SUPPORTIVE HUMAN RESOURCE PRACTICES AND INTENTION TO QUIT: THE ROLE OF AFFECTIVE COMMITMENT AND PERCEIVED SUPERVISOR SUPPORT

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Abstract

This study examines the relationship between supportive human resource practices (SHRPs) and intention to quit (ITQ) by taking into consideration the mediating role of affective commitment (AC) and the moderating role of perceived supervisor support (PSS). *A cross-sectional survey design resulted in a final sample of 507 employees from different industries in Bosnia and Herzegovina. To test the hypotheses, structural equation modeling and hierarchical regression were used. The results showed that SHRPs are related favorably to ITQ. Furthermore, AC was found to be an important mediator of the relationship, whereas the evidence for a moderating role of PSS was partial.*

Keywords: supportive HR practices, affective commitment, perceived supervisor support, intention to quit, Bosnia and Herzegovina

1   INTRODUCTION

Human resource (HR) practices have been an important topic in the last few decades (Boon, Den Hartog, & Lepak, 2019; Memon, 2014). According to Collins (2006), the effective implementation of human resource practices in companies is an important source of competitive advantage and positively affects organizational performance. An organizational capacity to support employees through differ-ent mechanisms is considered to be an integral part of employee retention (Pradhan, Srivastava, & Jena, 2019). This means that an organization has to go beyond monetary incentives to a more socio-emotional exchange of resources.

Keeping employees in a company has never been of higher importance. The context of Bosnia and Herzegovina (B&H) is very specific because it is characterized by high unemployment and a massive brain

drain in recent years, which leads to a business struggle to keep employees not just within companies but within the country as well (Knezović, Bušatlić, & Riđić, 2020). This problem in many developing countries is a consequence of both government and business negligence. Although government tends to keep a high number of people employed within the public sector and put additional burdens on the private sector, employees tend to experience several issues in the workplace. For example, employees tend to be underpaid compared with the company's actual earnings, work overtime without being paid, and face low development opportunities (Haskić, 2018). Furthermore, there is a serious divergence between written policies and job descriptions and what is actually expected from the employees. This is harmful to employees and thus increases their chances of leaving the company. In a country in which many companies share the same approach to employees, the next logical step is to migrate.

To investigate employee retention, researchers have focused on different sets of HR practices (Combs, Liu, Hall, & Ketchen, 2006). Therefore, there are different conceptualizations of these sets, ranging from very general, such as "HR system" or "HR bundle," to more specific conceptualizations such as "high performance," "high commitment," or "high involvement" (Boon et al., 2019). In contrast to previous sets with an exhaustive list of HR practices, in this study we used the operationalization of supportive human resource practices (SHRPs) developed by Allen, Shore, and Griffeth (2003). Their rationale was based on a social exchange theory in which support of employees results in employees' support to the organization. What clearly distinguishes SHRPs from other HR practices is that they are perceived as an investment in employees that an organization is not required to offer at all or to offer to some employees (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa, 1986). SHRP is more individually focused because it signals to employees that the organization cares about and values them. Several researchers have demonstrated that perceived investment by employees results in higher employee retention (Huselid, 1995). This is possible through participation in the decision-making process (PDMP), the fairness of rewards or distributive justice (DJ), and growth opportunities (GOs) (Allen et al., 2003). In the B&H context, in which job

security is one of the main goals for employees (Knezović et al., 2020), a supportive environment is of immense importance.

Regardless of the name, the dominant amount of research shows the favorable relationship between HR sets of practices and different levels of organizational performance (Chadwick, 2010). One of the problems in the relationship lies in the inconsistency of practices within the same-labeled systems. This divergence results from three decades of research (Huselid, 1995; Boselie, Dietz, & Boon, 2005; Katou, 2011). The set of SHRPs proposed by Allen et al. (2003) is yet to be validated and tested across the different populations. Allen et al. (2003) used two samples from the United States: salespeople working in the beauty and cosmetics areas, and insurance agents of a large national insurance company. Biswas et al. (2020) replicated the study using HR managers in Bangladesh. Therefore, the first objective of this study was to validate supportive HR practices on the general population of employees in B&H.

Furthermore, as Dyer and Reeves (1995) proposed, the relationship between HR practices and organizational performance exists at different levels, but a more direct relationship is at the bottom of the performance pyramid. This is especially important in terms of turnover decisions because they can be influenced at different levels of the organization. Although abundant research exists on the relationship between human resource management (HRM) and employee retention (Ramlall, 2003; Aguenza & Som, 2018), little work has explained how they are related. This unexplored effect of HR practices on different levels of performance is known as the "black box" (Boselie et al., 2005). Because there still is a need to investigate possible underlying mechanisms that associate HR practices and employee retention, some researchers have argued that organizational commitment can be observed as a mediator, especially between a supportive environment and turnover (Rhoades, Eisenberger, & Armeli, 2001; Allen et al., 2003). Because the concept of organizational commitment is very broad, Mercurio (2015) argued that affective commitment (AC) is more directly related to the organizational outcomes than behavioral and transactional constructs of commitment. Importantly, using the conservation of resources theory, which is based on accumulation, protection, and re-

plenishment of personal resources (Hobfoll, 1989), we can argue that by investing in SHRPs and making them well-functioned, the emotional bond that employees exhibit toward the organization, or simply the AC, should be stronger. Therefore, the second objective of this study was to test whether SHRPs are related to employee retention in the context of B&H by considering the mediating role of AC.

