considered one of the most strategic sources and focus since, they have the potential to either create a sparkling picture of swift, friendly service or mar the reality of the ideal vacation (Bradley *et al.*, 2017; Otoo and Mishra, 2018; Solnet *et al.*, 2019).

Committed and dedicated employees propel organizational success (Jung and Yoon, 2016; Noesgaard and Jørgensen, 2023; Truss *et al.*, 2013). To ensure organizational success and competitiveness, organizations need highly motivated, engaged and committed employees (Gupta *et al.*, 2017; Naiemaha *et al.*, 2019; Sun and Yoon, 2022). A major challenge facing the hotel industry is the effective utilization of human resources (Ann and Blum, 2020; Chathoth *et al.*, 2020; Francis and Baum, 2018). The hotel industry is engulfed with attrition, retention, talent shortage and skill development as initiatives are made to establish high-performance work cultures and improve workplace attractiveness (Domínguez-Falcón, 2016; Park and Min, 2020; Poulston, 2009).

The hotel industry must evolve into learning organizations that continuously adapt to changes with the help of qualified human resources. Moreover, hospitality professionals seek demanding work settings and possibilities for ongoing learning in order to maintain cutting-edge skills and expertise (Jia *et al.*, 2019; Nieves and Quintana, 2018; Swanson *et al.*, 2020). Hence, the hotel industry must strive to provide employees better and more flexible working conditions, career opportunities, opportunities to learn as well as opportunities for growth and development (Chand and Ambardar, 2020; Kandampully *et al.*, 2018; Prayag and Hosany, 2015). Employee skill enhancement is a typical practice in equipping employee with the requisite competencies (Hewagama *et al.*, 2019; Ishaq, 2019; Uraon, 2018).

Human resource development (HRD) practices improve the knowledge and abilities of employees through a variety of organized human resource activities (Gilley *et al.*, 2011; Richman *et al.*, 2015; Thuy and Trinh, 2020). In spite of the proactiveness towards HRD efforts by organizations, Ghanaian hospitality professionals have consistently low levels of commitment and engagement which causes firms to experience significant staff turnover (Eunice *et al.*, 2019; Holston-Okae and Mushi, 2018). Furthermore, low levels of employee engagement (Hameduddin and Lee, 2021; Presbitero, 2017; Tsaour *et al.*, 2019); organizational commitment (Abdirahman, 2015; Kim *et al.*, 2020; Nazir and Islam, 2017) and employee turnover intention (Karatepe *et al.*, 2021; Salas-Vallina and Alegre, 2018; Wang and Wang, 2020) have detrimental effects on organizational and employee performance.

Numerous antecedents of employee turnover intentions (Bentley *et al.*, 2019; Memon *et al.*, 2021; Rawashdeh and Tamimi, 2019); employee engagement (Boccoli *et al.*, 2023; Chen and Peng, 2021; Shuck *et al.*, 2017a, b) and organizational commitment (Jawaad *et al.*, 2019; Jørgensen and Becker, 2015; Yeh, 2019) have been addressed in literature, nonetheless, HRD practices is a factor that significantly affects how employees behave (Kura *et al.*, 2019; Soliman and Wahba, 2019; Otoo, 2022a, b).

Researchers have investigated the mediation mechanisms of a number of variables (Becker and Huselid, 1998; Gerhart, 2007; Wood and Wall, 2007). These studies have uncovered several mediating factors in the interactions between human resource (HR) practices and performance connections (Boxall and Purcell, 2008; Coff, 2002; Otoo, 2019a, b).

The advancement of the knowledge of mediation mechanisms in strategic HRD has also made use of a wide variety of divergent theoretical stances. Inextricably linked, academics have also discovered that HR practices have an impact on organizational outcomes via intermediaries who reside at different research echelons (Batt and Colvin, 2011; MacDuffie, 1995; Yang and Lin, 2009).

These studies shed light on the peculiarities of mediation mechanisms in the HR–organizational outcome relationship (Batt, 2002; Collins and Smith, 2006; Huselid and Becker, 2011). Axioms supporting the presence of organizational commitment have undergone extensive research (Bakker and Schaufeli, 2008; Allen and Meyer, 1996; Meyer and Parfyonova, 2010). Organizational commitment significantly influences employee behavior and attitudes (Garcia and Fernandez, 2015; Nasuridin *et al.*, 2018; Yao *et al.*, 2019). The participation of employees in HRD practices is associated with higher levels of organizational commitment (Fihla and Chinyamurindi, 2018; Tan *et al.*, 2019; Uma *et al.*, 2017).

Although it may seem evident that HRD practices and organizational commitment are related, little research has empirically examined this relationship (Czarnowsky, 2008; Kim and Beehr, 2018; Shuck *et al.*, 2011). However, the empirical relationship between HRD practices, employee engagement and organizational commitment is disproportionately underrepresented in literature. Therefore, it is crucial to comprehend how HRD practices influence employee engagement and organizational commitment (Gupta, 2017; Kura *et al.*, 2019; Shuck and Wollard, 2010). The study aims to examine the association between HRD practices and employee engagement with organizational commitment as a mediating variable.

