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Affective and normative forces between HCHRM and turnover intention in China

HCHRM and
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in China

741

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to investigate the affective and normative mechanisms linking high-commitment human resource management (HCHRM) to employee turnover intention. Accordingly, the authors hypothesize that positive affect and group job satisfaction mediate the relationship between HCHRM and turnover intention.

Design/methodology/approach – Based on a sample of 471 employees and their supervisors from 53 assembly lines in China, the hypotheses were tested with hierarchical linear modeling.

Findings – The results suggested that both positive affect and group job satisfaction significantly mediated the negative relationship between HCHRM and turnover intention. Moreover, the indirect effect of HCHRM on turnover intention via group job satisfaction was larger than that via positive affect.

Practical implications – In the Chinese context, HCHRM practices are effective in reducing turnover intention of the first-line employees on assembly lines. Organizations should show concerns for front-line workers' positive affect and group job satisfaction to reduce their turnover intention.

Originality/value – The present research contributes to the extant literatures by uncovering the affective and normative mechanisms of the HCHRM-turnover intention association.

Keywords Turnover intention, Positive affect, Group job satisfaction, HCHRM

Paper type Research paper

1. Introduction

For the past decade, high-commitment human resource management (HCHRM) has garnered increasing research attention in strategic HRM. It has been demonstrated that HCHRM predicts individual work effort (McClellan and Collins, 2011) and citizenship behavior, as well as organizational knowledge exchange (Collins and Smith, 2006), innovation (Chow *et al.*, 2008; Zhou *et al.*, 2013) and bottom-line performance (Agarwala, 2003; Whitener, 2001). In particular, with “commitment” identified as its hallmark, one of the major objectives of HCHRM is to retain talents and make them willing to stay (e.g. Allen *et al.*, 2013; Arthur, 1994; Batt and Colvin, 2011; Xiao and Björkman, 2006). However, why and how HCHRM is related to individual turnover intention are still open questions.



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First, in the extant literature, HCHRM has generally been conceptualized at the organizational level (Allen *et al.*, 2013; Hom and Xiao, 2011; Whitener, 2001) to capture how intended HCHRM practices affect the outcomes. This conceptualization, however, has masked variations of HCHRM across groups within the organization (Lepak and Snell, 2002). As an exception, Chow *et al.* (2008) focussed on HCHRM at work unit level and found that the effectiveness of HCHRM depended on the strategic value attached to the specific work group. Arthur and Boyles (2007) maintained that studying within-organization variation of HRM helped reveal how it influenced individual and organizational outcomes. According to the multilevel framework of HRM, organizational-level HRM represents intended/designed HRM practices while individual-level HRM reflects HRM practices perceived by employees (Lepak *et al.*, 2012; Jin *et al.*, 2014). Before the intended HRM practices are perceived by employees, they should be implemented by the work groups to which the employees are affiliated. In this process, managers of the work groups often tailor the HR practices to fit their operation, leading to variance of HCHRM across work groups (Nishii and Wright, 2008). Thus, group-level HRM serves as a conduit for transmitting the impact of organizational HRM policies to employees (Lepak *et al.*, 2012). We believe that investigating HCHRM at the group level will provide new insights into how the implementation of HCHRM affects individual turnover intention.

Second, despite the diverse perspectives explaining the impact of HCHRM on individual turnover intention, the potential affective mechanisms are still vague. The existing explanations argued that HCHRM motivates employees to stay with the organization through inducing individual obligations to reciprocate (Allen *et al.*, 2003, 2013; Batt and Colvin, 2011). This social exchange view overemphasizes the rational and calculative aspects of turnover intention (Griffeth *et al.*, 2000), while neglects its affective facet. Maertz and Griffeth (2004) pointed out that affective factors were often responsible for triggering turnover intention. Meanwhile, the notion that HCHRM creates affective bonds between employees and their organizations (Allen *et al.*, 2013; Baron *et al.*, 2001) lies at the heart of the concept. It is presumable that HCHRM can positively elicit affective experience in employees and then make them stay within the organization. Hence, it is necessary to explore the affective mechanisms linking HCHRM to individual turnover intention.