The support that employees receive can be observed through the lens of the organizational and supervisors' support. Because organizational support usually is observed through formal policies and procedures, the role of supervisor support was given more attention recently. As a person who highly influences the atmosphere in which employees learn and develop, a supervisor becomes a focal point (Ellinger, Ellinger, & Keller, 2003; Škerlavaj, Černe, & Dysvik, 2014). In particular, if employees perceive their organization and supervisor to be supportive, they tend to engage more with their work and their organization. Therefore, support is a concept that has a multidimensional effect on the organization, and thus it can be considered to be a valuable moderator between the input activities and outcomes. To effectively perceive any kind of organizational support, employees have to understand that the organization is willing to invest in them. Nishii and Wright (2008) proposed the strategic human resource management (SHRM) framework, in which the employees' perception was an important element when predicting employees' reactions. As HR practices become more supportive, employees' reactions tend to be more favorable toward the organization. The person that can transmit the most effective support to employees is their supervisor. Therefore, the third objective of this study was to investigate the moderating role of supervisors' support on the relationship between SHRPs and employee retention.

2 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND HYPOTHESES

2.1 Employee Retention

As the work environment becomes more dynamic, businesses invest more in attracting and keeping key employees (Aguenza & Som, 2018). A concept that has been of immense importance is employees' intention to leave in the future. Ahmad

(2018) described it as "an employee's cognitive response to the working conditions of a particular organization and to the economic condition of a nation as a whole, which stimulates an employee for the search of a better alternative job and manifest as the intent to leave an organization voluntarily" (p. 79). Simplistically, it is a situation in which an employee has planned to leave the organization (Saeed, 2014). Booth and Hamer (2007) considered this situation to have negative consequences for the organization because it clearly presents weaknesses in terms of managing employees' behavior.

Because the concept of retention received tremendous attention in the recent period, Mathimaran and Kumar (2017) conceptualized effective retention, describing it as "a systematic effort by employers to create and foster an environment that encourages current employees to remain employed by having policies and practices in place that address their diverse needs" (p. 17). In essence, companies are fighting to keep their best employees in the local and international market because retention is not only for keeping a company's employees but also is a great advertising tool for better recruitment. According to Luthans, Norman, Avolio, and Avey (2008), different components of a supportive work environment can play a crucial role in overall employee attitudes and behaviors, which are keys to the employees staying in the organization. For example, Naz et al. (2020) found a significant relationship between a supportive work environment and employee retention. The relationship was not direct, because organizational commitment and person–organization fit mediated it. This shows that the relationship between organizational characteristics and employee retention is complex, and different elements often have to match to produce the desired result.

Although the concept of human resource practices has been present for decades (Beer, 1984), there is a great question of whether employees believe in those practices. The behaviors of employees and their perceptions of human resource practices differ from employee to employee (Nishii & Wright, 2008). The nature of employees' perceptions can differ depending on how their manager or supervisor tends to implement human resource practices (Wright, 2001). This is why it is important to understand employees' perceptions toward SHRPs on the individual level.

2.2 Supportive HR Practices

A vast amount of research has been devoted to examining systematically human resource practices (Boon et al., 2019). The main idea behind supportive HR practices lies in developing a supportive work environment. This approach is founded on the behavioral perspective of HRM that considers attitudes and behaviors of employees as major antecedents of organizational performance (Schuler & Jackson, 1987). Recalling the "black box" phenomenon, Biswas et al. (2020) introduced the individual-level attributes that should explain more precisely the mechanism through which HR practices contribute to organizational performance. This was in line with the argument by Allen et al. (2003) that SHRPs are designed to influence, in the first place, individual attitudes and behaviors and, through them, organizational performance. This distinguishes SHRPs from the other sets of HR practices. Because there are relatively few studies of this particular set of HR practices, to validate them we followed the proposals of Allen et al. (2003).

Together, as a complementary set, SHRPs can contribute to overall organizational effectiveness. Huselid (1995) argued that human resource practices that contribute to employees' development or motivation should increase employee retention. Huselid also found significant evidence that human resource practices play a negative role in employee turnover. This is why the development and selection of specific SHRPs are crucial to the long-term survival of a company. In particular, a supportive environment that is characterized by a larger extent of employee integration with the processes, transparency, and development opportunities enhances the bond with the organization. When employees feel support from the organization, they are more likely to feel obliged to repay the organization with higher productivity and involvement, and eventually to stay with the organization. This argument is founded on Gouldner's (1960) reciprocity concept, that still is a widely used paradigm in organizational behavior studies (Gervasi, Faldetta, Pellegrini, & Maley, 2021). Although the relationship between HRM and employee turnover is very popular, there is a lack of research regarding SHRP, especially in a non-Western context (Biswas et al., 2020). Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

H1: There is a negative relationship between supportive HR practices (decision-making process, fairness of rewards or distributive justice, and growth opportunities) and intention to quit (ITQ).

