

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATION AND CONCLUSION

1.5 Introduction

The chapter begin with the summary of the background of the current study. Following this, the chapter provides discussion about the findings from Chapter Four. Then, the chapter explain the theoretical and practical implication of this study. Finally, the chapter describe the limitations of this study and the recommendations for future research, follow by the conclusion of this study.

5.2 Background of the Study

This study developed a conceptual framework (see Section 2.9) to help address the gaps identified previously in Section 1.3. The conceptual framework in this study included the factors that affect service quality, such as human resource management (HRM) practices, organizational commitment, job satisfaction and job involvement. In specific terms, the conceptual framework proposed the direct effect of HRM practices on service quality, organizational commitment, job satisfaction and job involvement. The framework also proposed the mediating role of organizational commitment, job satisfaction and job involvement in the relationship between HRM practices and service quality

This study makes four contributions. First, it addressed the effect of HRM practices on service quality in the context of higher education in Yemen, an underdeveloped country.

Second, it is contributed to the literature by addressing the effect of HRM practices on three components of employee work attitudes (organizational commitment, job satisfaction, job involvement) based on a specific sample perspective (the academic staff at Aden University. Aden University is one of the public higher education in Yemen). Previous researchers have continuously encouraged to study the components of employee work attitudes together (Morrow, 1983; Brooke, Russell, & Price, 1988; Wegge et al., 2007) because employee work attitude at the workplace is result from a combination of attitudes (Blau & Boal, 1987).

Third, this study contributed to the literature by addressing the effect of employee work attitude (organizational commitment, job satisfaction, job involvement) on service quality in the context of public higher education in Yemen.

Fourth, this study contributed to the literature by providing an empirical evidence about the effect of HRM practices and service quality through work attitude (organizational commitment, job satisfaction, job involvement), which helps to answer the big question by scholars (Paauwe & Blok, 2015; Kloutsiniotis & Mihail, 2018) "how HRM practices effect service quality?". Answering this question make the relationship between HRM practices and service quality clearer and understanding. In other word, it will lead to better understanding of how HRM practice related to service quality.

5.3 Discussion of Findings

5.3.1 HRM Practices and Service Quality

The first hypothesis in this study proposed that HRM practices have a direct effect on service quality. The results of the analysis (see Table 4.43 in Chapter 4) showed that HRM practices had a direct and positive effect on service quality. This finding was consistent with previous studies that were conducted in various contexts and with different samples (e.g., Worsfold, 1999, Browning 2006; Chand, 2010; Ueno, 2008; 2012; Husin, Chelladurai, & Musa, 2012; Tomar & Dhiman, 2013).

A possible reason for this finding could be that the academic staff at Aden University view the HRM practices there as a symbol of support from their university. This is because the university shows that it recognizes the efforts of the employees and cares about their well-being by providing them with training to enhance their knowledge and skills, giving them the opportunity to participate in the decision-making process, implementing fair performance appraisals, and offering an intensified compensation scheme. Such practices encourage the employees to reciprocate by making extra efforts to provide good service quality.

HRM practices also can strengthen the relationship between university and their employees. The relationship between the university and their employees starts when university initiative to follow the appropriate ways in process of selection and recruitment of its employees, investment in their employees by providing training and development to improve employee knowledge and skills, empowered them and provide opportunity to participate and use their experience, skills and ability within the workplace. A positive relationship between university and employees lead to improve service quality that provide to the customer, due to employee's perception about the

university effect the customer perception about service quality (Parkington & Schneider, 1979; Schneider, & Bowen, 1985; Gazzoli, Hancer, & Kim, 2013; Jaakkola, Helkkula, & Aarikka-Stenroos, 2015; Oh & Kim, 2017).

Another possible reason to explain the link between HRM practices and service quality in the context of Yemen is the social culture and social norms in society. Islam is the main religion in Yemen, and Yemeni society is one of the most conservative culture, and Islam plays a major role in their dealings and social relations (Donaldson, 2000). religious practices have become a norm and integrated into the people's way of life in Yemen (Alawi et al, 2016), and the practice of giving, fair treatment towards the employees, are important components in people's lifestyle in Yemen (Alawi & Masood, 2018). The social norms such as the norms of recognition of favours offered by others and norm of reciprocity have roots in the Islamic religion and social values in Yemen. Therefore, when the academic staff at Aden University view HRM practices as support from their university, they will reciprocate that by perform a good service quality to benefit and support their university. The culture and social norms in society can influence the organizational commitment and employee performance in Yemen (Alsamawi et al, 2019a; Alsamawi et al, 2019b; Emam, Jasi, and Tabash, 2019).

