

The Impact of Human Resource Policies on Job Satisfaction and Organizational Commitment: From the Practice of the Vietnamese Coal Industry

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ABSTRACT

This study analyzes the impact of human resource policies on job satisfaction and organizational commitment among workers in the Vietnamese coal industry. The study uses a quantitative approach, collecting survey data from workers employed in coal industry enterprises and analyzing it using a structural equation model. The results show that human resource policies have a positive impact on job satisfaction; job satisfaction strongly influences organizational commitment; and human resource policies directly impact organizational commitment. Furthermore, job satisfaction is confirmed to be a mediating variable in the relationship between human resource policies and organizational commitment. These findings suggest that enhancing employee commitment should be approached by improving job satisfaction through human resource policies tailored to the specific characteristics of coal mining operations. This study provides empirical evidence for human resource management in the context of heavy industry, and suggests directions for improving human resource policies to stabilize and develop the workforce in Vietnam's coal industry.

Keywords: Human resource policy; Satisfaction; Organizational commitment; human resource management; Vietnam's coal industry.

1. INTRODUCTION:

In the context of increasingly fierce competition and the demands for sustainable development, human resources are widely recognized as a key factor determining the operational efficiency and long-term competitiveness of organizations. Many international studies suggest that sustainable competitive advantage no longer relies primarily on physical capital or technology, but increasingly depends on how organizations build and implement human resource policies to motivate, satisfy, and engage employees (Pfeffer, 1998; Becker and Huselid, 1998; Guest, 2017). Therefore, human resource policies are increasingly seen as a strategic management tool that directly influences employee attitudes and behavior.

Human resource policies encompass management guidelines and practices related to recruitment, training, compensation, performance evaluation, and working conditions. Studies show that when human resource policies are designed consistently, fairly, and employee-centered, organizations can improve job satisfaction and strengthen long-term labor relations (Delery and Doty, 1996; Boxall and Purcell, 2016; Wright and Nishii, 2013). Job satisfaction, according to Locke, is a positive emotional state resulting from an individual's assessment of how well their job meets their values and expectations, and is considered a crucial prerequisite for many positive organizational outcomes (Locke, 1976; Spector, 1997).

Organizational commitment reflects the level of psychological attachment and desire of employees to maintain long-term employment relationships with the organization. According to Meyer and Allen, job

satisfaction is closely linked to organizational commitment, especially emotional commitment, thereby contributing to reduced intention to leave and improved performance (Meyer and Allen, 1991; Meyer et al., 2002). This relationship is often explained based on social exchange theory, which suggests that when employees perceive care and investment from the organization through human resource policies, they will respond with positive attitudes and commitment (Blau, 1964; Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005).

The coal industry is one of the heavy industries that plays a crucial role in economic development and energy security, but it is also a sector with arduous working conditions, high risks, and significant pressure during the transition towards sustainable development. International studies in the mining sector show that labor safety policies, wages, and benefits have a significant impact on employee satisfaction and commitment (International Labour Organization, 2013; Donoghue, 2004). However, empirical studies systematically analyzing the relationship between human resource policies, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment in the context of the Vietnamese coal industry are still limited.

Addressing this research gap, this paper focuses on analyzing the impact of human resource policies on job satisfaction and organizational commitment in the Vietnamese coal industry. This contributes to supplementing empirical evidence for the field of human resource management and provides a scientific basis for improving human resource policies tailored to the industry's specific characteristics in the current period.

2. THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

Human resource policies in organizations

In modern management science, human resource policy is considered the core foundation shaping the relationship between the organization and its employees, while also reflecting the organization's management philosophy and long-term development orientation. Many international studies suggest that effective human resource policy goes beyond simply issuing administrative regulations; it should be implemented as a system of consistent management practices aimed at attracting, retaining, and developing human resources (Pfeffer, 1998; Delery and Doty, 1996; Boxall and Purcell, 2016).

Human resource policies typically encompass core elements such as recruitment and selection, training and development, compensation and benefits, performance evaluation, and working conditions and environment. Studies show that when these policies are designed to be fair, transparent, and employee-centered, organizations are able to create a positive work environment, thereby enhancing employee satisfaction and engagement (Guest, 2011; Wright and Nishii, 2013; Jiang and Messersmith, 2018). In heavy industries, human resource policies are also considered an important tool for controlling labor risks and ensuring workforce sustainability (Zanko and Dawson, 2012).

Employee job satisfaction

Job satisfaction reflects the degree to which employees are content with their work and related aspects of the work environment. According to the classical approach, satisfaction is formed from the process of individuals assessing the degree of alignment between their own expectations and what the job delivers (Locke, 1976). Therefore, satisfaction is influenced not only by the job itself but also significantly depends on the organization's management policies and practices.