2.3 The Mediating Role of Affective Commitment

The essence of supportive human resource practices lies in social-exchange theory, which explains the cost–benefit relationship between two parties (Allen et al., 2003; Koster & Gutauskaite, 2019). If an organization can show that it cares about its employees, the employees tend to be more attached to the organization. AC represents the emotional bond between employees and an organization that is developed over time by the interaction of different elements, forces, and people and that, therefore, is not broken easily (Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch, & Topolnytsky, 2002; Knezović & Greda, 2021). Marescaux, de Winne, and Sels (2012) argued that the perception of favorability is the key factor related to AC. They explained the relationship between HR practices and AC through two aspects: social-exchange relationship, and distributive preference. For example, an organization that provides more social-emotional resources and fair distribution is expected to have a more committed workforce. Furthermore, because employees consider supportive HR practices to be a "sign of appreciation, commitment and trust towards them" (Marescaux et al., 2012, p. 333), they are more willing to exhibit higher commitment to the organization.

Because SHRPs are designed specifically to be perceived as an investment in or recognition of particular employees (Allen et al., 2003), they can be observed as voluntary practices of the organization. Employees that are more involved in deciding the direction the organization will take (Appelbaum & Sluja, 2013), perceive higher growth opportunities within the current organization, and are treated fairly, which is an important determinant of trust and belief in the organization (McFarlin & Sweeney, 1992), tend to be more committed, especially on an emotional level (Knezović & Greda, 2021). In developing countries, where the basic working conditions very often are not met, organizations that manage to go beyond the basics and provide certain investments in employees are considered to be desired employers. Those orga-

nizations have a reputation for not just being able to attract employees but also to keep them. Therefore, we present the following hypothesis:

H2: There is a positive relationship between supportive HR practices (decision-making process, fairness of rewards or distributive justice, and growth opportunities) and affective commitment.

As a predominant construct of commitment, AC is found to be a significant predictor of ITQ (Carayon, Schoepke, Hoonakker, Haims, & Brunette, 2006; Ahmad, 2018). As a result of positive work experience, AC is related favorably to different outcomes such as organizational citizenship behavior, absenteeism, and eventual intention to remain with the organization (Wasti, 2002). Rhoades et al. (2001) stated that there is a higher chance of employee involvement in organizational activities and intention to stay if they exhibit AC. Haqued, Fernando, and Caputi (2019) argued that "employees with AC demonstrate positive intentions to serve their organizations and are likely to think less about quitting their jobs" (p. 51). In particular, employees that exhibit high AC are emotionally tied to the organization, and that relationship is hard to break. Therefore, AC can be considered to be a mitigator of possible employee withdrawal. Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

H3: There is a negative relationship between affective commitment and intention to quit.

Although SHRPs have been presented as a significant predictor of employees' turnover, it is obvious that the direct effect is rather weak. The "black box" phenomenon indicates that the relationship between HR practices and different work outcomes is distant and that there is a need to investigate other intervening variables. We argue that the significant mediator is presented in the AC. This is supported by extensive literature that presented AC as a valid mediator in different workplace relations, especially those related to turnover intentions (Tetteh, Osafo, Ansah-Nyarko, & Amponsah-Tawiah, 2019). The main principle relies on social exchange theory, which emphasizes reciprocity (Fazio, 2017). In par-

ticular, AC tends to be adjusted toward the perceived organizational support or, in this case, perceived supportive HR practices. If SHRPs are effective, we expect them to stimulate AC and, in return, to create a more loyal workforce. Because AC is one of the proximal outcomes of strategic HR practices, and AC is an important antecedent of employees' turnover intentions, AC could play a mediating role in the relationship between SHRPs and ITQ. Therefore, SHRPs first would influence AC and subsequently would modify the ITQ. Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

H4: There is a negative relationship between supportive HR practices (decision-making process, fairness of rewards or distributive justice, and growth opportunities) and intention to quit.

2.4 The Moderating Role of Supervisor Support

Some organizational characteristics tend to be more suitable for HR practices than others. One is perceived support from the organization and immediate supervisor. Perceived organizational support is considered to be the degree of valuing employees' contributions to their prosperity (Kumar & Ghadially, 1989). In other words, when employees see the organization as being supportive, they feel more obligated to fulfill all expectations with greater efforts. It can be said that positive organizational support makes employees care about the organization and want to help the organization achieve its goals, increases employee organizational commitment, and reduce the tendency for employees to miss work (McColl-Kennedy & Anderson, 2002).

In recent times, the role of the supervisor deviated from the general organizational support concept. In particular, supervisors are the "bridge" between top management and employees, and the success of the company most of the time depends on their relationship with the employees. Perceived supervisors' support is reflected in the degree to which supervisors esteem and take care of the prosperity of employees (Kottke & Sharafinski, 1988). Employees are prone to consider the organizational emergency on their well-being based on collaboration with their supervisors, which leads to a point at which they can establish a relationship with their

supervisor in the same way as with the organization for which they work. PSS can be considered to be an important factor that comes from the organization and its commitment (Cole et al., 2006). The supervisor's support is concentrated on the employee's dedication to the job. Every employee creates their own opinion or belief about the organizational dedication and cares about them by evaluating their commitment, which can be presented favorably or unfavorably (Eisenberger et al., 1986).