To set the groundwork for the study, the theoretical underpinnings of HRD, employee engagement and organizational commitment are described. The model that links HRD to organizational commitment and employee engagement is then used to frame the hypotheses. Structural equation modeling was applied in evaluating the efficacy of the proposed model and hypotheses and the outcomes were then contrasted with those of prior studies that came to similar conclusions. The study's limitations, implications and suggestions for future investigation are provided.

## Literature review

### *Theory and hypothesis development*

The social exchange theory lends credence to the relationship between HRD practices, employee engagement and organizational commitment (Blau, 1964; Chung and Jeon, 2020; Subardjo and Harjanti, 2019). The social exchange theory asserts that responsibilities are created as a result of interactions between people in mutually reliant situations (Almaaitah *et al.*, 2017; Cropanzano *et al.*, 2017; Saks, 2006). The social exchange postulates that people interact with one another depends on how they evaluate their options and how they perceive their benefits and costs (Chernyak-Hai and Rabenu, 2018; Gharib *et al.*, 2017; Jawaad *et al.*, 2019).

### *Human resource development practices*

The conceptualization of HRD relies on the study's focus since it is a multidimensional construct whose properties cannot be described in a single construct (Garavan *et al.*, 1995; Gilley and Maycunich, 2000; Sung and Choi, 2014). HRD is a collection of connected activities intended to boost people's abilities, knowledge and skills (Ericson, 2006; Otoo, 2019a, b; Swanson, 2001). HRD practices enhance employee skills, competence and commitment (Purang, 2008; Rodriguez and Walters, 2017; Sung and Choi, 2011). Several authors supported the aforementioned viewpoint when they contend that the efficiency of an organization's

human capital, which is essential to its survival and effectiveness, is determined by the abilities and competencies of its employees (Chand and Ambardar, 2020; Nilsson and Ellstrom, 2012; Uraon, 2018).

HRD practices aim to retain highly committed, engaged and productive human resources (Alfes *et al.*, 2020; Koç *et al.*, 2014; Otoo *et al.*, 2019). Similarly, academics postulate that HRD practices are strategic tools for the development of competent employees and gain competitive advantage (Cho and McLean, 2009; Mowbray *et al.*, 2020; Scheel *et al.*, 2014).

### *Employee engagement*

Employee engagement is a crucial element for success as espoused by numerous studies (Baumruk, 2004; Gruman and Saks, 2011; Kahn, 1992). These studies explored the scope of employee engagement in different contexts; hence, no unified definition (Macey and Schneider, 2008; Shuck *et al.*, 2017b; Levitats and Vigoda-Gadot, 2020). Saks (2019) opined that employee engagement is the degree to which employees are immersed and conscientious in their jobs. Kahn (1990) concurred with this view when he accentuated that employee engagement is the process of integrating employees into certain job roles. Shuck *et al.* (2017a) posited that employee engagement is an employee's positiveness about their organization as well as their proactiveness in pursuing organizational goals.

Kahn (1990) asserts that employees express and employ physical, cognitive and emotional engagement in role performance. He further suggested that multiple levels of influence—individual, interpersonal, group, intergroup and organizational are responsible for maintaining one's level of physical, cognitive and emotional engagement. Physical engagement refers to the physical efforts made by people to fulfill their jobs (Baumruk, 2004; Fleming and Asplund, 2007). Cognitive engagement addresses employees' perceptions of the organization, its executives and their working conditions (Shaw, 2005; Shuck and Reio, 2011). Emotional engagement refers to employee opinions toward the organization and its executives as well as their feelings about the physical and cognitive components of engagements (Halbesleben and Wheeler, 2008; Richman, 2006).

Robinson (2006) stressed that an environment where positive emotions attributes in the form of pride and involvement are advocated enhances employee engagement, thereby improving organizational performance. There is a wealth of empirical data that support the effects of employee engagement. Employee engagement improves organizational citizenship behavior (Dalal *et al.*, 2012; Gupta, 2017; Mackey *et al.*, 2021), organizational commitment (Gašić and Berber, 2023; Joolideh and Yeshodhara, 2009; Wollard and Shuck, 2011) and job performance (Gupta *et al.*, 2017; Salas-Vallina *et al.*, 2021; Soliman and Wahba, 2019).

Furthermore, studies show that employee engagement reduces employee turnover (Gupta and Sayeed, 2016; Sandhya and Sulphrey, 2020; Zhong *et al.*, 2016). Also, employee engagement enhances organizational growth and financial returns (Bakker and Oerlemans, 2019; Macey and Schneider, 2008; Rana *et al.*, 2014). Researchers have examined the nexus between HRD practices and employee engagement with the aim of developing a theoretical framework for future empirical studies (Wollard and Shuck, 2011; Vecina *et al.*, 2013; Welch, 2011). Employee engagement has ramifications for HRD practices, such as strategic change process, career development and training, organizational learning and organization development (Kura *et al.*, 2019; Saengchai *et al.*, 2020; Wollard and Shuck, 2011).