Third, although HCHRM practices are supposed to produce shared experiences in a work group, it is still unknown whether and how the shared experiences account for individual turnover intention. Felps *et al.* (2009) noted that individual turnover intention was often affected by others and might diffuse within a group. According to job embeddedness theory, shared belief, attitudes, and affective experiences signal employees' fit with and link to the organization and then embed them in the organization. Group job satisfaction is an ideal construct to capture how shared experiences explain the impact of HCHRM on turnover intention. Job satisfaction is considered one of the most consistent and salient predictors of turnover intention (e.g. Holtom *et al.*, 2008). Moreover, the theoretical and statistical justification for aggregating job satisfaction to the group level has been validated in a handful of studies (e.g. Harter *et al.*, 2002; Whitman *et al.*, 2010). Empirically, Harter *et al.* (2002) found that group-level job satisfaction explained unique variance in turnover.

In bridging these gaps, this study attempts to advance the literature on HCHRM and turnover intention in three aspects. First, in contrast with previous research, the present research will focus on work-unit-level HCHRM to investigate whether and how varied implementation of HCHRM affects individual turnover intention. Second, relying on affective event theory (AET; Weiss and Cropanzano, 1996), we will examine the mediation of positive affect on the relationship between HCHRM and turnover intention. In this way, we aim to draw attention to the affective aspects of both HCHRM

and turnover intention and shed light on the affective mechanisms underlying HCHRM. Third, we will take a further step to examine the mediation of group job satisfaction on the HCHRM-turnover intention association from job embeddedness theory (Mitchell *et al.*, 2001). In the present study, group job satisfaction is identified as shared attitude that reflects prescriptive norms. Compared with positive affect that indicates individual affective experiences, group job satisfaction represents normative forces in turnover (Hom and Xiao, 2011). Therefore, one of our objectives is to distinguish the affective and normative mechanisms by which HCHRM influences individual turnover intention.

2. Theory and hypotheses

2.1 HCHRM and turnover intention

HCHRM is a bundle of HRM practices aiming to induce employee “commitment” to accomplishing organizational goals (Arthur, 1994; Whitener, 2001). Unlike control-based HRM, characterized by strict rules, rigid performance standards, monitoring, and sanctions (Wood, 1996), HCHRM relies on employees’ self-regulation, self-management (Arthur, 1994), and trusting work relationships. The philosophy of HCHRM is to develop a long-term and mutual investment relationship between employees and the organization (Zhou *et al.*, 2013). It concentrates on nurturing employees’ psychological links (e.g. commitment, identification, and attachment) with the organization and the people there. In general, HCHRM practices include selective staffing, comprehensive training, developmental appraisal, flexible job descriptions, and competitive and equitable compensation (Chow *et al.*, 2008; Whitener, 2001; Zhou *et al.*, 2013).

Turnover intention refers to individual conscious and volitional willingness to leave the organization (Griffeth *et al.*, 2000). Generally, HCHRM reduces individual turnover intention through two pathways. First, HCHRM practices retain employees by building their psychological attachment to the organization and embedding them in it. In groups implementing HCHRM practices, members are deliberately selected based on their fit with the organizational values and goals (Collins and Smith, 2006). They are more likely to identify with the organizational goals and be committed to the organization. By providing proper jobs, specific training, and personal development opportunities, HCHRM will further increase employees’ perceived fit with the organization and align their goals with the organizational interests. Zhou *et al.* (2013) argued that HCHRM blurred the boundary between the self and the organization among the employees and blended them into the organization. When employees are equipped with knowledge, skills, and ability specific to the company, it enmeshes them in the organization and prevents them from leaving (Hom and Xiao, 2011). Second, HCHRM induces employees’ obligations to stay through generating their perception of being valued, trusted (Xiao and Björkman, 2006), and supported (Allen *et al.*, 2003; Whitener, 2001). HCHRM practices, such as enriched jobs, enlarged job scope (Zhou *et al.*, 2013), competitive compensation, developmental appraisal, and career development opportunities, not only endow employees with tangible benefits, but also convey genuine concerns for them. In return, individuals will feel obliged to stay with the organization and dedicate themselves to achieving its goal. Therefore, we propose:

H1. HCHRM is negatively related to turnover intention.

2.2 The mediation of positive affect

To date, although Baron *et al.* (2001) argued that familial feelings accounted for HCHRM’s influence on desirable outcomes, the affective mechanisms implied in HCHRM are still understudied. As AET suggests, specific management practices are

expected to elicit affective experience among the staff and consequently influence their behaviors (Weiss and Cropanzano, 1996). At the heart of AET, affective experiences constitute individual readiness to act and play a pivotal role in transmitting the effect of situational events on behavioral intention (Ashton-James and Ashkanasy, 2008). Positive affect refers to one's positive views and feelings about oneself and the world (Burke *et al.*, 1993). We define it as enduring positive feelings, including joy, happiness, and delight (Izard, 1977), to predict stable turnover intention.

