

Labor Practices and Organizational Commitment

BUENAS PRÁCTICAS LABORALES Y COMPROMISO ORGANIZACIONAL

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RESUMEN

En el marco de la Responsabilidad Social Empresarial, la percepción de los trabajadores respecto de las políticas y prácticas de recursos humanos que implementa la organización, son relevantes en su compromiso organizacional. Se analiza la relación entre la percepción del trabajador de las políticas y prácticas de recursos humanos de la empresa y el constructo multidimensional de compromiso organizacional, a través de una investigación de tipo correlacional, de corte transversal, para una muestra de 89 trabajadores provenientes de 7 organizaciones de la Provincia de Ñuble. El objetivo es determinar si las políticas y prácticas laborales implementadas por las empresas se relaciona con el grado de compromiso organizacional que manifiesta el trabajador, medido a través del instrumento propuesto por Meyer y Allen en 1991. Los resultados muestran que la mayoría de las buenas prácticas analizadas, tienen una correlación positiva y moderada con el compromiso con la organización. Se destaca la relación positiva entre el compromiso y al menos uno de los aspectos de cada "Buena Práctica Laboral" estudiada: Beneficios y Compensaciones, Salud y Seguridad, Procesos de Recursos Humanos, Capacitación y Desarrollo Profesional, y Conciliación Laboral.

(Dávila M, Troncoso C, 2018. Buenas Prácticas Laborales y Compromiso Organizacional. *Cienc Trab.* Sep-Dic; 20 [63]: 145-150).

Palabras clave: COMPROMISO ORGANIZACIONAL, PRÁCTICAS DE RECURSOS HUMANOS, RESPONSABILIDAD SOCIAL EMPRESARIAL.

ABSTRACT

Within the framework of Corporate Social Responsibility, workers' perceptions regarding human resource policies and practices implemented by the organization are relevant to the organizational commitment that they display towards the institution. We analyze the relationship between workers' perceptions of company human resource policies and practices and the multidimensional construct of organizational commitment through cross-sectional correlational research for a sample of 89 workers from 7 different organizations in the Ñuble Province, Chile. This study aims to understand workers' perceptions regarding the implementation, by the organization, of certain labor policies and practices, and its relationship with the degree of organizational commitment, measured through the instrument proposed by Meyer and Allen in 1991. The results show that most of the good practices analyzed have a high positive and moderate correlation with organizational commitment. The positive relationship between commitment and at least one of the aspects of each "Good Labor Practice" studied is highlighted: Benefits and Compensations, Health and Safety, Human Resources Processes, Training and Professional Development and Work Conciliation.

Key words: ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT, HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT, CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY, GOOD LABOR PRACTICES.

INTRODUCTION

Within the framework of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), one of the stakeholders which organizations must satisfy is the so-called "internal public". This dimension refers to the company's performance in relation to its employees.¹ This aspect of CSR is materialized through policies, measures, and processes oriented towards good management of human resources and corresponds to Good Labor Practices (GLP). These are relevant

due to their impact on people's work and lives, since work and interpersonal relationships that converge in the organizational space intervene in the balance of the physical and psychosocial health of workers.

Many studies have linked the relationship between Human Resource Management and organizational performance.² Furthermore, although proper management does not ensure competitive success, organizations that show superior performance and that are sustainable over time generally rely on a stock of distinctive skills and competencies based on human resources. In fact, according to the criteria developed by Barney³, human resources are a source of a potential sustainable competitive advantage when they are valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable.⁴

Organizational policies that are considered to be good management of Human Resources seek to increase the quality of working life and the well-being of workers. In this study, practices along this line have been systematized into six dimensions: Health and Safety; Communication and Work Relationships; Training and Professional Development, Work Conciliation; Benefits and Compensations, and Human Resource Management Processes.

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Recibido: 7 de junio de 2018 / Aceptado: 23 de octubre de 2018

This study addresses one of the current central challenges of human resources management: studying the relationships established between workers' perceptions of human resource policies and practices, and their level of commitment to the organization for a group of companies in the Ñuble Province, Chile. Additionally, we study the relationship between seniority, remuneration, and type of contract on the level of commitment. Thus, we intend to contribute to the literature by highlighting the importance of applying good human resources management through the design and implementation of policies and practices that strengthen workers' organizational commitment.