The feeling of being supported implies that workers have common goals and values with the organization and that they are identifying themselves with an organization, which results in loyalty to the organization (Meyer, Allen, & Smith, 1993). As previously mentioned, perceived organizational support is trying to fulfill or meet the employees' socio-emotional needs to make them identify with the organization (Eisenberger et al., 2001), which will increase perceived organizational support and greater commitment. PSS is closely connected with perceived organizational support. Supervisors are those who create an atmosphere among employees, and in most organizations they are the key factor in the maintenance and enhancement of employees' commitment (Erdeji, Jovičić Vuković, Gagić, & Terzić, 2016). When employees feel support from a supervisor, it increases their loyalty to the work environment and decreases the intention to leave the organization (Islam et al., 2013). This is in line with leader–member exchange theory (Dienesch & Liden, 1986), which positions a leader, in this case a supervisor, as pivotal in enhancing different employee-related outcomes. Therefore, we argue the following:

H5: There is a negative relationship between perceived supervisor support and intention to quit.

However, perceived support also fuels other process–outcome relations. In particular, the positive atmosphere that is created by organizational support and high supervisor involvement improves the impact of the process on organizational outcomes. Having an opportunity to participate in the decision-making process will influence employee-related outcomes, but in the presence of relevant supporting factors such as resources and the proper

supervisor attitude, the impact should be higher. Employees that are not supported adequately are more reluctant to raise their voice or use opportunities for development, and perceive justice in the organization as non-transparent. Without the proper support, the employees tend to trust the organizational goals and values less, which creates a situation of discomfort.

It is crucially important that the right organizational resources and relevant supervisors' profiles are presented to capture the highest value from the employees (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Liu, Chow, & Huang, 2019). The key here is that support from the organization and supervisor can be different because both can pursue their interests. When they are aligned around the same goal, we can expect rather powerful outcomes. However, when they are not, the outcomes can be questionable. In particular, employees do not leave the organization, but their leaders. Pramudita and Sukoco (2018) argued that the employee–supervisor relationship is built on reciprocity, and that when employees receive more support from their supervisor, their performance increases. Such employees are under a greater obligation to repay, and to do so, they have to stay in the organization. Therefore, we extend the model by hypothesizing the following:

H6: Perceived supervisor support moderates the relationship between supportive HR practices (decision-making process, fairness of rewards or distributive justice, and growth opportunities) and intention to quit.

Figure 1 presents the conceptual model that incorporates the hypotheses developed in this study.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Participants and Procedure

This research is based on primary data, for which cross-sectional data collection was used. Questionnaires were distributed in print and online forms to employees in different industries. This helped us to obtain a large and diverse sample, which was important to mitigate the risk of sample

Figure 1: Conceptual model
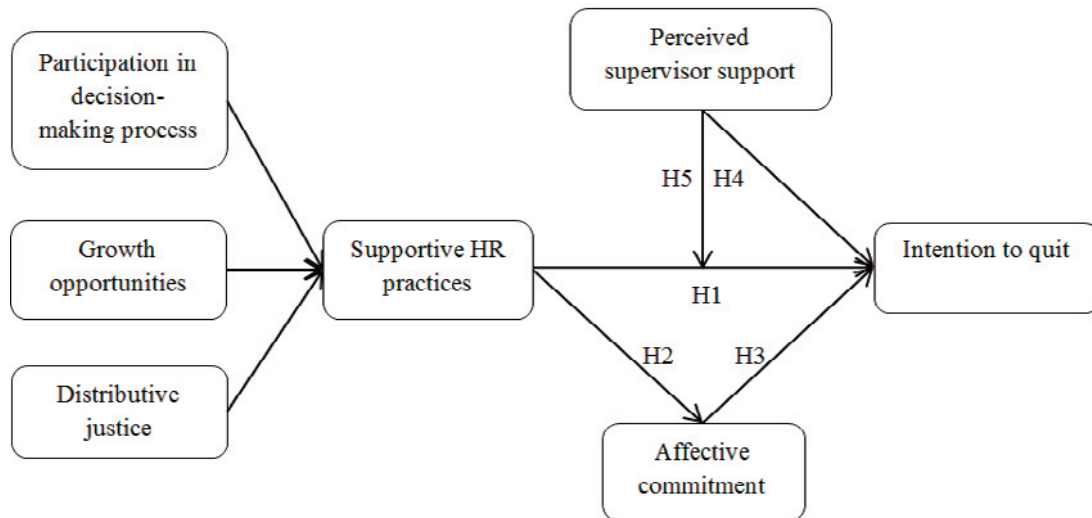
bias because convenience sampling was used. This method has been used in previous research in which authors encountered problems relating to the lack of reliable data and databases which contained the elements of the entire target population (Vandekerkhof, Steijvers, Hendriks, & Voordeckers, 2019).

For content accuracy and validity, we used the back-translation method because the original constructs were in the English language. Furthermore, to ensure voluntary participation and guarantee data privacy, the first page of the questionnaire provided an option to the respondents to decide whether to participate. After the initial contact, a reminder letter was sent one month later. The final sample consisted of 507 employees.

Among the respondents, 42% were female and 58% were male employees. On average, respondents were 34 years old, and the majority (73%) was highly educated. More than half of the respondents (56%) had more than five years of work experience. Most worked in small and medium-sized enterprises (88%) and were employed in the service sector (60%).