Physical, emotional and cognitive attributes of employee engagement were examined in this study.

### *Organizational commitment*

Organizational behavior and business management academics have recently given organizational commitment a lot of attention (Bhatnagar, 2012; Gupta, 2017; Guchait and

Cho, 2010). The fundamental goal of many of this research has been to discover ways to boost workers' perceptions of their work in order to increase their commitment to their employers (Bakker and Schaufeli, 2008; Labrague *et al.*, 2018; Yeh, 2013). Organizational commitment is a person's level of identification and connection with an organization, which is strengthened by strong acceptance of and adherence to the organization's objectives and ideals (Agarwal and Sajid, 2017; Ferreira *et al.*, 2017; Grego-planer, 2019).

Alamri and Al-Duhaim (2017) postulate that organizational commitment is an action that ties a person's identity to a company and makes sure that their goals and the company's goals are congruent. Three sets of antecedent elements are linked to organizational commitment: job and role traits, individual attributes and structural determinants (Schaufeli and Salanova, 2007; Suifan, 2015; Tsai *et al.*, 2010). Meyer *et al.* (1993) theorized that employees demonstrate three distinct levels of commitment at various levels of an organization. They defined organizational commitment as a multidimensional paradigm consisting of three commitment types: affective, continuance and normative commitments.

Affective commitment represents a personal connection to and judgment about the hiring organization (Robinson *et al.*, 2004; Wong and Wong, 2017), continuous commitment reflects the cost-benefit analysis of a decision to stay or leave the employing firm (Chew and Chan, 2008; Meyer and Parfyonova, 2010) and normative commitment represents a duty to stick with their employer (Meyer *et al.*, 2012; Norm *et al.*, 2017). Highly committed employees not only remain with their company longer but also behave better at work, perform more professionally and get more immersed in their work (Albrecht and Andretta, 2011; Bailey *et al.*, 2017; Grobelna, 2019). Affective, continuous and normative attributes of organizational commitment were examined in this study.

#### *Human resource development practices and organizational commitment*

The synergy between HRD practices and organizational commitment has been evaluated through the advancement of diverse concepts and theories (Rafik *et al.*, 2019; Uma *et al.*, 2017; Otoo, 2022a, b). HRD practices enhances employees' competencies, commitment and dedication (Jain and Premkumar, 2011; Mira *et al.*, 2019; Yap *et al.*, 2010). Sung and Choi (2011) agreed with the above supposition when they argued that greater organizational commitment is positively associated with HRD practices. Several authors postulate that HRD practices stimulate employee performance and commitment, thereby predicting employee commitment toward their organizational (Cai *et al.*, 2019a, b; Cherif, 2020; Kareem and Hussein, 2019).

Studies suggest empirically that HRD strategies and practices comprising career growth and development (Saengchai *et al.*, 2020), diversity training (Kuruppu *et al.*, 2021), training and development (Rodriguez and Walters, 2017) and professional education (Niati *et al.*, 2021) are crucial in promoting organizational commitment.

#### *Human resource development practices and affective commitment*

Wong and Wong (2017) posited that affective commitment denotes individuals' recognition and attachment to an organization. Affective commitment contributes to the emotional attachments that employees have for personal interaction with co-workers, organization's culture and job characteristics (Cheung and Wu, 2012; Meyer *et al.*, 2002). Numerous academics accentuate that employees' affective commitment is favorably connected with HRD interventions, including career growth and development, training and development opportunities, challenging assignments, compensation and recognition (Chew and Chan, 2008; Maheshwari and Vohra, 2015; Yao and Wang, 2006).

This parallels the finding of [Sung and Choi \(2014\)](#), who contend that investments and support for HRD practices have a positive effect on employee loyalty, dedication and commitment. The following hypothesis is advanced.

*H1.* HRD practices are significantly associated with affective commitment.

#### *Human resource development practices and continuance commitment*

Continuance commitment is the consciousness of the costs associated with quitting the organization ([Allen and Meyer, 1990](#); [Meyer and Parfyonova, 2010](#)). [Norm et al. \(2017\)](#) argue that the degree of continuance commitment is influenced by the levels of affective or normative commitment. [Benjamin and David \(2012\)](#) emphasize that continuance commitment is favorably impacted by a conducive HRD environment. This parallels the finding of eminent scholars who argued that employee commitment to continuing their work is positively correlated with the perceived value of HRD interventions ([Beck and Wilson, 2000](#); [Bhuiyan and Shahidulislam, 1996](#); [Fihla and Chinyamurindi, 2018](#)). The following hypothesis is advanced.

*H2.* HRD practices are significantly associated with continuance commitment.

#### *Human resource development practices and normative commitment*

[Meyer and Allen \(1997\)](#) contend that the development of normative commitment is thought to be a response to social pressure. [Smeenk et al. \(2006\)](#) posited that when an employee's developmental needs are addressed, their normative commitment is increased. [Paul and Anantharaman \(2004\)](#) postulate the normative commitment of employees is positively connected with an organization's hiring process, career management and development strategies and training and development strategies. This is consistent with [Benjamin and David's \(2012\)](#) study, which demonstrated that normative commitment is positively influenced by HRD investments and a supportive HRD environment. The following hypothesis is advanced.