5.3.2 HRM Practices and Organizational Commitment

The second hypothesis of this study was related to the effect of HRM practices on organizational commitment. This hypothesis was supported by the results of the analysis, which revealed that HRM practices had a direct and positive effect on organizational commitment. In other words, the HRM practices at Aden University, such as recruitment and selection, training and development, participation, performance

appraisal and compensation, shaped the commitment of the academic staff towards the university. This finding was in line with previous studies which also found that HRM practices have a positive effect on organizational commitment (Nishii, Lepak, & Schneider, 2008; Edralin, 2008; Kooij et al 2013; Naeem, Mirza, Ayyub, & Lodhi, 2019; Valeau, Paille, Dubrulle & Guenin, 2019).

One of the mechanisms that is used by the university to show its commitment to and recognition of its academic staff is its HRM practices. When a university provides its academic staff with training and development programs to upgrade their skills and abilities, and opportunities to participate in decision making, recognizes their efforts and rewards them according to their performance, the academic staff will feel that they are valued by their university, and will be obligated to reciprocate by giving their full commitment to that university (Eisenberger, Fasolo & Davis-LaMastro, 1990; Gould-Williams & Davies, 2005; Kuvaas, 2008; Hemdi, 2009; Kooij, Guest, Clinton, Knight, Jansen & Dikkers, 2013; Ko & Walter, 2013).

5.3.3 HRM Practices and Job Satisfaction

The third hypothesis in this study was related to the effect of HRM practices on job satisfaction. The results of the analysis revealed that HRM practices had a positive and significant direct effect on job satisfaction. The finding of the current study was consistent with previous studies which also found that HRM practices have a positive effect on employee job satisfaction (Macky & Boxall, 2007; Gould-Williams & Mohamed, 2010; Boon et al., 2012; Kooij et al., 2013; Al-Shuaibi et al., 2014; Sobaih,

Ibrahim & Gabry, 2019; Hewagama, Boxall, Cheung & Hutchison, 2019; Khushk, 2019).

There are number of possible reasons to explain the link between HRM practices and job satisfaction. Firstly, the academic staff at Aden University probably view the HRM practices as an initiative by their university to provide organizational support. Therefore, they feel obligated to reciprocate with a positive attitude such as job satisfaction. Secondly, the implementation of HRM practices convey the message to the academic staff that the university cares about them and is willing to invest in their development. As a result, the academic staff are motivated to make extra efforts to benefit their university such as by displaying a high level of job satisfaction. Thirdly, HRM practices such as participation offer academic staff the opportunity to use their skills and knowledge at the workplace (the university), and this helps to foster their happiness in doing the job (Ko & Smith-Walter, 2013).

5.3.4 HRM Practices and Job Involvement

The fourth hypothesis of this study was related to the effect of HRM practices on job involvement. The results of the analysis revealed that HRM practices had a positive and significant direct effect on job involvement. According to this result, the HRM practices had the desired consequences on employee job involvement. The finding of this study was consistent with previous studies which found that HRM practices are powerful predictors of job involvement (Boon et al., 2007; Edralin, 2008; Butayeh & Al-Qatawneh, 2012; Ko & Smith-Walter, 2013; Huang, Ahlstrom, Lee, Chen & Hsieh, 2016).

The main idea behind the relationship between HRM practices and job involvement is that HRM practices provide employees with the opportunity to practise their skills and experience at the workplace. Also, HRM practices such as participation are the closest to autonomy (i.e., empower staff to be involved in decision making). Therefore, HRM practices that improve employee autonomy in participation, and give them the opportunity to apply their knowledge and skills can lead to the prediction of positive employee work attitudes, in particular, job involvement.

