



Human resource management affecting organizational commitment of private university lecturers in Thailand

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Abstract

Private universities in Thailand are facing a severe crisis of faculty shortages and loss of qualified instructors. The number of full-time faculty dropped to 11,722 in 2022, while student enrollment increased from 199,810 to 264,496. This issue stems from private sector competition offering higher salaries and benefits, perceived inferior status compared to public institutions, and limited self-development opportunities. Research objectives were: 1. To examine the influence of human resource management factors on the organizational commitment of faculty at Thai private universities. 2. To examine the influence of job-related factors on the organizational commitment of lecturer members at private universities in Thailand. This quantitative study sampled 375 full-time faculty from 42 private universities nationwide using multistage sampling. Data were collected via a questionnaire divided into four sections: personal information, human resource management, job factors, and organizational commitment. The findings revealed that overall human resource management was rated at a high level, with acquisition receiving the highest score. Organizational commitment, particularly pride, was also rated highly, attributed to the university's focus on personnel and growth opportunities. Factors such as human resource acquisition, development, retention, job meaningfulness, autonomy, responsibility, and organizational support significantly influenced commitment ($p < 0.05$), with organizational support having the strongest effect. However, growth opportunities and rewards showed no statistical significance influence.

Keywords: human resource management, job factors, organizational commitment

Background and Significance

The COVID-19 pandemic has not merely transformed the business world but has also fundamentally altered work patterns. These challenges have compelled executives and human resource departments to reconsider and revise their human resource management approaches and methodologies to adapt to emerging changes, enabling organizations to cope with evolving situations and maintain competitive advantages. Human resource management therefore plays a crucial role in managing employees and personnel within organizations, allowing them to grow robustly, efficiently, and effectively in new contexts (Aguinis & Burgi-Tian, 2021).

Private universities are higher education institutions operating under the National Education Act B.E. 2546 and its amendment (No. 2) B.E. 2550. Currently, there are 42 private universities nationwide. According to data from the Office of the Private Higher Education Commission, significant changes occurred in private university lecturers numbers between 2021 and 2022: from over 16,696 full-time lecturers (199,810 students) in 2021 to only 11,722 lecturers (264,496 students) in 2022. This indicates ongoing lecturers turnover with various underlying causes. The entry and departure of lecturers members is undesirable for private universities, which strive to minimize such occurrences. Creating quality and specialized educational personnel, particularly lecturers, requires substantial investment. Private universities expect these lecturers members to remain with the institution and contribute optimally for the longest possible duration.

Many private universities are experiencing workforce crises due to competition from private sector businesses seeking quality lecturers. This occurs because salary and benefit packages offered by private higher education institutions cannot compete with those of business and private organizations, particularly in fields highly demanded by the private sector. This aligns with research by Kakarndee (2017) on factors affecting frequent job changes among Generation Y workers, which examined five main factors: wages, finding suitable employment, career growth opportunities, relationships with supervisors, and self-development opportunities. The study found that wage factors and finding suitable work positively influenced job changes, while self-development opportunities negatively affected job changes.

Moreover, lecturers in private higher education institutions often perceive themselves as having lower status than their counterparts in public institutions, both socially and professionally. Consequently, they aspire to positions in public higher education institutions. For private universities to remain viable and address experienced lecturers shortages while preventing such problems that directly impact organizational development, administrators must create bonds between lecturers and the organization through definite policies and management approaches that foster attachment and encourage long-term retention.

Lecturers commitment to institutions enhances dedication, cooperation, and collaborative efforts to improve and create quality, efficient work outcomes. This results in increased lecturers confidence in institutional goals and values, supporting organizational transformation and enhancing competitive capabilities. Combined with effective internal organizational management to achieve balance and address current and future challenges under various influences affecting the organization—including domestic legislation, international agreements, competition among educational institutions from both private and public sectors, and internal organizational obstacles—this enables institutions to survive in such environments and become continuously developing organizations capable of elevating their status as leaders among private educational institutions, gaining recognition and acclaim from educational institutions both domestically and internationally.

Given these circumstances, as a lecturers member at a private university, the researcher identified a research gap warranting investigation into human resource management effects on organizational commitment among private university lecturers in Thailand. This research aims to provide guidelines for developing appropriate organizational commitment in current real-world situations and enhance the effectiveness of private university management to ensure quality operations recognized both domestically and internationally.