*H3.* HRD practices are significantly associated with normative commitment

#### *Employee engagement and organizational commitment*

Several studies have expressed a positive association between employee engagement and organizational commitment ([Jung and Yoon, 2016](#); [Piyasena and Kottawatta, 2018](#); [Rigg et al., 2014](#)). [Gupta \(2017\)](#) postulates that enhanced engagement levels improve performance, satisfaction, innovation and motivation. Researchers argue that enhanced levels of employee engagement improve organizational citizenship behavior, job performance and organizational commitment ([Ariza-Montes et al., 2019](#); [Gupta et al., 2017](#); [Kataria et al., 2013](#)). They corroborates the findings of many authors who contend that enhanced levels of employee engagement reduce turnover intentions and promote a more optimistic outlook and attitude toward the workplace ([Babakus et al., 2017](#); [Memon et al., 2021](#); [Sandhya and Sulphay, 2020](#)). The following hypothesis is advanced.

*H4.* Employee engagement is significantly associated with organizational commitment.

#### *The mediating role of organizational commitment*

The association between organizational commitment and organizational outcomes has been examined by many academics ([Bakker and Oerlemans, 2019](#); [Cho and McLean, 2009](#); [Meyer and Herscovitch, 2001](#); [Sturges et al., 2005](#)). Organizational commitment enhances employee loyalty, levels of job involvement and reduces turnover intentions ([Gagné and Deci, 2005](#); [Habib et al., 2014](#); [Nawaz and Pangil, 2016](#)). Many scholars accentuate that organizational commitment improves organizational sustainability, productivity and retention ([Harrison](#)

*et al.*, 2006; Powell and Meyer, 2004; Yahaya and Ebrahim, 2016). The social exchange theory is espoused in this study (Chernyak-Hai and Rabenu, 2018; Cooper-Thomas and Morrison, 2019).

The social exchange theory postulates that responsibilities are created as a result of interactions between people in mutually reliant situations (Almaaitah *et al.*, 2017; Cropanzano *et al.*, 2017; Saks, 2006). Organizational commitment contributes to employee readiness to change, well-being and growth (Hung *et al.*, 2018; Kim *et al.*, 2020; Mangundjaya, 2012). Similarly, several authors emphasized that organizational commitment enhances organizational effectiveness, job satisfaction and fulfillment (Ekhsan, 2019; Nasuridin *et al.*, 2018; Tarigan and Ariani, 2015). The following hypothesis is advanced.

*H5.* Organizational commitment mediates the association between HRD practices and employee engagement.

**Methods**

*Research setting and data structure*

Hotels depend on employees' social and technical skills, inventiveness, attitude and dedication for a competitive advantage, which makes it distinct in examining employee engagement and commitment related issues (Kandampully *et al.*, 2018; Otoo, 2022a, b). Data were collected from 13 hotels comprising 5 (five-star) and 8 (four-star) hotels. Of these, 3 were indigenously owned while 10 were internationally owned. Customers are routinely informed about the standards that may be found at various facilities using hotel classification systems (Leon, 2019; Xu *et al.*, 2020). Information about the hotels was gathered from the Ghana Tourism Authority (2022) Directory.

A standardized questionnaire was used in obtaining information from the study's respondents (Creswell and Creswell, 2018; Malhotra *et al.*, 2019). Hotels were selected using a purposive sampling technique (Creswell and Guetterman, 2019; Lincoln *et al.*, 2018). The study sample was 1,010 respondents. A thorough answer from 760 respondents (75.2% response rate) was considered acceptable. Inference from Table 1, men constituted 58.6%

Variables	Frequency (s)	Percentage of totals (%)	Variables	Frequency (s)	Percentage of totals (%)
Gender			Education		
Male	445	58.6	Senior High	214	28.2
Female	315	41.4	Diploma	142	18.7
			HND	206	27.1
Age			Bachelor's degree	163	23.0
18–25	148	19.5	Master's degree	35	5.0
26–35	341	44.9	Experience (years)		
36–45	150	19.7	Less than 1	74	9.7
46–55	81	10.7	1–5	157	20.7
56–65	40	5.2	6–10	246	32.4
Star ratings			11–15	141	18.5
4 Star	8	61.5	16–20	96	12.5
5 Star	5	38.5	20 and above	47	6.2

**Table 1.**  
Profile of respondents

**Source(s):** Table by authors

(majority) of respondents. The age range of 26–35 years was represented by (44.9%) of the respondents. The majority of responders (36.5%) have between 6 and 10 years of experience working in hotels. 38.5% of the hotels are associated with five stars compared to 61.5% of four-star hotels.