Theoretical framework

The CSR was established in a business vision which incorporates sustainable social, economic, and environmental performance as a transversal and strategic strategy, offering an added value to all stakeholders of the organization as well as society in general.⁵

From the perspective of the ILO (International Labor Organization), a good work practice is a collective experience based on respecting fundamental principles and rights at work. This provides well-being to workers and progress to companies, thus improving the level of internal relationships, guaranteeing adequate working and employment conditions, and facilitating increases in productivity and salaries.⁶

The ISO 260007, moreover, identifies five issues related to labor practices that all organizations should consider: (1) to contribute to increasing the quality of life of individuals by creating jobs, employment stability, and decent work; (2) to continuously improve working conditions and social protection, including remuneration, working hours, holidays, hiring and firing practices, maternity protection, and access to welfare services; (3) to facilitate agreements, negotiations, and information exchange that seek to establish consensuses between employer representatives and workers in relation to their economic and social concerns; (4) to encourage and guarantee the highest possible level of mental, physical, and social well-being of workers, and to prevent damage to health that may be caused by working conditions; and (5) to ensure human development and training in the workplace in order to improve the quality of life of individuals.

Having reviewed several CSR Manuals, and specifically the "Internal Public" dimension^{1,7-13}, GLP have been established that raise organizational operating standards and that aim to construct better working conditions. Among them, the following dimensions are considered:

- **Health and Safety:** The practices that protect the safety of workers against accidents and occupational diseases. They cover everything from information delivery and systematization to the implementation of procedures for the prevention of occupational risks and the promotion of healthy workplaces, among other initiatives.
- **Communication and Work Relationships:** The measures that establish communication channels between the employer and worker, allowing participation and opinions, in order to strengthen the relationship and its permanence over time. Dialogue mechanisms between the employer and workers were considered, as well as corrective actions to improve the work environment.
- **Training and Professional Development:** The practices that promote and facilitate staff training and development, including investments of time and money made by companies to train

workers, as well as the planning, recording, and systematization of training in the organization.

- **Work Conciliation:** The practices developed in order to allow workers to coordinate their family and work life. This objective is materialized with measures oriented towards facilitating flexibility in working hours and designing integration activities, in which workers and their families participate.

- **Benefits and Compensations:** The set of welfare policies that include economic and non-economic incentives for workers (rewards, bonuses, or participation). It also includes social benefit plans and salary payment that are in line with the market.

- **Human Resource Processes:** The policies and processes within organizations that facilitate human resource management and, in turn, ensure equality and transparency in the treatment of their workers. Within this category, there are measures such as the existence of position profiles, induction processes for new recruitments, applications of formal and systematic performance evaluations to employees, and transparent promotion and general access systems.

It has been established that organizations' concerns regarding these topics influence various organizational indicators. Job satisfaction levels of workers, for example, influence turnover, since employees are more likely to resign when their job satisfaction is low. In turn, Human Resources Management practices (supervision, job training, and salary practices), are positively and significantly correlated with job satisfaction.¹⁴ Non-monetary recognition, skill development, fair rewards, and work relationships with high exchanges of information and participation are negatively related to the intention of leaving the organization. Additionally, fair labor practices as well as affective and continuance organizational commitment have an effect on turnover, especially among the most qualified staff.¹⁵

One of the constructs of organizational behavior that is affected by the GLP is the Organizational Commitment of workers. The literature suggests that certain initiatives that are directly oriented towards internal stakeholders have a positive impact on the perception and judgment that these stakeholders form regarding the corporate image. This, in turn, affects the development of their individual behavior, specifically impacting their level of organizational.¹⁶

It has been determined that the perception of human resource practices, such as staff selection, performance evaluation, the description of positions, and empowerment influence affective commitment.¹⁷ It has also been established that training and rewards practices are significantly and positively associated with workers' organizational commitment.¹⁸

Recently, it has been established that there is a potential impact of strategic practices in human resources and constructs such as organizational commitment, leadership, and job satisfaction in the development of certain industries such as tourism, banking, and telecommunications^{19,20}, establishing a positive relationship in all of them. In a recent study of the service sector in the United Kingdom, Human Resources Management (HRM) has also been linked with positive behavioral results related to organizational citizenship and intentions of rotation, both as a consequence of organizational commitment.²¹

A recent study suggests a direct relationship between human resource practices and organizational commitment. Juhdi²², for example, determined that the four human resource practices: Performance appraisal, career management, person-job fit, and

compensation are positively related to organizational commitment. Imran and Ahmed²³ demonstrated that compensation HR practices, perceived organizational support, work life policies, training and development, career opportunities, empowerment, organizational climate, and communication have a direct and positive impact on organizational commitment. Moreover, Sanders et al²⁴ established that employees who perceive the human resources management system of an organization as distinctive tend to be affectively committed to the organization.