5.3.5 Organizational Commitment and Service Quality

This study proposed that organizational commitment will positively be related to service quality. The analysis result provides support to the hypothesis. It means that an employee organizational commitment is very important to deliver service quality. Organizations will face more difficulties to delivering the desirable level of service quality when their employees uncommitted (Al-refaei et al, 2019) or unwilling to exert any additional effort to benefit their organization (Zeithaml, Parasuraman & Berry, 1990; Al-Refaei, Zumrah, & Alshuhumi, 2019). This finding consistent with previous research that found significant effect of organizational commitment on service quality (Tsai & Wu, 2011; Chu, Tseng & Tsai, 2014; Hadian, 2017; Malhotra & Mukherjee, 2004; Mansour & Nusairat, 2012; Wong & Cheung 2014; Kloutsiniotis & Mihail, 2018; Al-Refaei, Zumrah, 2019).

The link between organizational commitment and service quality is possible because delivering the required level of service quality determined by employee and customer interaction through service encounter. During service encounter, the behaviour of committed employee will largely determine customer perceptions of

service quality (Boshoff & Tait, 1996). It is due to employee's behaviour reflects employee's willingness to accept and support organisational goals, and employees who identify support organisational goals generally perform good quality of service.

5.3.6 Job satisfaction and service quality

This study proposed that job satisfaction could have a positive effect on service quality. The result of data analysis shows that this hypothesis was supported. There is a positive and significant direct effect of job satisfaction on service quality. This finding reveals that when employees feel happy and satisfied with their organization, they will perform a good service quality to organization's customers (Malhotra & Mukherjee, 2004; Zeithaml & Bitner, 2000). On the other hand, organizations will face more difficulties in delivering the desirable level of service quality when their employees' dissatisfaction or not happy because they will be unwilling and not motivated to exert any additional effort to benefit their organization (Zeithaml, Parasuraman & Berry, 1990). This finding is consistent with previous studies which found that employee job satisfaction can influence service quality (Trivellas & Dargenidou, 2009; Waqas et al, 2012; Mansour & Nusairat, 2012; Kim & Han, 2013; Wong & Cheung 2014).

This finding is consistent with the social exchange theory which states that, when a person volunteers to do a favour for another, he is expected to get some return in the future (Blau, 1964; Gould-Williams & Davies, 2005). That means when an organization satisfies their employees through HRM practices (e.g., providing training and development programs to enhance employee knowledge and skills, allowing employees to participate in decision making, introducing justice and fairness performance appraisal systems, and offering an attractive compensation scheme), then the employee will

reciprocate that to the organization by performed good service quality to satisfied their organization, and their customers.

5.3.7 Job Involvement and Service Quality

This study further proposed the direct effect of job involvement on service quality. The analysis result found a positive and significant direct effect of job involvement on service quality. It means when employee identified with his job and has high level of job involvement, then he/she feel motivated to reduplicate his effort and performed a good service quality to satisfied customers and support the organization to achieve its objectives. The finding of this study is consistent with previous research, which also found a positive and significant effect of job involvement on service quality (Beheshtifar, & Emambakhsh, 2015; Diefendorff et al., 2002; KO & Smith-Walter, 2013). A possible reason is due to an employee will exert more effort and work smarter if their job involvement is increased, which provide beneficial influence on the service quality (Dundon et al., 2004).

5.3.8 The Mediating Effect of Organizational Commitment, Job Satisfaction and Job Involvement in the Relationship Between HRM Practices and Service Quality

As presented in the previous discussions, HRM practices were found to be positively related to service quality. It was also found that HRM practices had a positive relationship with organizational commitment, job satisfaction and job involvement. In addition, organizational commitment, job satisfaction and job involvement were found to have a positive relationship with service quality. The findings achieved the necessary conditions for establishing the mediating variables (Baron & Kenny, 1986; Kenny et al., 1998; Noor, 2011; Villanueva & Djurkovic, 2009; Zumrah, 2012). Therefore, this

study earlier proposed that organizational commitment, job satisfaction and job involvement mediated in the relationship between HRM practices and service quality.

The results of the data analysis revealed that the proposed hypotheses (organizational commitment, job satisfaction and job involvement mediate in the relationship between HRM practices and service quality) were partially supported. This means that the HRM practices can have a direct effect on service quality, and can also influence service quality through organizational commitment, job satisfaction and job involvement.

These findings were consistent with the social exchange theory. The academic staff at Aden University view the HRM practices (providing training and development, allowing participation in decision making, offering an attractive compensation scheme, implementing a fair performance appraisal system) being provided to them by their university as evidence that the university cares about their wellbeing and recognizes their contributions. As a result, the academic staff feel that it is their responsibility to reciprocate by showing a high level of commitment, satisfaction, and involvement with regard to their tasks, and in turn, provide good service quality to the university's customers. (Eisenberger et al, 1990; Gould-Williams & Davies, 2005; Kooij et al., 2013).