### *Measures*

A Likert scale, which ranges from 1 (“strongly disagree”) to 5 (“strongly agree”), was used to score the measures. The construct standards estimate criterion proposed by Sarstedt and Mooi (2019) and Hair (2020) was applied. A construct’s statements that fell short of the ideal threshold of 0.60 or higher were removed (Jing *et al.*, 2022; Rhemtulla *et al.*, 2020).

### *Human resource development practices scale*

Perceived investment in employee development (PIED), developed by Lee and Bruvold in 2003, was used to measure HRD practices. Sample items include “provision of a personal development plan” and “provision of career advancement training”. The seven-item scale had a reliability of 0.92.

### *Organizational commitment scale*

Meyer *et al.* (1993) three component of organizational commitment scale was adopted in measuring affective commitment (four items), continuance commitment (four items) and normative commitment (four items). Sample items include “I would be more than pleased to continue working with this organization in the future.”, “I feel very personally connected to the organization” and “staying with one organization is crucial, in my opinion”. The reliability for each of the three dimensions of organizational commitment was 0.84, 0.82 and 0.81, respectively. The overall reliability of the 12 items was 0.86. High inter-dimensional correlations, ranging between 0.57 and 0.76 was observed.

### *Employee engagement scale*

Kahn (1990) three dimensions of employee engagement was adopted in measuring physical engagement (two items), cognitive engagement (three items) and emotional engagement (three items). Sample items include “I put everything I have into my work”, “I work really hard at what I do” and “I concentrate on my assignment at work”. The reliability for each of the three dimensions of employee engagement was 0.85, 0.83 and 0.79, respectively. The overall reliability of the 8 items was 0.87. High inter-dimensional correlations, ranging between 0.58 and 0.78 was observed.

### **Analytic approach**

A two-hierarchical linear model was developed (Ringle *et al.*, 2020). Analysis of Moment Structure (AMOS) 26.0 and the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) 21.0 was used to evaluate the efficacy of the proposed model and hypotheses (Hair *et al.*, 2020; Sarstedt *et al.*, 2020). A confirmatory factor analysis was conducted (Henseler and Schuberth, 2020). The measurement model was put to the test in the first step (Mehmetoglu and Venturini, 2021). Construct reliability was examined (Cho, 2016; Rhemtulla *et al.*, 2020). The criterion for convergent validity and construct validity was examined (Cheah *et al.*, 2018; Schuberth *et al.*, 2018). Discriminant validity between constructs was examined (Radomir and Moiescu, 2019).

The over model was tested in the subsequent stage (Henseler, 2017; Hwang *et al.*, 2020). The Baron and Kenny (1986) classical product approach was employed to test the mediation

concept (Hayes, 2018; Memon *et al.*, 2018). Figure 1 shows a representation of the mediation model.

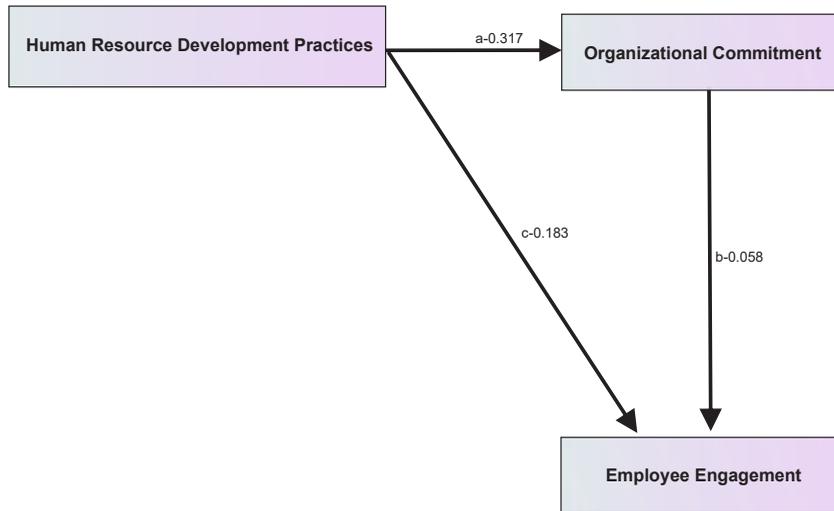
*Common method bias*

Several a-priori measures were applied in addressing the issue of common method bias (Jakobsen and Jensen, 2015; Kong *et al.*, 2018). During the pre-test study, ambiguous questions were clarified, psychological separation of constructs were ensured as well the provision of mid-point scales for each survey item (Baker *et al.*, 2018; Minbashian *et al.*, 2019). To lessen social desirability bias, respondents' anonymity and confidentiality were assured (Garg, 2019; Spector *et al.*, 2019). Harman's one-factor test was used as a post hoc evaluation (Antonakis, 2017; Lin and Tsai, 2019). The findings demonstrate that the established benchmarks were sufficient (Bucic *et al.*, 2017; Griffiths *et al.*, 2019). Common method bias consequences remained insignificant as warranted these approaches.