In this study, organizational commitment is considered according to the definition of Meyer & Allen²⁵, that is, as a psychological state that characterizes the relationship between a person and an organization, which presents consequences regarding the decision to continue in the organization or leave it. According to the authors, this construct has a multidimensional nature and is composed of: (1) affective commitment, which refers to a worker's emotional attachment and identification with the organization, and which causes the worker to stay with the company willingly. Employees with strong affective commitment remain in the organization because they want to; (2) continuance commitment, is associated with the need to remain in the organization, caused by the costs or loss of benefits resulting from individual investments made in the organization that would be lost if the individual were to leave it. Workers remain in the organization because they need to; and finally (3) normative commitment, which reflects the feeling of individuals' obligation to remain in the organization, is defined as a link with the organization due to the obligation that the individual feels towards it, since he believes it is the right thing to do and what he should do.

The importance of having committed workers is that they can potentially improve job performance, ensure permanence, loyalty, and identification of human resources with the company, significantly reducing turnover levels, absenteeism, dissatisfaction, and demotivation of workers.²⁶ Moreover, these factors can affect organization costs by involving the repetition of staff selection, monitoring, and training. Therefore, a committed worker allows the organization to focus its attention on performance and not on the variety of attitudes that can cause conflicts and confrontations.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study design is correlational and cross-sectional. 89 individuals participated, belonging to 7 companies from different areas (forestry, agro-industry, and tourism) in the city of Chillán, Chile. Individuals were randomly selected among workers from the companies that showed interest in participating in the study. The number of respondents per company was at least 10% of the plant. Information was collected using a survey, which was applied between July and August 2017.

This questionnaire was prepared based on closed questions and Likert scales. In the first part, in order to measure workers' perceptions regarding their situation and work environment within their company, and based on the reviewed literature and previous studies, 20 items were formulated. These items were associated with health and safety measures, communication and labor relationships, training and professional development, work conciliation, benefits and compensations, and human resource policies implemented by institutions. Each of these items gives rise to a variable that reflects the individuals' perceptions of the degree to

which they are in agreement with each statement. The measurement was done with a 5-level Likert scale ranging from "completely disagree" to "completely agree". These 20 items give rise to a scale of 20-100 points, based on which a good labor practices index (GLPI) is determined.

The evaluation of "Organizational Commitment" (OC) was performed based on the proposal of Allen and Meyer^{27,28}, in which commitment is understood as a multidimensional construct that covers three dimensions: affective, continuance, and normative. The questionnaire measures commitment and is composed of 18 items corresponding to statements that are presented on a 5-level Likert scale, where 1 corresponds to "completely disagree" up to 5, which corresponds to "completely agree".

The first dimension involves "Affective Commitment" (AC), the second includes "Continuance Commitment" (CC) and finally, "Normative Commitment" (NC).

In order to determine the level of global organizational commitment, as for each of its dimensions, an index has been used that takes values between 0 and 1, and which are classified in ranges as shown in Table 1.

Table 1.
Commitment classification by range.

Index Range	Commitment classification
[0-0.5]	Weak
[0.5-0.7]	Moderately low
[0.7-0.8]	Moderately high
[0.8-1]	Strong

In the last part, for individual characterization, 4 variables were considered: gender (G), work seniority (WS), income level (IL), and contract type (CT).

Correlational hypotheses between the different variables described above and organizational commitment were proposed, considered both globally and by category. In general terms, we expected to find: (i) positive relationships between the different commitment types and the perception of good labor practices in the different areas studied, (ii) positive relationships between commitment, seniority in the company, remunerations, and employment contracts. We studied correlations between the specified variables and constructs using the Spearman correlation coefficient in SPSS.

RESULTS

The reliability of the instrument used to measure commitment was established by the Cronbach's Alpha index. Table 2 shows the indices obtained for each of the commitment types evaluated. The results for the Organizational Commitment scale are excellent ($\alpha > .9$). In the case of the scales used to measure Continuance and Normative Commitment, the result is good ($\alpha > .8$), and acceptable ($\alpha > .7$) in the case of Affective Commitment.

Table 2.
Reliability indices of the instrument used.

Commitment type	Cronbach's Alpha
Affective Commitment	0.794
Continuance Commitment	0.834
Normative Commitment	0.834
Organizational Commitment	0.903

Regarding the workers' perceptions of good labor practices in their company, the scale used showed an excellent internal consistency index (Cronbach's alpha=0.922), which indicates that the proposed instrument for measurement is reliable.