3.2 Measurement

The questionnaire contained seven main constructs. Regarding SHRPs, PDMP was measured using five items. Each item was presented with a seven-point Likert scale developed by Steel and Mento (1987), ranging from 1 = "strongly disagree" to 7 = "strongly agree." DJ was measured using Colquitt's (2001) scale consisting of four items. GOs were measured using four items developed by Weng and Hu (2009). Both DJ and GOs were scored on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 = "strongly disagree" to 5 = "strongly agree."

Regarding the moderating constructs, the PSS was measured using four distinctive items ($\alpha = 0.85$) developed by Colquitt (2001). To measure AC, we used six items ($\alpha = 0.91$) developed by Rhoades et al. (2001), and for ITQ we adopted Colarelli's (1984) scale, which contained two items ($\alpha = 0.88$). All three constructs were measured on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 = "strongly disagree" to 5 = "strongly agree."

3.3 Analyses

### 3.3.1 Reliability, Validity, Descriptive Statistics, and Correlations

The data used in the study were analyzed in two steps: (1) preliminary analysis, and (2) hypotheses testing. In the preliminary analysis, we checked for reliability and validity concerns using a series of tests (Table 1).

Table 1: Descriptive statistics, reliability, validity, and correlations

		M	SD	α	CR	AVE	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	ITQ	2.43	1.22	0.88	0.89	0.80	(0.89)					
2	PSS	3.75	0.86	0.85	0.89	0.67	-0.40	(0.82)				
3	AC	3.65	0.87	0.91	0.92	0.65	-0.58	0.59	(0.81)			
4	PDMP	4.74	1.45	0.95	0.95	0.79	-0.37	0.65	0.58	(0.89)		
5	GOs	3.97	0.88	0.92	0.92	0.75	-0.41	0.56	0.62	0.52	(0.86)	
6	DJ	3.11	1.09	0.95	0.95	0.81	-0.45	0.44	0.42	0.46	0.40	(0.90)

Note: N =507. *p < 0.05; **p < 0.01. CR = composite reliability; AVE = average variance extracted; square roots of AVE values are in parentheses.

Figure 2: Final model with standardized estimates
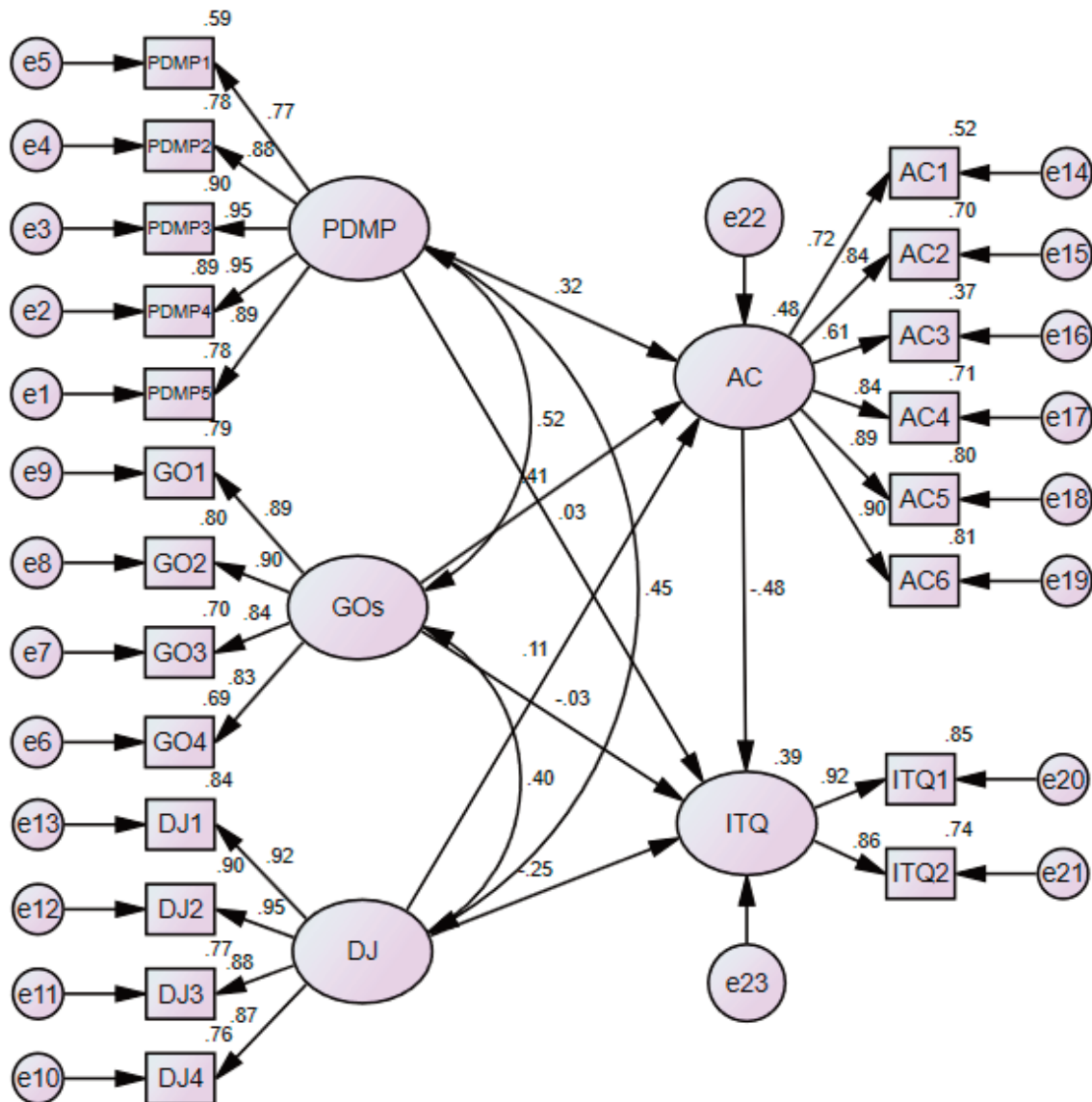
To test the reliability of responses, Cronbach's alpha was used. All the variables scored higher than 0.6, which is a common minimum threshold (Hair et al., 2006). The correlation between variables mostly was moderate. As expected, the correlation of variables with the ITQ was negative, whereas other correlations were positive. Furthermore, we performed confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) on our theoretical model, because we used the already-established constructs. Both convergent and discriminant validity were reached. The results showed that the model fit the data quite well (e.g., x^2 = 928.19, df = 260, x^2/df = 3.57, confirmatory fit index = 0.944, Tucker–Lewis index = 0.935, and root-mean-square error of approximation = 0.071).