We assume that HCHRM will elicit positive affect in employees. First, workers in work units with HCHRM are offered enriched jobs and allowed a certain degree of job autonomy. As a result, employees will feel respected and valued. Under this circumstance, even when assigned routine tasks, these employees can derive joy from the job (Saavedra and Kwun, 2000). Second, by providing comprehensive training and development opportunities, HCHRM develops workers' knowledge, skills, and ability to complete tasks, which will further generate their sense of contentment and delight. Third, HCHRM is characterized by competitive compensation, pay for performance, and group incentives. All these make the job decent and appealing, and partly compensate for boredom in the structured job. Additionally, intangible rewards, such as an internal promotion ladder and job security, satisfy employees' need for development and safety, thus positively induce affective experiences with the job.

Furthermore, positive affect induced by HCHRM, in turn, will reduce individual turnover intention. According to the "affect-as-information model" (Schwarz, 1990), positive affect indicates optimistic assessments, perceived control (Lerner and Keltner, 2001), and pleasurable experiences of the environment. Given their hedonic nature, people tend to maintain pleasant situations while avoiding those that incur displeasure (Maertz and Griffeth, 2004). Hence, workers with positive affect will strive to continue their group membership to preserve the pleasant experiences. Moreover, in the "broaden-and-build model," Fredrickson (1998) showed that positive affect contributed to individual broadening and building of physical, intellectual, and social resources. Workers with positive affect report higher optimism, self-efficacy (Isen and Reeve, 2005; Staw and Barsade, 1993), and energy to solve problems that drive them to leave, such as deteriorating well-being and interpersonal relationship conflicts. Previous research has shown that positive affect negatively predicts turnover intention (Bouckenooghe *et al.*, 2013; Posthuma *et al.*, 2005). Therefore, we hypothesize:

H2. Positive affect mediates the negative relationship between HCHRM and turnover intention.

2.3 The mediation of group job satisfaction

Group job satisfaction, which describes shared cognitive and affective evaluations of the job among group members, has been conceptually and empirically justified (Harter *et al.*, 2002; Whitman *et al.*, 2010). There are two core tenets in the definition. First, group job satisfaction combines cognitive and affective evaluations. Hom *et al.* (2012) pointed out that job satisfaction involved affective components. It is essentially evaluative judgments manifested in affective forms (Brief and Weiss, 2002). Second, group job satisfaction is shared among group members and represents collective experience. What distinguishes group job satisfaction from its individual counterpart is that it reflects "consistent or homogenous affective reactions within a group" (George and Bettenhausen, 1990, p. 108).

We posit that HCHRM is predictive of group job satisfaction. In work units with HCHRM, employees are recruited based on the fit of their values and qualifications with the organizational requirements (Zhou *et al.*, 2013). Employees are exposed to a homogeneous environment and organizational experience. For example, they are provided with identical enriched jobs, developmental programs, fair salary, and job security in HCHRM programs (Hom and Xiao, 2011). Hence, they will interpret these cues in a similar fashion and have similar evaluations of the work experience (Salancik and Pfeffer, 1978). It is likely that individuals will pervasively report a high level of job satisfaction with consensus, which gives rise to high group job satisfaction.

The well-established job satisfaction-turnover link has been documented in many studies (e.g. Hom and Kinicki, 2001). By and large, individuals with higher job satisfaction often perceive less necessity to search for job alternatives and more attachment to the organization. Group job satisfaction exerts a similar influence on turnover intention. In groups with a high level of shared job satisfaction, the employees generally feel satisfied with the situation. They know that the members are closely connected and the situation can be maintained only with collective efforts. Thus, it becomes an implicit rule that individuals should comply with the organizational goals and be committed to the organization (Birdi *et al.*, 2008). Fearing that unscrupulous individuals may break the favorable state, the interlocked group members tend to reward desirable behavior and punish deviant behaviors (Hom and Xiao, 2011). These normative forces will prevent employees from leaving the organization (Maertz and Griffeth, 2004). In other words, shared job satisfaction is the link that embeds individuals in the organization (Mitchell *et al.*, 2001). On the contrary, in Felps *et al.*'s (2009) turnover contagion model, a single member's dissatisfaction and turnover intention can trigger other coworkers' intention to quit. Empirically, Whitman *et al.* (2010), in their meta-analytical study, showed that group employee satisfaction is negatively associated with withdrawal behavior. Taken these arguments together, we hypothesize that:

H3. Group job satisfaction mediates the negative relationship between HCHRM and turnover intention.