Objective

1. To examine the influence of human resource management factors on the organizational commitment of lecturers members at private universities in Thailand.
2. To examine the influence of job-related factors on the organizational commitment of lecturers members at private universities in Thailand.

Literature Review

Concepts and evolution of human resource management

Human Resource Management (HRM) has evolved from functioning merely as Personnel Administration to becoming Strategic HRM, which serves as a critical business partner in driving organizations toward sustainable goal achievement. The core concept of HRM encompasses utilizing a set of policies, processes, and various activities to maximize personnel potential with optimal efficiency. The main components of HRM, conceptual framework adopted in this research, are divided into four core processes: 1. Acquiring human resources (e.g., planning, recruitment, and selection), 2. Rewarding human resources (e.g., performance appraisal and compensation), 3. Developing human resources (e.g., training and career planning), and 4. Maintaining and protecting human resources (e.g., labor relations and occupational health and safety). The primary objectives of HRM include helping organizations achieve strategic goals, utilizing personnel skills efficiently, and developing quality of work life.

Concepts concerning job factors and commitment

Organizational success in the 21st century depends on human capital quality and organizational commitment, particularly among lecturers members who seek pride and satisfaction directly from their work content. A significant model explaining how job characteristics affect commitment is the Job Characteristics Model (JCM) developed by Hackman & Oldham (1975). This model proposes that five core job characteristics (skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback) create three critical psychological states in employees (experienced meaningfulness of work, experienced responsibility for work outcomes, and knowledge of actual work results), which serve as mediators leading to enhanced motivation and commitment.

Concepts and theories of organizational commitment

Organizational Commitment refers to the sense of identification, acceptance of organizational values, and willingness to dedicate oneself to the organization. The most widely accepted commitment model is Allen & Meyer (1990) three-component model, which comprises: 1. Affective Commitment: emotional attachment and pride in organizational membership, 2. Continuance Commitment: commitment arising from consideration of costs incurred if one leaves (investment in the organization), and 3. Normative Commitment: commitment stemming from feelings of indebtedness or obligation to remain with the organization. Organizational commitment is critically important because it can predict turnover rates (Steers, 1977), increase productivity, and foster customer loyalty. Social Exchange Theory (Allen & Meyer, 1990) serves as the principal theory explaining that commitment emerges from equitable exchange of benefits between employees and organizations.

Research hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: Human resource management, comprising 1) human resource acquisition, 2) human resource rewards, 3) human resource development, and 4) human resource maintenance and protection, affects organizational commitment of private university lecturers in Thailand.

Hypothesis 2: Job-related factors, comprising 1) job meaningfulness, 2) autonomy and responsibility, 3) growth opportunities, and 4) organizational support, affect organizational commitment of private university lecturers in Thailand.

Research Conceptual Framework

Human Resource Management utilizing theories including: 1) Scientific Management Theory, 2) Equity Theory (Maslow, 1943) 3) Hierarchy of Needs, 4) Two-Factor Theory (Taylor, 1911; Adams, 1965; Herzberg, 1966), and work-related factors including Goal Setting Theory, Theory Y, Maslow – Self-Actualization Level, Perceived Organizational Support (Locke & Latham, 1990; McGregor, 1960; Eisenberger et al. 1986). The dependent variable is Organizational Commitment, comprising Meyer & Allen (1991). Three component model of commitment, motivation factors, and human relations theory (Herzberg, 1966; Mayo, 1933). Research conceptual framework shows in Figure. 1.

Table 1 Cronbach's alpha coefficients for pilot testing of research variables

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient
Human Resource Management	0.983
Job-related Factors	0.949
Organizational Commitment	0.973

The reliability analysis results demonstrate excellent internal consistency for all research variables. All Cronbach's Alpha coefficients exceed the acceptable threshold of 0.70, with values ranging from 0.949 to 0.983, indicating very high reliability.