In addition, the social norm of reciprocity is important in the culture of Yemeni society. Therefore, when the university provides an attractive HRM practices (provide training and development, allow participation in decision making, offer attractive compensation scheme, implement fair performance appraisal system), the culture and social norms of Yemeni society make the academic staff feel responsible to return the

kindness by showing a positive work attitudes (i.e. organizational commitment, job satisfaction, job involvement) and a good performance (i.e. deliver service quality).

5.4 Theoretical Implications

Despite the growing attention of HRM practices to improve organizational performance in general and service quality as particular, most of previous studies conducted in developed countries such as America, Europe and different part of Asia

(Chand, 2010; Ueno, 2012; Uen et al., 2012; Tzafirir & Gur, 2007; Tomar & Dhiman, 2013; Browning, 2006; Tsaur & Lin, 2002; Worsfold, 1999; Morrison, 1996; Husin et al., 2012; Jago & Deery, 2002). However, the finding of previous studies cannot be generalized to the other stage of economic such as least developed countries with cultural and national differences such as Yemen which characterized as poor economic growth (GSDRC, 2007). Therefore, this study adds to the discussion to verify the previous finding related to HRM practices and service quality in the context of Yemen.

This study extends the existing literature by providing empirical evidence about mechanism that link HRM practices and service quality. In specific, this study highlights the role of organizational commitment, job satisfaction and job involvement as a mediator in the relationship between HRM practices and service quality. The link between variables (organizational commitment, job satisfaction, job involvement, HRM practices, service quality) were underpinned by social exchange theory. According to the theory, when employee received favourable treatment from their organization (in this study refer to HRM practices), they will feel obligated to return (be more

committed, involve, showing job satisfaction) this treatment, and ultimately producing good performance (in this study refer to service quality).

Finally, this study is significant because it tests simultaneously the link between the variables (organizational commitment, job satisfaction, job involvement, HRM practices, service quality) in a single research framework and in a specific context. In previous studies, the relationship between these variables have been tested and examined in separate study. For instance, the effect of HRM practices on organizational commitment has been empirically examine in the study by Aladwan and colleagues

(2015), while the effect of HRM practices on job satisfaction (Al-Shuaibi, Subramaniam & Shamsudin, 2014) and job involvement in another study (Boon et al., 2007). Other studies test the effect of HRM practices on both job satisfaction and organizational commitment (e.g. Gould-Williams, 2004; Nishii, Lepak & Schneider, 2008; Boon, Hartog, Boselie & Paauwe, 2011; Zhang & Morris, 2013), while the other studies examine the effect of HRM practices on job involvement and organizational commitment (Ko & Smith-Walter; 2013; Takeuchi & Takeuchi, 2013). Similarly, there are studies examine the effect of organizational commitment on service quality (e.g.

Hadian, 2017; Heydari & Lai; 2019), while other studies focus on the effect of job satisfaction on service quality (e.g. Waqas et al., 2012; Kim & Han, 2013), and examine both organizational commitment and job satisfaction on service quality (e.g. Ashill et al., 2008; Wong & Cheung, 2014).

5.5 Practical Implications

Higher education institutions can improve service quality that deliver to their customers through human resource management (HRM) practices. This study reveals that HRM practices at Aden University have a positive and significant effect on service quality. For instance, the higher education institutions can control and enhance service process efficiency through recruitment and selection process which must focus on the right candidates who fit with the organization and has appropriate attitudinal and behavioural characteristics. This is the starting point for control producing and deliver higher levels of service quality (Redman, & Mathews, 1998). Having high-quality academic staff will enable the university to educate better quality graduate and that will enhance competitive advantage of the university, its reputation, and market share as well as financial power (Owlia & Aspinwall, 1997; Narayana, 2012). In addition, the higher education institution can control and enhance service process efficiency by make sure their employees more understand their work performances in terms of serving through performance appraisal, which lead to customer's satisfaction (Husin et al., 2012).