3. Method

3.1 Participants and procedures

The survey was administered in two large manufacturers from mainland China. One of them was located in Guangzhou City and the other in Dongguan City. We contacted HR managers of the headquarters to get their assent. Then, the HR managers notified the affiliated factories and two of them were volunteered to participate in the survey. One HR specialist from each factory was appointed to assist the researchers in administering the investigation. Each factory had more than 100 assembly lines producing diverse digital products. Because the lines produce different products, supervisors of the assembly lines usually have certain discretion in executing HRM practices. Given the special work pattern in manufacturing factory, a work unit in the present research is comprised of assembly line workers and their immediate supervisor.

After obtaining the name list of voluntary participants, we separately sent each supervisor and employee a sealable envelope containing a questionnaire and a cover letter. A special code schema was used to match supervisors with their subordinates. The cover letter explained the research purpose, and provided guidelines to complete the questionnaire and assurance of confidentiality. Following previous research, the

supervisors were asked to assess HCHRM practices on the assembly lines because they are responsible for and knowledgeable about its execution (Gerhart *et al.*, 2000). The employees reported positive affect, job satisfaction, and turnover intention. After completing the questionnaires, they were required to put them into the envelopes, seal the envelopes, and send them to the researchers.

Initially, we distributed 320 employee questionnaires and 40 supervisor questionnaires in plant A, 480 employee questionnaires and 60 supervisor questionnaires in plant B. At the end of the distribution-return process, we received 631 employee questionnaires and 77 supervisor questionnaires. Work groups with fewer than three valid employee questionnaires were excluded. Then, after matching the questionnaires and deleting unusable ones, we obtained 471 valid employee questionnaires and 53 supervisor questionnaires. Among them, 220 employee questionnaires and 28 supervisor questionnaires were from plant A, 251 employee questionnaires and 25 supervisor questionnaires were from plant B.

Of the employees, 41.4 percent were male and 88.3 percent were the Han nationality. In terms of their age distribution, 10.8 percent of them were in the 19-22 age group, 65.4 percent in the 23-27 age group, 19.7 percent in the 28-32 age group, and 4.0 percent in the above 32 years age group. As for organizational tenure, 13.6 percent of them had worked in the current organization for 0-3 months, 30.6 percent for 4-6 months, 25.7 percent for 7-12 months, 14.0 percent for 12-18 months, and 16.1 percent for more than 18 months.

3.2 Measurement

The Chinese versions of the scales used in the current survey were translated from the original English versions. Two bilingual scholars were invited to conduct the translation and back-translation procedures following the double-blind discipline. All the items were reported on a five-point Likert scale ranging from: (1) "strongly disagree" to (5) "strongly agree."

3.3 HCHRM

McClean and Collins's (2011) seven-item scale was used to measure the HCHRM practices executed in the assembly lines. A sample item was "The training we provide for this position is used to promote long-term growth and development within the company". The reliability of the scale was 0.70.

3.4 Positive affect

We adapted three items from Izard's (1977) instrument to assess employees' positive affect. The respondents were asked to report the extent to which they felt joyful, happy, and delighted. The sample items include: "I'm joyful at work". The reliability of positive affect was 0.80.

3.5 Job satisfaction

We used Cammann *et al.*'s (1983) three-item instrument to measure the overall job satisfaction of the workers on the assembly lines. A sample item was "All in all, I am satisfied with my job". The reliability of job satisfaction was 0.83.

3.6 Turnover intention

We measured the variable with Bluedorn's (1982) four-item scale, including a reverse-coded item. A sample item was "I do not plan to work here much longer". The reliability

of turnover intention was 0.64. Although 0.70 is the recommended cut-off point for research (Nunnally, 1970), some studies assert that 0.60 can be an acceptable criterion (Hair *et al.*, 1992; Tu and Lu, 2016).