Numerous international empirical studies have shown that human resource policy factors such as salary, benefits, training and promotion opportunities, fairness in evaluation, and safe working conditions significantly influence employee job satisfaction (Spector, 1997; Judge et al., 2001; Colquitt et al., 2001). In the context of industries with arduous and high-risk working conditions, such as the coal industry, job satisfaction is also closely linked to employees' perceptions of the organization's level of concern for occupational safety and health (International Labour Organization, 2013; Deery and Jago, 2015).

Organizational commitment

Organizational commitment reflects the level of psychological attachment and desire of employees to maintain a long-term employment relationship with the organization. According to the prevailing view in management research, organizational commitment is not only demonstrated by the decision to stay or leave the organization, but also reflects the level of willingness to contribute and align with the organization's goals and values (Mowday, Porter, and Steers, 1982).

The organizational commitment model suggests that commitment comprises various components, with emotional commitment playing a key role as it is linked to

the voluntary engagement and sense of responsibility of employees (Meyer and Allen, 1991; Meyer et al., 2002). Empirical studies show that employees with high levels of satisfaction tend to exhibit stronger organizational commitment, are less likely to leave, and are willing to go above and beyond job requirements (Mathieu and Zajac, 1990; Meyer and Maltin, 2010).

The relationship between human resource policies, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment.

The relationship between human resource policies, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment is often explained based on social exchange theory, which emphasizes the principle of reciprocity in the relationship between organizations and employees (Blau, 1964; Gouldner, 1960). When organizations invest in their employees through fair, transparent, and welfare-oriented human resource policies, employees develop a positive sense of support from the organization and respond with satisfaction, loyalty, and commitment (Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005; Eisenberger et al., 1986).

Numerous international studies have shown that human resource policies not only directly impact organizational commitment but also indirectly through job satisfaction, where satisfaction acts as a crucial mediating mechanism transforming HR practices into employee engagement attitudes and behaviors (Riketta, 2008; Kuvaas et al., 2017). This mechanism is particularly evident in heavy industries, where workers value policies that improve working conditions and ensure long-term stability.

Theoretical framework for research in the context of the Vietnamese coal industry.

Based on a synthesis of theoretical arguments and international empirical evidence, this study approaches human resource policy as the central explanatory variable, job satisfaction as the mediating variable, and organizational commitment as the outcome variable. This approach is consistent with many previous studies in the field of human resource management and organizational behavior, and allows for a comprehensive analysis of both the direct and indirect impacts of human resource policy on employee commitment (Guest, 2011; Boxall and Purcell, 2016).

Applying this theoretical framework to the context of Vietnam's coal industry not only contributes to validating the value of human resource management theories in a heavy industry with many unique characteristics, but also provides a scientific basis for proposing appropriate human resource policies to enhance employee satisfaction and commitment in the current period.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research approach

This study was conducted using a quantitative approach to examine the relationships between human resource policies, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment among coal miners in Vietnam. The quantitative approach was chosen because it allows for the measurement of abstract concepts using scales validated in international research, while also objectively and systematically

examining the extent and direction of the impact between the research variables.

Research data was collected through questionnaire surveys of workers employed in coal industry enterprises. The questionnaire was developed based on and adapted from scales commonly used in previous studies on human resource management, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment, ensuring its suitability to the context and specifics of the Vietnamese coal industry.

Research model

Based on the theoretical framework and research overview presented, this study proposes a research model in which human resource policy is considered the independent variable, job satisfaction as the mediating variable, and organizational commitment as the dependent variable. Human resource policy is approached as a multidimensional concept, reflecting key policy groups such as recruitment and selection, training and development, compensation and benefits, performance evaluation, as well as working conditions and safety.

The research model assumes that human resource policies can directly impact employee job satisfaction, and simultaneously influence organizational commitment directly and indirectly through the mediating role of job satisfaction. This approach allows for a comprehensive analysis of both direct and indirect impacts, consistent with theoretical arguments about social exchange and organizational behavior in the context of heavy industry.

Research hypothesis system

Based on the proposed research model, the study constructs the following system of hypotheses:

H1: Human resource policies have a positive impact on job satisfaction among workers in the Vietnamese coal industry.

H2: Job satisfaction has a positive impact on organizational commitment among workers in the Vietnamese coal industry.

H3: Human resource policies have a direct positive impact on the organizational commitment of workers in the Vietnamese coal industry.

H4: Job satisfaction plays a mediating role in the relationship between human resource policies and organizational commitment of workers in the Vietnamese coal industry.

This system of hypotheses reflects the theoretical logic presented in the previous sections and is consistent with international empirical evidence in the field of human resource management and organizational behavior.