Moreover, the higher education institution also can offer an opportunity to participate in decision making that enabled employee to use their existing knowledge and skills, which lead to improve service quality. Furthermore, the higher education institutions can improve service quality to their customers by continuously invest in training and development program. This initiative can enhance ability of the employees, which in turn able to demonstrate quality of service to satisfied their customers (Zumrah et al, 2013; Zumrah, 2014). Employees will view the initiative of the organization (i.e. offered training and development program) as a symbol of support to them, which in

turn they will form a positive work attitude, and consequently improve service quality. This study shows that the HRM practices is positively related to work attitudes (organizational commitment, job satisfaction, job involvement) and service quality.

Finally, the higher education institution needs to emphasize on the development of work attitude among the academic staff. This study highlights the importance of HRM practices in developing the work attitude (organizational commitment, job satisfaction, job involvement) among academic staff. HRM practices can developed the academic staff knowledge and skills, provides opportunities to participate in decisions and motivates them by value and recognise their efforts. As a return, the academic staff will demonstrate positive work attitudes, exert extra effort and work harder to benefit their organization (Takeuchi, 2003; Lepak et al., 2006; Takeuchi et al., 2007; Wu & Chaturvedi, 2009).

5.6 Limitations and Suggestions for Future Studies

First, the data of current study were gathered at one point of time, used a cross-sectional design methodology. Collecting data at one point of time cannot rule out the issue of reverse causality (Kloutsiniotis & Mihail, 2018). Therefore, a longitudinal study would be better to uncover the dynamic influence of HRM practices on employee attitudes (Takeuchi et al., 2007). Undertaking a longitudinal designed study in a better position to make causal statements and provide a stronger test of the study hypothesized relationships.

Second, this study measured service quality through external perspective. Some scholar view that, evaluate service quality through internal perspective is better rather

than external because internal perspective such as employee are in the best position which can evaluate their own performance rather than customer's perspective (Babakus et al., 2003; Karatepe et al., 2013; Zumrah et al, 2013). Therefore, it is recommended for future studies to replicate the framework of this study by evaluating service quality based on internal perspective.

Third, the sample for this study are from one specific industry, which is Aden University, a public university in Yemen. Therefore, the findings of this study cannot be generalized across other industries, due to this case investigated only one kind of service that provided by employees in one sector to their customers. However, future studies can replicate this study across service industries that offering a variety of services to variety of customers to provide validation.

Forth, the current study investigated the relationship between HRM practices and service quality through work attitudes (organizational commitment, job satisfaction, job involvement). Future study can consider other mediator such as perceived organizational support (POS) and leader-member exchange (LMX) to make the effect of HRM practices on service quality more understandable.

Fifth, the current study considers the effect of HRM practices on a positive work attitudes (organizational commitment, job satisfaction, job involvement). Future study should considers examine the effect of HRM practices to reduce negative attitudes such as intention to leave, absenteeism, and turnover, and their mediating effect between HRM practices and service quality.

5.7 Conclusion

There are five variables in this study. The variables are human resource management practices (selection and recruitment, training and development, employee participation, performance appraisal, compensation), organizational commitment, job satisfaction, job involvement and service quality.

The focus of this study is to examine the effects of HRM practices on service quality in the context of public higher education sector in Yemen, specifically Aden University. This study also tests the mediating effect of organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and job involvement in the relationship between HRM practices and services quality.

The respondents in this study are academic staff at Aden University and their students (regarded as customer in this study). Aden University contains of 2228 academic staff (represents 30 percent from total of the academic staff in the public universities) and 36700 students. Both academic staff and students come from various governorates or states (Sana'a, Hadramot, Taiz, Hodeidah, Ibb, Dhamar, Al-Baida, Hajja, Shabowah, Abyan, Aldale'a, Lahej, Almhrah, Soqatra and Aden (Aden University, 2018).

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the theory, when employee received favourable treatment from their organization (in this study refer to HRM practices), they will feel obligated to return (be more committed, involve, showing job satisfaction) this treatment, and ultimately producing good performance (in this study refer to service quality).

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In addition, this study adds to the discussion to verify the previous finding related to HRM practices and service quality in the context of Yemen. It is due to despite the growing attention of HRM practices to improve organizational performance in general and service quality as particular, most of previous studies conducted in developed countries such as America, Europe and different part of Asia (Chand, 2010; Ueno, 2012; Uen et al., 2012; Tzafirir & Gur, 2007; Tomar & Dhiman, 2013; Browning, 2006; Tsaur & Lin, 2002; Worsfold, 1999; Morrison, 1996; Husin et al., 2012; Jago & Deery, 2002).