**Results**

A good model fit was established by a three-factor CFA model representing HRD practices, organizational commitment and employee engagement (2/df = 2.15, root mean squared error approximation (RMSEA) = 0.051, standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) = 0.042, Tucker–Lewis index (TLI) = 0.986 and comparative fit index (CFI) = 0.979) (McNeish and Wolf, 2021; Savalei, 2021). Estimates of the coefficient ranged from 0.81 to 0.92 (Sellbom and Tellegen, 2019; Shi *et al.*, 2019). The standard estimates ranged from 0.74–0.88 (Chin *et al.*, 2020; Sharma *et al.*, 2021). The range of estimates for average variance extracted (AVE) was 0.55–0.84, whereas the range of estimates for composite reliability (CR) was 0.85–0.93 (Jing *et al.*, 2022; Sarstedt *et al.*, 2019). Discriminant validity was achieved (Henseler *et al.*, 2015; Franke and Sarstedt, 2019).

Table 2 presents descriptive statistics and correlation analysis, while Table 3 presents the results of the model test. Table 4 displays CFA results, while Table 5 presents discriminant validity test results. Table 6 displays the results of the hypothesis test, whereas Table 7



**Figure 1.**  
Model of mediation  
with path coefficient

Source(s): Figure by authors

displays results of HRD practices effect test. HRD practices and affective commitment were significantly associated (0.736,  $p < 0.05$ ), thereby supporting Hypothesis 1. HRD practices and continuance commitment were shown to be non-significantly associated (0.391 $p > 0.05$ ). Hypothesis 2 is unsupported. HRD practices and normative commitment were shown to be non-significantly associated ( $-0.456, p > 0.05$ ). Consequently, hypothesis 3 is unsupported. Employee engagement and organizational commitment are significantly associated (0.396,  $p < 0.05$ ), hence supporting Hypothesis 4. Organizational commitment mediates the association between HRD practices and employee engagement (0.519,  $p < 0.05$ ), thereby supporting Hypothesis 5. HRD practices had a significant indirect (mediated) effect on employee engagement (0.058,  $p < 0.05$ ) (Memon *et al.*, 2018; Rasoolimanesh *et al.*, 2021).

**Discussion**

This study provides essential empirical insights in comprehending whether organizational commitment mediates the relationship between HRD practices and employee engagement. The results show HRD practices and affective commitment are significantly associated. HRD practices and continuance commitment were shown to be non-significantly associated.

HRD practices and normative commitment were shown to be non-significantly associated. HRD practices are positively associated with higher organizational commitment (Bisharat *et al.*, 2017; Guest, 2017; Sung and Choi, 2011). Employee commitment and loyalty are boosted by their satisfaction with organizations HRD strategies and practices (Mackay, 2018; Naz *et al.*, 2016; Yap *et al.*, 2010).

Items	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5
1. HRD practices	12.18	4.19	1				
2. Affective commitment	9.36	3.68	0.435**	1			
3. Continuance commitment	9.48	3.71	0.338*	0.368**	1		
4. Normative commitment	9.63	3.73	0.394**	0.338*	0.278**	1	
5. Employee engagement	15.29	5.82	0.579**	0.471**	0.409**	0.486**	1

**Note(s):** \*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). \*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

**Source(s):** Table by authors

**Table 2.** Descriptive statistics, correlations, and scale reliability

Model	$\chi^2$	Df	$\chi^2/df$	$P$	RMSEA	SRMR	TLI	CFI
<i>First order CFA</i>								
HRD practices	197.405	64	3.08	0.000	0.055	0.053	0.925	0.938
Employee engagement	188.584	66	2.85	0.000	0.056	0.051	0.924	0.927
Organizational commitment	193.412	68	2.84	0.000	0.057	0.050	0.919	0.936
<i>Second order CFA</i>								
HRD practices	196.306	64	3.06	0.000	0.056	0.054	0.942	0.951
Employee engagement	191.472	66	2.98	0.000	0.057	0.052	0.962	0.958
Organizational commitment	190.412	68	2.80	0.000	0.058	0.051	0.948	0.963
Measurement model-overall model	192.814	62	2.97	0.000	0.054	0.045	0.957	0.969
Structural model -overall model	103.442	48	2.15	0.000	0.051	0.042	0.986	0.979

**Note(s):** RMSEA = Root mean square of approximation; SRMR=Standardized Root Mean Residual; TLI = Tucker–Lewis index; CFI=Comparative fit index; \* $p < 0.05$