In addition, because we collected the data at a single point in time, there was a possibility of common method bias. Following Podsakoff et al.'s (2012) discussion, we performed Harman's single-factor test, a common latent factor test, and a common marker variable test to check for common method bias. The results of all three tests showed that the variance produced by a single factor was below the common threshold of 50%, and thus we could conclude that there was no evidence of common method bias.

3.3.2 Hypotheses Testing

A structural model was used to test the first four hypotheses. The values of the model fit were fairly acceptable (i.e., x^2 = 732.86, df = 179, x^2/df = 4.09, confirmatory fit index = 0.945, Tucker–Lewis index = 0.935, and root-mean-square error of approximation = 0.078). The model is presented in Figure 2.

To test for the mediation, we had to ensure that the basic conditions were met, i.e., a significant relationship between (1) the independent and the dependent variables, (2) the independent and the mediating variables, and (3) the mediating and the dependent variables. The results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Standardized weights for structural model

	Std. estimates	SE	t	Note
Model 1: Independent and dependent variables				
PDMP → ITQ	−0.11*	0.04	−2.12	H1
GOs → ITQ	−0.23**	0.07	−4.28	H1
DJ → ITQ	−0.31**	0.05	−6.18	H1
Model 2: Independent and mediating variables				
PDMP → AC	0.32**	0.03	7.14	H2
GOs → AC	0.41**	0.05	8.92	H2
DJ → AC	0.11*	0.03	2.70	H2
Model 3: Mediating and dependent variables				
AC → ITQ	−0.58**	0.06	−13.39	H3
Model 4: Full model				
PDMP → ITQ	0.03	0.04	0.64	—
GOs → ITQ	−0.03	0.07	−0.57	—
DJ → ITQ	−0.25**	0.05	−5.43	—
PDMP → AC	0.32**	0.03	7.10	—
GOs → AC	0.41**	0.05	8.93	—
DJ → AC	0.11**	0.03	2.74	—
AC → ITQ	−0.48**	0.08	−8.04	—

Note: N =507. *p <0 .05; **p <0 .01. ITQ – R2 = 0.39; AC – R2 = 0.48.

4 RESULTS

The results for Model 1 showed that SHRPs were negatively related to ITQ (PDMP − β = −0.11, p < 0.05; GOs − β = −0.23, p < 0.01; DJ − β = −0.31, p < 0.01), which provides evidence to support H1. Furthermore, the relationships between SHRPs and AC were positive (Model 2: PDMP − β = 0.32, p < 0.01; GOs − β = 0.41, p < 0.01; DJ − β = 0.11, p < 0.05). These results provide sufficient evidence to support H2. Model 3 showed a negative relationship between AC and ITQ (β = −0.58, p < 0.01). This indicates support for H3. Therefore, we can state that all conditions for mediating effects were met. Finally, in Model 4, the relationships between certain SHRPs and ITQ became insignificant (PDMP − β = 0.03, p > 0.05 and GOs − β = −0.03, p > 0.05). This indicates full mediation through AC. Therefore, additional analysis was conducted to check for the indirect effects of SHRPs on the ITQ through AC. The results are presented in Table 3.

The indirect effect of SHRPs on the ITQ through AC was negative and significant (Table 3). Therefore, taking all the evidence, we can state that the AC partially mediates the relationship between DJ and ITQ (β = −0.06, p < 0.01). In addition, AC fully mediates the relationship between PDMP and ITQ (β = −0.12, p < 0.01) and the relationship between GOs and ITQ (β = −0.25, p < 0.05). Therefore, we can conclude that there is sufficient evidence to support H4.

For H5 and H6, we performed a hierarchical multiple regression. The results are presented in Table 4.