With the information that was gathered using both instruments, it can be observed that, in general terms, there is a tendency for companies with a better perception of good labor practices (GLPI) to also show a higher commitment index (CI). Table 3 shows the percentage of workers per company according to level of commitment. It can be seen that companies 3 and 6, in which the majority of the surveyed workers show strong Organizational Commitment ($0.8 > OC \text{ index} \leq 1$), are also those that record the highest percentages of good labor practices; meanwhile, company 7, in which the majority of workers record a weak commitment level ($0 \geq \text{índice CO} \leq 0.5$), also has the lowest perception index of good labor practices.

Table 3. Level of organizational commitment and good labor practices index according to company.

Company	% Workers by Commitment Level				Average OC index	Average GLP Index
	Weak	Moderate-Low	Moderate-High	Strong		
1	---	100.00%	---	---	0.618	0.734
2	40.00%	60.00%	---	---	0.503	0.835
3	---	11.11%	22.22%	66.67%	0.844	0.925
4	21.74%	56.52%	17.39%	4.35%	0.620	0.722
5	14.29%	42.86%	14.29%	28.57%	0.704	0.823
6	7.14%	21.43%	17.86%	53.57%	0.776	0.888
7	53.85%	46.15%	---	---	0.502	0.632

The correlation analysis between the organizational commitment index, evaluated both in general terms, as well as in its affective, normative, and continuance areas, and the index of perception of good practices presented a positive and significant correlation at the 0.01 level among all the measurements. Table 4 shows the results of the correlation. A good correlation ($0.60 < \rho < 0.80$) is observed between Organizational and Continuance Commitment with the perception of Good Practices, and a moderate correlation ($0.40 < \rho < 0.60$), between this and Affective and Normative commitment.

Table 4. Correlation between commitment with perception of good labor practices.

	Correlation coefficient with perception of Good Practices	Significance
Continuance Commitment (CC)	0.672	0.000
Affective Commitment (AC)	0.574	0.000
Normative Commitment (NC)	0.597	0.000
Organizational Commitment (OC)	0.704	0.000

When analyzing the correlations between commitment and each of the good practices considered separately, it was observed that all the variables associated with good labor practices had a positive correlation, whether low ($0.2 < \rho < 0.4$) or moderate ($0.40 < \rho < 0.60$), and were significant at the 0.01 level, with each of the commitment indicators studied. Table 5 summarizes the results of the analysis. The highest correlation coefficient ($\rho = 0.604$) occurs between organizational commitment (OC) and the variable

associated with the non-monetary recognition of work performed, followed by concern for the workers' emotional health and stress ($\rho = 0.554$), the clarity that workers have regarding their functions and responsibilities ($\rho=0.548$), the development of social and recreational activities for workers and their family ($\rho = 0.543$), and job training ($\rho = 0.508$).

The labor practices with the lowest correlation coefficient with organizational commitment in general (between 0.361 and 0.396) are associated with health and safety, communication within the company, facilities for personal procedures, economic compensation for good performance, and the degree of knowledge of the mission and values.

Continuance commitment (CC) has a higher correlation coefficient with the variable Social and family activities ($\rho=0.564$), performance evaluation ($\rho=0.564$), and non-monetary recognition of work performed ($\rho = 0.540$).

Table 5. Correlation coefficients between commitment and labor practices and policies.

Labor policies and practices	CC	AC	NC	OC
Risk prevention	0.410	0.371	0.291	0.413
Health and safety	0.381	0.288	0.265	0.361
Emotional health and stress	0.466	0.443	0.597	0.554
Work environment	0.355	0.328	0.478	0.425
Communication within the company	0.299	0.310	0.317	0.370
Representation in front of the employer	0.447	0.387	0.453	0.482
Participation in decision-making	0.346	0.416	0.405	0.443
Job training	0.390	0.408	0.518	0.508
Job projection	0.491	0.276	0.336	0.403
Resources for task development	0.369	0.419	0.408	0.440
Facilities for personal procedures	0.367	0.261	0.245	0.331
Social and family activities	0.564	0.395	0.420	0.543
Economic support for personal problems	0.406	0.396	0.318	0.432
Employment stability	0.458	0.399	0.379	0.468
Salaries according to the market	0.373	0.390	0.474	0.464
Economic compensation for good performance	0.412	0.262	0.364	0.397
Work recognition	0.540	0.528	0.505	0.604
Known and shared mission and values	0.405	0.308	0.298	0.396
Clarity of functions and responsibilities	0.478	0.494	0.472	0.548
Performance evaluation	0.563	0.350	0.279	0.484

All correlations are significant at the 0.01 level (bilateral).