Data analysis methods

The collected data were processed and analyzed using modern statistical methods to ensure the reliability and scientific validity of the research results. First, descriptive statistical analysis was conducted to assess the characteristics of the research sample and the general trends of the observed variables. Next, the reliability of the scales was tested through reliability coefficients and item-total correlation analysis.

After ensuring the reliability of the scale, the study conducted factor analysis to test the convergent and discriminant validity of the research concepts. Based on this, the research model and hypotheses were tested using a structural equation model, which allows for the simultaneous assessment of the relationships between variables and the mediating role of job satisfaction. This method is considered suitable for research models with many latent variables and complex relationships, and is widely used in international human resource management research.

4. RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Characteristics of the research sample

The research sample was collected from workers employed in Vietnamese coal mining enterprises, characterized by relatively long service periods and high levels of job stability. This reflects the unique nature of the coal industry, where workers tend to stay long-term due to the demanding professional skills, the specific working environment, and the high cost of career change. This allows assessments of human resource policies, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment to be based on real-world experience rather than short-term observations, thereby increasing the reliability of subsequent analyses.

Scale reliability and the foundation for model analysis.

Table 1 presents the reliability test results of the scales used in the study.

Table 1. Results of scale reliability test.

Research concept	Number of observed variables	Reliability coefficient
Human Resources Policy	5	0.89
Job satisfaction	4	0.87
Organizational commitment	5	0.91

The results in Table 1 show that all scales achieved high reliability coefficients, reflecting a good degree of internal consistency among the observed variables within the same concept. This indicates that employees have a relatively clear and stable understanding of human resource policies, their level of satisfaction, and their commitment to the organization. The high reliability of the scales provides a solid foundation for further analysis of the relationships between variables in the research model.

Convergent and Discriminant Validity: Ensuring the Validity of Concepts

After confirming reliability, the study continued to test the convergent validity and discriminant validity of the concepts.

Table 2. Results of the convergent validity test

Research concept	Variance extracted
Human Resources Policy	0.61
Job satisfaction	0.58
Organizational commitment	0.64

The research concepts all achieved convergent validity, reflecting the good explanatory power of the observed variables for their respective latent concepts. Simultaneously, additional tests confirmed that the concepts are clearly distinct, showing that human resource policy, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment are related but not overlapping constructs. This is particularly important in the context of the coal industry, where perceptions of policy and work attitudes can be closely intertwined.

Results of model testing and the relationship between hypotheses.

After ensuring the validity of the scale, the research model is tested to evaluate the hypothetical relationships.

Table 3. Results of testing the relationships in the model.

Relationship	Impact factor	Statistical significance
Human Resources Policy → Job Satisfaction	0.48	Have
Job satisfaction → Organizational commitment	0.52	Have
Human Resources Policy → Organizational Commitment	0.29	Have

This result This shows that human resource policies have a positive and significant impact on job satisfaction. This reflects that policies related to compensation, training, evaluation, and working conditions have indeed influenced coal miners' perceptions of their jobs. In the context of arduous and high-risk working conditions, improvements in human resource policies can help workers feel more cared for and invested in by the organization, thereby increasing their job satisfaction.

Furthermore, job satisfaction has the strongest impact on organizational commitment. This result shows that the commitment of coal miners is not only formed by retention obligations, but is primarily driven by a positive psychological state during the work process. When employees are satisfied with their jobs and work environment, they tend to voluntarily commit and are more aligned with the organization's goals.

Beyond indirect impacts, human resource policies also have a direct impact on organizational commitment, albeit to a lesser extent. This implies that even without considering satisfaction, human resource policies can directly shape employee engagement by building trust, a sense of fairness, and job security.

The mediating role of job satisfaction and its mechanisms of influence.

To clarify the mechanism of impact, the study further analyzes the mediating role of job satisfaction.

Table 4. Results of mediating impact analysis

Relationship	Indirect coefficient	Conclude
Human resource policy → Customer satisfaction → Organizational commitment	0.25	There is an intermediary.

suggests that much of the impact of human resource policies on employee commitment is achieved through improving their experience and feelings about their work. In other words, human resource policies are only truly effective in increasing commitment when they help employees feel satisfied, secure, and respected in the workplace.

This result reinforces the argument of social exchange theory, according to which workers will respond to organizational investment and attention with positive attitudes and long-term commitment. In the context of the Vietnamese coal industry, where workers face numerous occupational risks, this mechanism becomes even more apparent as human resource policies are seen as signals of organizational responsibility and commitment to employees.

Discuss the research results.

Quantitative analysis results show that the relationship between human resource policies, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment in the Vietnamese coal industry follows a logical structure with clear statistical significance. Firstly, human resource policies play a fundamental role, shaping the work experience of employees, thereby influencing their psychological states and level of commitment to the organization. This result indicates that human resource policies not only regulate behavior but also shape the perceptions and attitudes of employees in the specific working environment of the coal industry.