Table 3: Indirect effects through affective commitment with 95% confidence intervals

Mediation	Std. estimates	Lower	Upper	Note
PDMP → AC → ITQ	−0.12**	−0.16	−0.07	H4
GOs → AC → ITQ	−0.25*	−0.35	−0.16	H4
DJ → AC → ITQ	−0.06**	−0.11	−0.02	H4

*Note: N =507. *p < 0.05; **p < 0.01.*

Table 4: Moderating effect of perceived supervisor support

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Note
PDMP	−0.09*	0.01	−0.04	
GOs	−0.23**	−0.16**	0.26	
DJ	−0.28**	−0.26**	−0.25	
PSS		−0.25**	0.22	H5
PDMP×PSS			0.09	H6
GOs×PSS			−0.82*	H6
DJ×PSS			−0.02	H6
ΔR^2	0.237	0.035	0.014	
R^2	0.237	0.272	0.286	
Adjusted R^2	0.232	0.266	0.276	
ΔF	52.070**	23.970**	3.250*	

*Note: N =507. *p < 0.05; **p < 0.01.*

First, we added SHRPs in Model 1. The results showed a negative relationship between each practice and ITQ. Additionally, SHRPs explained 23.7% of the variance in ITQ. Second, in Model 2, we added PSS as a moderating variable. The values showed that PSS was negatively related to the ITQ (β = −0.25, $p < 0.01$) and that it explained 3.5% of the variance in ITQ. Therefore, there is sufficient evidence to support H5. Finally, in Model 3, we added interaction terms of each SHRPs and perceived supervisor support. The results provided evidence that PSS strengthens the negative relationship only in the case of GOs and ITQ (β = −0.82, $p < 0.05$). Therefore, there is partial support for H6. The moderating effect of POS is presented in Figure 3.

5   DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Theoretical contribution

As B&H experiences a huge brain drain of the well-qualified workforce, employee retention is critical. This study investigated the role of SHRPs in employee retention. Furthermore, because the relationship between SHRPs and ITQ is not direct, and the mechanism of the effect is still to be investigated, we explored possible underlying factors. In particular, we attempted to fill the gap by empirically investigating the relationship between SHRPs and ITQ through the mediating role of AC and the moderating role of perceived supervisor support.

Although the conceptualization of SHRP by Allen et al. (2003) is almost two decades old, validation of the set is still to be supported (Biswas et al., 2020). In addition to the original validation of the set of SHRP using salespeople and insurance agents in the United States, there was a recent validation using HR managers in Bangladesh. This study contributes to the validation of employees across different industries in B&H.

Consistent with the study of Allen et al. (2003), we found that SHRPs are related favorably to ITQ. If employees perceive their working environment to be supportive, they are more likely to exhibit positive attitudes and behaviors toward the organization. This is rooted in social exchange theory and reciprocity, in which SHRPs are considered to be a

Figure 3: Moderating effect of perceived supervisor support on the relationship between growth opportunities and intention to quit
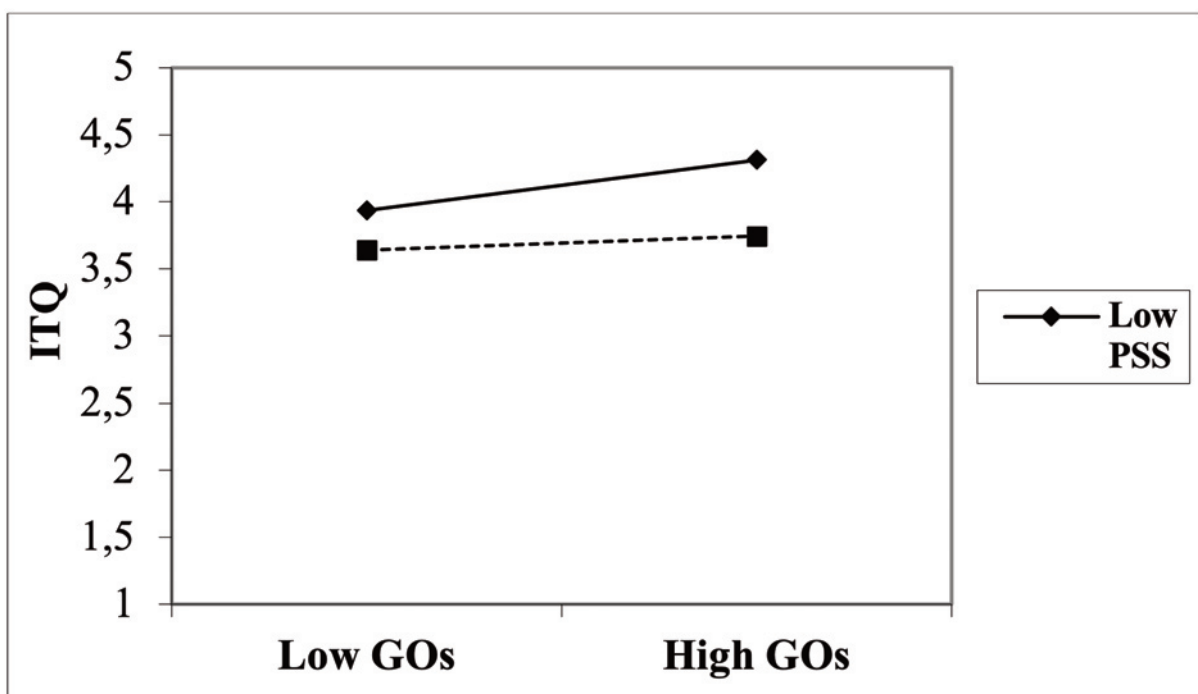
voluntary investment by the company and, therefore to create a sense of obligation toward the company. Reciprocity is even more pronounced in terms of the role of AC. Although this study was based on the work of Allen et al. (2003), we diverged from their work by focusing on AC rather than on the overall three-element organizational commitment. This was because AC is the most important of all commitment constructs for predicting different work-related outcomes. Our results show that there is a negative relationship between AC and ITQ. This is in line with the findings of previous works (Rhoades et al., 2001; Haque et al., 2019). One of the major findings of this study is that AC is the mediator of the relationship between SHRPs and ITQ. Although the role of AC as a mediator in different workplace relations is rather well explored (Tetteh et al., 2019), there is a lack of research into the specific SHRPs and ITQ. The results indicated a significant mediation, which means that when employees perceive their organization to be supportive, primarily through HR practices that are considered to be investments, they are more likely to experience emotional attachment to the organization and eventually to remain with the organization.