3. Data collection

The researcher submitted official letters requesting cooperation for research data collection from the university to the rectors of all 42 private universities to seek collaboration in collecting data from survey respondents. Data collection was conducted through online questionnaires on the Google Forms platform by sending links via official emails to private university lecturers nationwide, with a specified timeframe of 4–6 weeks for completing the questionnaires. The researcher followed up with reminder emails every 1–2 weeks to increase the response rate. After closing data collection, the results were downloaded and checked for completeness of response sets

4. Data analysis

Statistical analysis was employed, including means, standard deviations, correlation analysis between variables, and analysis of variable influences on job-related factors affecting organizational commitment among lecturers members at private universities in Thailand. Since the research objective aimed to study the influence of human resource management and job-related factors on organizational commitment, multiple linear regression analysis was used as the primary statistical method for hypothesis testing.

Results

Sample characteristics found that the sample of 375 respondents demonstrated the following characteristics: The majority were female (68%), aged 20-29 years (41.6%), and single (68.3%). Regarding educational background, most held master's degrees (94.7%) and were primarily academic staff (42.4%). Work experience was predominantly 1-5 years (39.5%), followed by 10+ years (25.6%), reflecting a workforce composition of both new and experienced personnel.

Average monthly income was primarily in the range of 18,001-30,000 baht (66.4%). Overall attitudes toward human resource management, job-related factors, and organizational commitment were at high agreement levels ($\bar{X} = 4.14$, S.D. = 0.69). When examined by individual dimensions, job-related factors scored highest ($\bar{X} = 4.21$, S.D. = 0.64), followed by organizational commitment ($\bar{X} = 4.14$, S.D. = 0.70), and human resource management ($\bar{X} = 4.07$, S.D. = 0.75)

In conclusion, the sample group demonstrated strong academic qualifications and roles, with income and work experience concentrated in the early-career range. Respondents exhibited highly positive attitudes toward job-related dimensions and organizational aspects, indicating favorable perceptions of their work environment and institutional commitment among private university lecturers in Thailand

1. Normality Testing

Table 2 Normality test for dependent variable y

Normality Test (Shapiro-Wilk)	
Statistic	p
0.986	0.001

The normality test calculated using Shapiro-Wilk, which yielded a p-value less than 0.001, indicating that the distribution of the data curve is non-normal. However, Hair et al. (2019) stated in their rules of thumb regarding data normality that normality can impact small samples (less than 50 samples), but this impact decreases significantly when sample size increases to 200 or more samples. Therefore, multiple regression analysis can be conducted with confidence.

Table 3 Correlation (collinearity) of Predictor Variables $X_1 - X_8$

Variables	VIF	Tolerance
X_1	2.63	0.380
X_2	1.53	0.656
X_3	2.36	0.423
X_4	1.28	0.780
X_5	1.41	0.711
X_6	1.47	0.680
X_7	3.16	0.317
X_8	2.47	0.404

There is no high correlation (collinearity) among the independent variables: human resource provisioning (X_1), human resource rewards (X_2), human resource development (X_3), human resource maintenance and protection (X_4), meaningfulness of work (X_5), autonomy and responsibility (X_6), growth opportunities (X_7), and organizational support (X_8).

The Tolerance values are greater than 0.1 and the VIF (Variance Inflation Factor) values are less than 10, which means they can be used for Multiple Regression Analysis

2. Correlation Analysis between Independent Variables and Dependent Variables.

Table 4 Results of correlation analysis between independent variables and dependent variable

variable	Y ₁	X ₁	X ₂	X ₃	X ₄	X ₅	X ₆	X ₇	X ₈
X ₁	0.624**	—							
X ₂	0.443**	0.516**	—						
X ₃	0.616**	0.671**	0.494**	—					
X ₄	0.329**	0.259**	0.237**	0.290**	—				
X ₅	0.398**	0.314**	0.300**	0.398**	0.364**	—			
X ₆	0.398**	0.274**	0.281**	0.408**	0.400**	0.443**	—		
X ₇	0.597**	0.724**	0.494**	0.620**	0.179**	0.272**	0.206**	—	
X ₈	0.638**	0.593**	0.474**	0.613**	0.219**	0.298**	0.294**	0.739**	—

* Statistically significance at level 0.05, ** Statistically significance at level 0.01

The analysis revealed that all eight independent variables have a significant positive relationship with organizational commitment ($p < 0.001$), with correlation coefficients ranging from low to high ($r = 0.329 - 0.638$). The strongest correlation was found with organizational support (X_8 , $r = 0.638$), followed by human resource provisioning (X_1 , $r = 0.624$), human resource development (X_3 , $r = 0.616$), and growth opportunities (X_7 , $r = 0.597$), which were all at a high level.