**Source(s):** Table by authors

**Table 3.** Results of the measurement and structural model test

Factor	Items	(λ)	AVE	CR
HRD practices (α = 0.92)	Provision of personal development plan	0.875	0.55	0.92
	Provision of career advancement training	0.854		
	Employee training is supported	0.726		
	Employee career-management programs are supported	0.744		
	Systematic program to assess the abilities and interests of employees	0.745		
	Employees are given the training they need to advance in their careers	0.834		
Affective commitment (α = 0.84)	Career counseling and planning aid is provided to employees	0.761	0.84	0.91
	I would be more than pleased to continue working with this organization in the future	0.846		
	I feel very personally connected to the organization	0.844		
	I could easily develop a close relationship with another organization the same way I have with this one	0.853		
	I honestly think that I am to blame for the problems the company is having	0.834		
Continuance commitment (α = 0.82)	Even if I wanted to, it would be very difficult for me to leave my company at this time	0.748	0.77	0.85
	leaving the organization would require me to incur significant personal expense	0.755		
	I could quit my job right now without spending too much money	0.774		
	I would experience too much upheaval in my life if I choose to leave my organization right now	0.806		
	Most workers change jobs far too frequently	0.814		
Normative commitment (α = 0.81)	Staying with one organization is crucial, in my opinion	0.796	0.67	0.91
	Things are better when employees work at a single employer for the duration of their careers	0.836		
	Even if another job came along, I wouldn't want to quit this one	0.788		
	I put everything I have into my work	0.885		
Employee engagement (α = 0.87)	I work really hard at what I do	0.864	0.64	0.93
	I take pride in the work I perform	0.756		
	I feel motivated at work	0.749		
	I'm interested in my job	0.755		
	I'm content with the work I do	0.844		
	I concentrate on my assignment at work	0.791		
My job is given a lot of attention	0.754			

**Table 4.** Confirmatory factor analysis factor names, factor loadings and Cronbach's alpha

**Note(s):** AVE represents average variance extracted; CR represents composite reliability. All factor loadings are significant at  $p < 0.05$   
**Source(s):** Table by authors

	1	2	3	4	5
1. HRD practices	(0.814)				
2. Affective commitment	0.118	(0.826)			
3. Continuance commitment	0.148	0.528	(0.747)		
4. Normative commitment	0.513	0.247	0.376	(0.782)	
5. Employee engagement	0.188	0.428	0.628	0.296	(0.821)

**Table 5.** Discriminant validity

**Note(s):** Values in diagonal represent the squared root estimate of average variance extracted (AVE)  
**Source(s):** Table by authors

Hypothesis	Beta coefficient	p value	Result
H1: HRD practices is significantly associated with affective commitment	0.736	0.001	Accepted
H2: HRD practices is significantly associated with continuance commitment	0.391	0.238	Rejected
H3: HRD practices are significantly associated with normative commitment	-0.456	0.158	Rejected
H4: Employee engagement is significantly associated with organizational commitment	0.396	0.003	Accepted
H5: Organizational commitment mediates the association between HRD practices and employee engagement	0.519	0.002	Accepted

**Table 6.** Inferences drawn on hypotheses

Source(s): Table by authors

	HRD practices Direct	Indirect	Total effect	p value
Organizational commitment	0.317		0.317	0.000
Employee engagement	0.183	0.058	0.241	0.000

**Table 7.** Standardized direct, indirect and total effects of HRD practices

Source(s): Table by authors

The results also indicate employee engagement and organizational commitment are significantly associated. Engaged employees have a sense of attachment to their jobs and act independently to fulfill job requirements (Gupta and Shaheen, 2017; Saks, 2019; Shuck and Reio, 2011). Employee engagement enhances organizational effectiveness, competitive advantage and innovation (Radic et al., 2020; Levitats and Vigoda-Gadot's, 2020; Welch, 2011). Prior studies have revealed a positive relationship between employee engagement and organizational commitment (e.g. Albrecht and Marty, 2020; Presbitero et al., 2019; Rameshkumar, 2020).

The results further reveal that organizational commitment mediates the association between HRD practices and employee engagement. Committed employees display-positive behavior at work and are more satisfied with their jobs (Agarwal and Sajid, 2017; Bakker and Demerouti, 2007; Yeh, 2019). Organizational commitment influences employee performance, organizational effectiveness and employee retention (Hung et al., 2018; Mangundjaya, 2012; Noesgaard and Jørgensen, 2023).

*Theoretical implications*

The supposition for the enhancement of organizational commitment and a further investigation into the nexus between HRD practices, organizational commitment and employee engagement is supported by the study. The study's findings shed light on the ambiguity in literature on HRD practices, organizational commitment and employee engagement (Jawaad et al., 2019; Rafik et al., 2019; Wollard, 2011). HRD practices and affective commitment are significantly associated. Affective commitment is recognized as the most consistent and strongest commitment among the organizational commitment components (Allen, 2003; Meyer and Smith, 2000).

The results corroborate past studies that show that employees' affective commitment is favorably connected with HRD interventions, including career growth and development, training and development opportunities, challenging assignments, compensation and

recognition (Chew and Chan, 2008; Maheshwari and Vohra, 2015; Yao and Wang, 2006). They also concur with an earlier study that found that investments and support for HRD activities have a positive effect on employee commitment, thereby increasing affective commitment (Sung and Choi, 2014). The findings support the postulation of researchers (Rawashdeh and Tamimi, 2019; Wong and Wong, 2017).