3.7 Control variable

Previous studies have shown that individual demographics, such as age, gender, and organizational tenure, are related to employee turnover intention (e. g. Griffeth *et al.*, 2000). Consequently, we controlled for employee gender, race, age, and tenure at the individual level. Gender of an employee was coded as 1 (= male) or 0 (= female), race was coded as 1 (= Han nationality) or 0 (= minority), age was recorded as 1 (= 19-22), 2 (= 23-27), 3 (= 28-32), or 4 (= more than 32), and tenure was record as 1 (= 0-3 months), 2 (= 4-6 months), 3 (= 7-12 months), 4 (= 12-18 months), or 5 (= more than 18 months). Moreover, at the group level, we controlled for the location and size of the assembly lines. The assembly line location was recorded as 1 (= Guangzhou) or 0 (= Dongguan), and its size was assessed with the number of employees.

3.8 Data aggregation

As group job satisfaction was aggregated from individual job satisfaction, three criteria, namely within-group agreement (r_{wg}), interclass correlations (ICC1), and reliability of the means (ICC2) were employed to judge the aggregation. In the present study, the average r_{wg} of group job satisfaction was 0.81, which is higher than the recommended 0.70 value (Lance *et al.*, 2006). ICC1 for group job satisfaction was 0.11 ($F = 2.11, p < 0.001$), which was slightly lower than the recommended value of 0.12, but the ICC1 value was statistically significant. ICC2 for group job satisfaction was 0.53, also lower than the recommended 0.70 criterion. However, the ICC2 is a function of team size (Bliese, 1998), and team size in the present study was relatively small, suggesting that ICC2 was acceptable. In conclusion, the aggregation in the present study was justified.

3.9 Discriminant validity

Though our data were collected from multiple sources, three of our variables of interest were reported by employees. As a result, we conducted confirmatory factor analysis to test the discriminant validity of the three variables. The three-factor model indicated that it has acceptable fitness ($\chi^2 = 169.19, df = 32, CFI = 0.92, GFI = 0.93, RMSEA = 0.10$), whereas the two-factor model ($\chi^2 = 412.07, df = 34, CFI = 0.77, GFI = 0.84, RMSEA = 0.15$) and the one-factor model ($\chi^2 = 515.01, df = 34, CFI = 0.70, GFI = 0.81, RMSEA = 0.17$) were unacceptable. The results revealed that the three measures were empirically distinct from each other.

4. Results

The means, standard deviations, and correlations are shown in Table I.

With HCHRM and group job satisfaction conceptualized at the group level, hierarchical linear modeling (Bryk and Raudenbush, 1992) was employed to examine the hypotheses. In keeping with Zhang *et al.* (2009), we group-mean-centered the individual variables and added their group means at level 2. For those at level 2, we added the grand-centered variables at the group level. All our proposed multilevel mediations were tested following Baron and Kenny's (1986) steps. Moreover, we also calculated the significance of the indirect effects with Sobel test and Monte Carlo method for assessing mediation (MCMAM; Selig and Preacher, 2008).

Table I.
Means, standard
deviations and
correlations

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
<i>Individual level (n = 471)</i>								
Employee gender	0.41	0.49	1					
Employee race	0.88	0.32	-0.03	1				
Employee tenure	2.89	1.27	-0.01	0.04	1			
Employee age	2.22	0.76	-0.03	-0.03	0.09*	1		
Positive affect	2.56	0.75	0.10*	0.03	-0.08****	0.04	1	
Turnover intention	3.00	0.72	-0.02	0.09*	0.15**	-0.11*	-0.37***	1
<i>Team level (n = 53)</i>								
Team size	8.89	4.93	1					
Location	0.53	0.50	-0.22	1				
HCHRM	3.58	0.62	-0.15	0.24****	1			
Group job satisfaction	2.84	0.39	0.10	-0.61	0.30*	1		

Notes: *n* employee = 471; *n* group = 53. **p* < 0.05; ***p* < 0.01; ****p* < 0.001; *****p* < 0.1 (two-tailed)

H1 argued that HCHRM was negatively related to turnover intention. As the results in Model 1 in Table II suggested, HCHRM was significantly and negatively related to turnover intention ($\gamma = -0.16$, $p < 0.05$), supporting *H1*.