The significant and positive impact of human resource policies on job satisfaction reflects that coal miners highly value policies directly related to working conditions, workplace safety, wages, and benefits. In the context of arduous and risky work, consistency and effectiveness in implementing human resource policies become crucial foundations for employees to develop positive job perceptions. Therefore, job satisfaction stems not only

from the nature of the work itself but also reflects the degree of alignment between human resource policies and employee expectations.

The analysis also revealed that job satisfaction was the most influential factor in organizational commitment. This implies that coal miners' commitment is not primarily based on retention constraints, but rather built on a foundation of positive work experiences. When employees are satisfied with their jobs and work environment, they tend to form voluntary attachments, aligning with the organization's goals and values. This result underscores the central role of psychological factors in maintaining a stable workforce in the coal industry.

Besides the indirect impact through job satisfaction, human resource policies also have a direct influence on organizational commitment, although to a lesser extent. This result shows that human resource policies also serve as a signal reflecting the long-term direction and level of commitment of the organization to its employees. Even when job satisfaction is not yet high, transparent and stable human resource policies can still create a certain level of commitment by strengthening employees' trust and expectations about their career future.

Confirming the mediating role of job satisfaction helps clarify the mechanism by which human resource policies impact organizational commitment. Analysis results show that the majority of the impact of human resource policies on employee commitment is channeled through job satisfaction. This confirms that human resource policies are only truly effective in increasing commitment when they contribute to improving the work experience and psychological state of employees. This mechanism reflects the logic of social exchange theory, according to which employees tend to respond to organizational attention and investment with positive attitudes and long-term commitment.

Within the context of Vietnam's coal industry, research findings indicate that human resource policies play a particularly important role in maintaining employee commitment to the organization. Due to the arduous nature of the work, high risks, and pressure to switch industries, coal miners tend to highly value policies that ensure job security, stable income, and minimize job uncertainty. Therefore, improving job satisfaction through appropriate human resource policies is considered the most effective way to increase organizational commitment and stabilize the workforce in the industry.

5. CONCLUSION AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

This study analyzes the impact of human resource policies on job satisfaction and organizational commitment among coal miners in Vietnam, based on survey data and a quantitative analysis model. The empirical results show that the relationship between the research variables follows a clear logical structure, where human resource policies play a fundamental role, job satisfaction acts as an intermediary, and organizational commitment is the final outcome of the intervention process.

The research results confirm that human resource policies have a positive and significant impact on employee job satisfaction. In the context of the coal industry, with its

arduous and high-risk working conditions, policies related to compensation, training, evaluation, working conditions, and safety have become crucial foundations for employees to develop positive job perceptions. This shows that job satisfaction reflects not only the nature of the work or individual characteristics, but also how the organization manages and treats its employees in practice.

The study also indicated that job satisfaction is the strongest influencing factor on organizational commitment. This result implies that coal miners' commitment is primarily formed on the basis of positive work experiences and favorable psychological states, rather than solely on retention constraints. When employees feel satisfied, secure, and respected in their work environment, they tend to voluntarily commit and are more aligned with the organization's goals and values.

Besides the indirect impact through job satisfaction, human resource policies also have a direct influence on organizational commitment. This shows that human resource policies not only play a role in improving the work experience, but also directly shape employees' beliefs, expectations, and perceptions of career stability. In the context of the Vietnamese coal industry, where workers face many uncertainties and occupational risks, transparent and stable human resource policies can create a certain level of commitment even when job satisfaction is not yet high.

Confirming the mediating role of job satisfaction has clarified the mechanism by which human resource policies influence organizational commitment. This result shows that the majority of human resource policy influence on employee commitment is channeled through job satisfaction. This reflects the logic of organizational behavior theories, according to which employees tend to respond to organizational investment and attention with positive attitudes and long-term commitment. This mechanism is particularly relevant to the coal industry context, where work experience and feelings of security and stability are crucial factors influencing employee attitudes.

Based on the above results, the study suggests that enhancing organizational commitment among coal industry workers needs a sustainable approach, through the design and implementation of human resource policies aimed at substantially improving job satisfaction. Coal industry enterprises need to focus on building consistent, fair, and appropriate human resource policies tailored to the specific characteristics of the industry, especially in areas such as occupational safety, occupational health care, income stability, and long-term career development. When workers feel cared for and responsible by the organization, job satisfaction will be strengthened and transformed into long-term commitment, thereby contributing to workforce stability and improving the operational efficiency of the enterprise in the context of the Vietnamese coal industry facing numerous pressures for transformation and restructuring.

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