In relation to affective commitment (AC), work recognition is the variable with which it has the highest correlation coefficient ($\rho=0.528$), also observing a moderate correlation ($0.40 < \rho < 0.60$) with the variables of emotional health and stress, participation in decision making, job training, resources for task development, work recognition, and clarity of functions and responsibilities.

Normative commitment (NC) has a higher coefficient of correlation with the variables of emotional health and stress ($\rho=0.597$), job training ($\rho=0.518$), and work recognition ($\rho=0.508$).

Table 6 shows the results obtained when correlating commitment and its different dimensions, with the variables of gender (GEN), seniority in the company (SEN), remunerations (REM), and worker's type of contract (TC). Only the variables seniority in the company and worker's type of contract have a positive and significant correlation (at the 0.01 level) with organizational commitment (OC); nonetheless, this is low. In relation to the dimensions of commitment, the highest coefficient ($\rho=0.341$) occurs between affective commitment and

seniority in the company, followed by the correlation between continuance commitment and the worker's type of contract ($\rho=0.3$). It is also observed that gender (a dichotomous variable where 1 represents women and 0 men) has a negative correlation with normative and continuance commitment.

Table 6.
Correlation coefficients between commitment and personal variables.

	CC	AC	NC	OC
GEN	-0.215*	-0.081	-0.228*	-0.198
SEN	0.235**	0.341**	0.227*	0.274**
REM	0.145	0.192	0.137	0.171
TC	0.300**	0.276**	0.238*	0.299**

** The correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (bilateral).

* The correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (bilateral).

DISCUSSION

Conclusions

The results show a positive and significant correlation between all the good labor practices analyzed (Health and Safety, Communication and Labor Relationships, Training and Professional Development, Work Conciliation, Benefits and Compensations, and Human Resource Processes) and the workers' levels of organizational commitment. In this sense, the results are in line with what was posed by Obeidat & Abdallah²⁹, who studied the relationship between certain human resource practices (recruitment methods, training and development, performance evaluations, and reward systems) and Organizational Commitment, determining that these have a significant influence on the three dimensions: affective, continuance, and normative commitment.

When examining the regression, moderate to high correlation coefficients were found among some labor practices such as: the non-monetary recognition of workers, the concern shown by the organization for workers' emotional health and stress levels, the clarity of assigned functions and responsibilities, the development of social and recreational activities and work training with organizational commitment. The former suggests that an explanatory relationship would exist among these factors, which will be addressed in a future study. These results differ from Chew & Chan³⁰, who found that organizational commitment is positively

affected by remuneration, recognition, and challenging tasks, but not by training and career development.

The general results indicate that workers who perceive that the organization possesses good work practices are committed to the organization. Non-monetary recognition is considered a very important variable in order to encourage workers' organizational commitment. The results of this study are consistent with Hassan & Mahmood³¹, who, through a Pearson correlation and regression, determined that Human Resource Management practices positively influence employees' organizational commitment. Furthermore, the study revealed that another important factor is the perception regarding job training, which also has a positive impact on employees' organizational commitment. This would be consistent with the results by Mohyin et al³², who found that formal and informal training strategies adopted by organizations are useful for developing committed and professional employees. These results are reaffirmed in Ehrhardt et al³³, who established a direct relationship between perceived training and organizational commitment.

For organizations, it is important to have committed workers, not only because this can potentially improve work performance, but also because it ensures the permanence, loyalty, and identification of their human resources with the company. This may result in a significant decrease in turnover, absenteeism, dissatisfaction, and demotivation levels in workers.

Limitations and future studies

In this study, we evaluated six dimensions of human resources (grouped into 20 practices in total in the field of human resources management) and their relationship with organizational commitment. The challenge is to expand the number of observations and to make a comparison within and between industries, in order to determine whether there are variations in the impact of GLP on organizational commitment. In addition, this study was conducted in the Ñuble Province, Chile; therefore, future studies could address causal relationships and investigate the relationship between constructs, extending the territorial scope.

Presentado en XXXIII Encuentro Nacional de Escuelas y Facultades de Administración, ENEFA 2017, realizado en la Universidad de la Serena, Chile. Noviembre 2017. Paper Ganador del Track Recursos Humanos.

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