Regarding the moderating role of perceived supervisor support, we found mixed results. On the one hand, PSS is negatively related to the ITQ, which is in line with the findings of previous studies (Eisenberger et al., 2001; Islam et al., 2013). On the other hand, we found partial support for the moderating effects of PSS on the relationship between SHRPs and ITQ. Specifically, PSS was a moderator significant only of the relationship between GOs and ITQ. This can be explained by the fact that GOs can be perceived differently under different supervisors. Even when they are relatively scarce, supportive supervisors can create an atmosphere in which employees feel that it is possible to progress and therefore that it is worth staying with the organization. Employees tend to believe more in supervisors who are supportive, and as long as they believe that they can progress at work, they are willing to stay with the organization. Therefore, perceived supervisor support strengthens the relationship between GOs and ITQ. These results provide an extension of the model proposed by Allen et al. (2003), which only dealt with mediators of the basic relationship.

5.2 Practical Implications

Pertaining to the theoretical part, the findings of this study provide some practical implications about employee retention. To generate and develop effective retention strategies, businesses should create a supportive work environment. Firstly, organizations should create an environment in which the employees have a voice in the decision-making process. This could be achieved by promoting the general involvement of employees in the decision-making process through formal and informal meetings or by granting more autonomy to lower-level positions. Secondly, every employee, at each level, has to be rewarded fairly. These rewards may be anything from compensation to vacation, depending on which organizational level the employee occupies. This is especially important for companies that have more-informal policies toward DJ. Therefore, the communication of such decisions is key in promoting transparency across the company. Thirdly, the employees should have a chance to be promoted within the organization, and the best way to provide that is by giving challenging tasks to employees, which will boost their performance. GOs are crucial not just to keep employees, but also to attract new employees. To provide effective opportunities, managers first should understand the career aspirations of employees, whether and to what extent they align with the organizational goals, and how to compromise between an individual and the company.

Furthermore, companies need to understand that SHRPs will not directly influence employees' decisions to quit. These practices will spur and create an emotional bond between employees and the company which eventually will make employees less likely to quit. Although SHRPs are a signal to employees about the company's intentions (Allen et al., 2003), their effect on employees' retention is not immediate. Therefore companies must cultivate a sustainable supportive environment in which employees feel that organizational support is ongoing rather than episodic.

Finally, the supervisors' role cannot be neglected because it also explains the model and partially moderates the relationship between SHRPs and ITQ. Therefore, companies have to consider how to attract and promote employees with particular characteristics into supervisory positions. As

business becomes dynamic, the supervisors' roles shift from universal to individual. In particular, companies should look for supervisors who can develop and sustain healthy personal relations, a one-on-one coaching style, and emotional support.

5.3 Limitations and Future Research

Like many studies, this study also has some limitations, even though it developed important findings regarding supportive human resource practices and their contribution to employees' performance. These limitations can be divided into methodological and theoretical.

Firstly, one of the greatest constraints in this study is that it suffered from the lack of previous research conducted in this region about supportive human resource practices. This caused a lack of opportunity to compare our results with those of previous research. Secondly, this study used a cross-sectional data collection time-frame method, in which the variables were measured in one distinct and limited specific period. Future research may focus on measuring these variables in different periods. Thirdly, this study used a convenience sampling method, which caused limitations on the generalization of the findings to the entire population and population validity. Additionally, this study focused mainly on the measurement of some specific supportive human resource practices. In future studies, the addition of other relevant supportive human resource practices might increase the reliability and variety of findings. In addition, this study gathered data across different industries in B&H. Focusing on one specific industry may provide more-accurate results. Finally, there should be a more thorough theoretical approach to the relationship between strategic HR practices and employee retention by taking into consideration possible new moderators and mediators.

EXTENDED SUMMARY/IZVLEČEK

Ta študija preučuje razmerje med podpornimi praksami ravnanja z ljudmi in namero o prenehanju z mediacijo čustvene predanosti in moderacijo zaznane podpore nadrejenega. Presečna študija je temeljila na anketnem vprašalniku in zajela vzorec 507 zaposlenih iz različnih panog v Bosni in Hercegovini. Za preverjanje hipotez smo uporabili modeliranje strukturnih enačb in hierarhično regresijo. Rezultati so pokazali, da so podporne prakse ravnanja z ljudmi pozitivno povezane z namero o prenehanju. Poleg tega je bilo ugotovljeno, da je čustvena predanost pomemben mediator v tem temeljnem odnosu, medtem ko se je moderacijska vloga zaznane podpore nadrejenega izkazala le kot delno pomembna.

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