In *H2*, we proposed that positive affect mediated the relationship between HCHRM and turnover intention. We regressed positive affect on HCHRM, and found that HCHRM was significantly and positively related to employee positive affect ($\gamma = 0.13$, $p < 0.01$). Model 2 in Table II revealed that after entering positive affect, the relationship between HCHRM and turnover intention became insignificant ($\gamma = -0.10$, ns), while positive affect was negatively related to turnover intention ($\beta = -0.39$, $p < 0.001$). According to Baron and Kenny's (1986) criteria to justify mediating effect, it confirmed full mediation of positive affect. Moreover, we applied Sobel test and MCMAM to calculate the indirect effect. As shown in Table III, the Sobel test suggested

Table II.
Results of multi-level
mediation between
HCHRM and
turnover intention

Variable	Null model	Turnover intention		
		Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
<i>Level 1</i>				
Employee gender		-0.05	0.01	-0.05
Employee race		0.15	0.25*	0.15
Employee tenure		0.10***	0.07**	0.10***
Employee age		0.14***	-0.11**	-0.14***
Positive affect			-0.39***	
<i>Level 2</i>				
Intercept	3.01	3.03***	3.03***	3.02***
Group size		-0.01	-0.02*	0.00
Location		0.06	-0.08	-0.05
HCHRM		-0.16*	-0.10	0.00
Group job satisfaction				-0.57***
σ^2	0.47	0.45	0.37	0.44
τ	0.05	0.04	0.04	0.01
R^2		0.20	0.22	0.80

Note: *n* employee = 471; *n* group = 53. **p* < 0.05; ***p* < 0.01; ****p* < 0.001 (two-tailed)

that the indirect effect of “HCHRM-PA-TI” was -0.05 ($p < 0.05$). In the MCMAM, the 95 percent confidence interval for the indirect effect of “HCHRM-PA-TI” was -0.10 to -0.01 (excluding 0). Thus, $H2$ was supported.

$H3$ assumed that group job satisfaction mediated the relationship between HCHRM and turnover intention. HCHRM was found to be positively associated with group job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.22$, $p < 0.05$). As presented in Model 3 in Table II, when we simultaneously added HCHRM and group job satisfaction to the model, the relationship between HCHRM and turnover intention became insignificant ($\beta = 0.00$, ns), while group job satisfaction was negatively related to turnover intention ($\beta = -0.57$, $p < 0.001$). It indicated that group job satisfaction fully mediated the relationship between HCHRM and turnover intention. We also used the Sobel test and MCMAM to estimate the indirect effect. As shown in Table III, the indirect effect was -0.13 ($p < 0.05$) in the Sobel test. The 95 percent confidence interval for the indirect effect was from -0.24 to -0.02 (excluding 0), so $H3$ was confirmed.

5. Discussion

5.1 Research findings

Drawing on AET and job embeddedness theory, we conceptualized HCHRM at the work unit level to explore how its execution in assembly lines influenced individual turnover intention, as well as how affective mechanisms and shared norm accounted for the process. We examined the mediation of group job satisfaction and individual positive affect on the HCHRM-turnover intention relation. Our results preliminarily support the hypothesized model and contribute to the extant literature in the following aspects.

First, HCHRM at the group level is negatively related to individual turnover intention. It further evinces the well-documented relationship between HCHRM and turnover (Agarwala, 2003; Allen *et al.*, 2013; Arthur, 1994; Batt and Colvin, 2011). Though commitment-based HR practices are assumed to be particularly effective among knowledge workers (Lepak and Snell, 2002), our finding demonstrates its generalizability in a labor-based workforce. That is, for those with rigidly structured jobs, commitment-based HR practices are not only applicable but also desirable. By conceptualizing HCHRM at the group level, we empirically substantiate that group-level HR practices captured the variance in individual outcomes (Arthur and Boyles, 2007; Nishii and Wright, 2008). In work units like assembly lines, supervisors are responsible to implement HRM practices with a certain degree of discretion and the operation is independent of other assembly lines. There can be variation in terms of HRM implementation across the work units (Nishii and Wright, 2008). Our research highlights the gap between “intended” and “perceived” HR practices, echoing Lepak *et al.*'s (2012) claim that team-level research would serve as momentum to cultivate perspectives explaining the impact of HRM practices on individual outcomes.