The results also indicate that employee engagement and organizational commitment are significantly associated. Employees who are highly engaged ensure the organizational competitiveness and success (Dixit and Bhati, 2012; Saks, 2019; Salas-Vallina *et al.*, 2021). The results corroborate past studies that show that increased engagement levels enhance performance, satisfaction, innovation and motivation (Memon *et al.*, 2021; Sandhya and Sulphrey, 2020; Schaufeli and Salanova, 2007). They also support earlier studies which show that enhanced engagement levels influence learning and motivation (Bailey *et al.*, 2017; Piyasena and Kottawatta, 2018). The findings validate the supposition of researchers (Boccoli *et al.*, 2023; Chen and Peng, 2021).

Furthermore, the results show that organizational commitment mediates the association between HRD practices and employee engagement. Organizational commitment contributes to employee readiness to change, well-being and growth (Jesus and Rowe, 2015; Kataria *et al.*, 2013; Labrague *et al.*, 2018). The results parallel earlier studies, which indicate that organizational commitment enhances employee loyalty, levels of job involvement and reduces turnover intentions (Gagné and Deci, 2005; Habib *et al.*, 2014; Nawaz and Pangil, 2016). They also concur with earlier studies that show that organizational commitment enhances organizational effectiveness, job satisfaction and fulfillment (Ekhsan, 2019; Nasuridin *et al.*, 2018; Tarigan and Ariani, 2015). The findings support the postulation of researchers (Jawaad *et al.*, 2019; Noesgaard and Jørgensen, 2023).

#### *Practical implication*

HRD practices are a factor that significantly affects how employees behave (Kura *et al.*, 2019; Soliman and Wahba, 2019; Otoo, 2022a, b). HRD practices enhance organizational commitment, skills, knowledge and motivation of employees (Kareem and Hussein, 2019). The results show HRD practices and affective commitment are significantly associated. Affective commitment has a favorable impact on preferred work behaviors like attendance, performance and citizenship behavior (Meyer *et al.*, 2002; Kim and Beehr, 2018; Wong and Wong, 2017). Rawashdeh and Tamimi (2019) contend that affective commitment is strengthened by anything that increases one's sense of autonomy, the level of personal competence and quality of work experiences.

Hotels would have to (re)evaluating affective commitment strategies where employees have a positive mind set and attitude towards work (Chen, 2007; Tarigan and Ariani, 2015). Agarwal and Sajid (2017) stressed of a positively significant relationship between affective commitment and desired outcome. Hotels would have to (re) examine affective commitment strategies where employees are content with their jobs and actually feel they were in charge of the company's problems (Meyer and Parfyonova, 2010; Paik *et al.*, 2007). The results also reveal employee engagement and organizational commitment are significantly associated. Engaged employees feel more connected to their organizations, have a positive mindset and attitude towards work (Ferguson, 2007; Truss *et al.*, 2006).

Hotels must (re)evaluate their employee engagement strategies where employees feel passionately committed to the organization (Buil *et al.*, 2019; Gašić and Berber, 2023). Employee engagement enables organizations human capital to transit from being strategic tools to being strategic partners (Doan *et al.*, 2021; Ruck *et al.*, 2017). Hotels would have to (re)

examine employee engagement practices where employees are engrossed in their tasks while at work and pay close attention to their assignments (Sun and Yoon, 2022; Vakira *et al.*, 2022).

The results further show that organizational commitment mediates the association between HRD practices and employee engagement. Organizational commitment improves organizational sustainability and productivity (Ghosh *et al.*, 2012; Harrison *et al.*, 2006; Kadiresan *et al.*, 2015). Fuller *et al.* (2003) emphasize that when workers feel appreciated and respected, they will stay devoted and loyal. Consequently, the hotel industry should promote the strengthening of organizational commitment in light of the fact that organizational commitment provides favorable workplace behaviors and enhanced job involvement and satisfaction (Meyer and Herscovitch, 2001; Tan *et al.*, 2019; Yeh, 2019).

The hotel industry would have to adopt, design and implement proactive HRD intervention to maintain highly engaged and committed employees for organizational competitiveness and sustainability.

### Limitations and suggestions for future study

It's important to consider any potential flaws when evaluating the results in spite of the theoretical and practical advancements of the study. Firstly, because the study is cross-sectional, the possibility that the results could be of reverse causality or a causal relationship cannot be completely ruled out (Churchill and Iacobucci, 2018; Hancock *et al.*, 2019). To reach these goals, future longitudinal research is required (Denzin and Lincoln, 2018; Saunders *et al.*, 2019). The study solely took into account the arbitrary perspectives of employees (Schein and Schein, 2018; Otoo, 2022a, b). The use of objective measures should be encouraged in future studies (Chiew *et al.*, 2019; Fuller *et al.*, 2016). Common method bias is less likely when objective measurements are used (Simmering *et al.*, 2015; Williams and McGonagle, 2016).

By examining a mediation mechanism, the present study sought to clarify the association between HRD practices and employee engagement. However, in order to conduct an exhaustive and focused inquiry, further theoretical and practical work is required to have a comprehensive grasp of the nexus between HRD practices and employee engagement. Future studies should explore the potential mediating mechanism of employee engagement in the relationship between job resources and employee turnover. Finally, the generalizability of the findings will be constrained due to the research's hotel industry focus. Applying the model to different fields or sectors might be beneficial.

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