Model	r_a	r_b	s_a	s_b	ab	t	p	95%CI	
								LL	UL
HCHRM-PA-TI	0.13	-0.39	0.06	0.04	-0.05	-2.12	$p < 0.05$	-0.10	-0.01
HCHRM-GJS-TI	0.22	-0.57	0.09	0.09	-0.13	-2.28	$p < 0.05$	-0.24	-0.02

Notes: Bootstrap $n = 20,000$ (two-tailed). PA, represents positive affect; TI, represents turnover intention

Table III. Sobel test and MCMAM to estimate indirect effects between HCHRM and turnover intention

Second, our findings support the mediation of positive affect on the HCHRM-turnover intention link. In contrast with previous literature that refers to turnover intention as a rational decision (Hom and Xiao, 2011; Whitener, 2001), our research showed that turnover intention could be an affective response to HRM practices. Thereby, we empirically substantiated Maertz and Griffeth's (2004) proposition that the organization can retain employees with affective forces. HCHRM is generally assumed to motivate and retain employees with familial ties and psychological bonds (Allen *et al.*, 2013; Baron *et al.*, 2001), its affective underpinnings have largely been overlooked. The present research brings to light how organizations can make their employees feel happy to stay. It indicates that besides calculative reasons, HRM also influences individual outcomes through affective experiences.

Third, group job satisfaction mediates the effect of HCHRM on turnover intention. The result concurred with Kehoe and Wright's (2013) proposition that shared experience captured variance in individual outcomes. It indicated that HCHRM influenced employee turnover intention not only through inducing individual affective experience, but also by creating shared experiences in the work unit. On the assembly lines, the workers operated interdependently. Both their experiences and job attitudes were closely connected and generally shared. The shared attitudes would further develop into normative forces (Hom and Xiao, 2011) that prescribe appropriate behaviors and discipline undesirable behaviors. That is, group job satisfaction motivates employees to maintain the favorable state acquiescently and refrain from withdraw and turnover. In comparison with individual job satisfaction, group job satisfaction reduced turnover intention through normative regulation. With regard to the cultural context, the finding might be partly ascribed to Chinese employees' highly collectivistic orientation, because collectively orientated employees are prone to maintaining harmonious relationships and complying with group norms (Hom and Xiao, 2011).

Moreover, our results reveal that the indirect effect of HCHRM on turnover intention via group job satisfaction is larger (-0.13) than that via positive affect (-0.05). It further suggests that compared with idiosyncratic experience, turnover intention is more likely to be shaped and constrained by shared experiences. With regard to HRM research, the psychological and familial bonds implied in HCHRM ought to be shared among group members to exert greater experiences. Therefore, the present study is among the first to simultaneously examine and differentiate the two forces in turnover intention, and map new avenues for future research into both HCHRM and turnover intention.

5.2 Practical implication

Our research findings provide practical implications for HR practitioners, especially those working on manufacturing assembly lines. First, HCHRM practices are effective in reducing employee turnover intention on assembly lines. Especially in China, where many manufacturers are striving to reduce their high turnover rate, commitment among front-line employees is extremely valuable. Additionally, as the implementation of HCHRM practices may vary across work groups, senior managers should take measures to ensure that they are executed under the intended HR principles. Second, our research indicates that it is plausible to reduce the turnover intention of front-line workers by inducing their positive affect. In fact, workers on assembly lines who have to work routinely are more vulnerable to negative emotions, such as depression, anxiety, and anger. Thus, it is imperative for Chinese manufacturers to implement HCHRM practices to improve their front-line workers' well-being. Third, cultivating group job satisfaction on assembly lines is another effective

measure to increase followers' willingness to stay. To create shared job satisfaction in the work unit, supervisors are recommended to offer them fair pay, opportunities, training, and promotion.

5.3 Limitations and future research

Several limitations are highlighted to be addressed in future research. One is that potential common method bias might undermine our conclusions. With job satisfaction, positive affect, and turnover intention reported by employees, it is likely that the relations of job satisfaction and positive affect with turnover intention are inflated. We recommend future research measure the three variables with temporal lags in between. Second, the cross-sectional nature of our research does not allow us to infer causal relationships between the variables. We suggest that the longitudinal research design should follow to examine the time-lagged relationship between the variables in our model. Third, the construct of HCHRM calls for more nuanced conceptualization and theorization. In the future, both employer and employee ratings should be included to unveil the affective mechanisms underlying HCHRM.

6. Conclusion

The objective of our research is to investigate how affective mechanism and shared attitudes account for the relationship between HCHRM and turnover intention. A survey conducted on Chinese manufacturing assembly lines supports the mediation of both group job satisfaction and positive affect in the relation. It highlights the affective aspect of turnover intention and enriches the extant literature by introducing new perspectives. As the findings implies, by implementing HCHRM practices employers can generate group job satisfaction and individual positive affect to retain their employees. Despite this fruitful exploration, more endeavors are warranted to explore the underlying mechanisms of HCHRM.

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