3. Hypothesis testing

Table 5 Analysis of the prediction and variance of analysis of human resource management and job-related factors affecting organizational commitment of private university lecturers in Thailand

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	F	Overall Model Test		
					df 1	df 2	p
1	0.748	0.560	0.550	58.2	8	366	< 0.001

The results of the multiple regression analysis showed an R² value of 0.560. This indicates that human resource management practices can explain 56.0% of the variance in organizational commitment among full-time lecturers at private universities in Thailand. The F-test results were as follows: $F(8,366) = 58.2$, with a significance level of $p < 0.001$.

Table 6 results of the multiple regression analysis between predictor variables and organizational commitment

Predictor	Estimate	SE	t	Stand. Estimate	P-value
Intercept	0.5525	0.2005	2.756		0.006
X ₁	0.1717	0.0419	4.100	0.2305	<0.001
X ₂	0.0122	0.0408	0.300	0.0128	0.765
X ₃	0.1335	0.0522	2.557	0.1363	0.011
X ₄	0.0758	0.0386	1.962	0.0770	0.049
X ₅	0.0885	0.0411	2.154	0.0886	0.032
X ₆	0.1067	0.0420	2.542	0.1069	0.011
X ₇	0.0565	0.0529	1.068	0.0658	0.286
X ₈	0.2426	0.0459	5.286	0.2883	<0.001

The predictor variables human resource provisioning (X₁), human resource development (X₃), human resource maintenance and protection (X₄), meaningfulness of work (X₅), autonomy and responsibility (X₆), and organizational support (X₈) were all statistically significant at the 0.05 level. They can predict the impact of human resource management on the organizational commitment of full-time lecturers at private universities in Thailand.

Growth opportunities (X₇) and human resource rewards (X₂) were not statistically significant. The equation can be written as follows:

$$Y = 0.5525 + 0.1717(X_1) + 0.1335(X_3) + 0.0758(X_4) + 0.0885(X_5) + 0.1067(X_6) + 0.2426(X_8) + E$$

All six of the aforementioned variables had a statistically significant effect. The results from the t-test show that the p-value for all six factors was less than 0.05, specifically: X₁ (p < 0.001), X₃ (p = 0.011), X₄ (p = 0.049), X₅ (p = 0.032), X₆ (p = 0.011), and X₈ (p < 0.001).

Discussion

The hypothesis testing results of this research demonstrate the relationships between various factors and organizational commitment. The results for each aspect can be discussed as follows:

1. Human resource acquisition factor affects organizational commitment

Human resource acquisition is a process to obtain personnel with knowledge and capabilities at the required time, comprising planning, job analysis, recruitment, and selection (Bakkah Inc., 2021). The accepted research results are consistent with the study by Nansamba et al. (2024), which found that positive perceptions regarding recruitment and selection lead to higher levels of employee commitment.

2. Human resource reward factor affects organizational commitment

Human resource reward is a process that focuses on creating morale and encouragement, starting with performance evaluation to consider compensation and benefits. This contradicts some research but can be explained that in the context of private university lecturers, other factors may be more important according to Herzberg's theory. Compensation and benefits are merely hygiene factors that prevent dissatisfaction but do not directly create motivation. While Martin & Hafer (1995) found that in academic work, internal factors such as challenging work have more influence than external factors like compensation. Therefore, for private university lecturers, rewards may not be a factor that directly affects organizational commitment.

3. Human resource development factor affects organizational commitment

Human resource development is a process of enhancing skills and knowledge to create career advancement. This is consistent with research by Martin & Hafer (1995), which found that employee training programs help improve work performance and increase long-term organizational commitment. When organizations provide opportunities for employees to develop skills, they become more loyal to the organization because they feel valued and part of the organization.

4. Human resource maintenance and protection factor affects organizational commitment

Human resource maintenance and protection is essential for organizations that want long-term success, comprising labor relations activities and health and safety activities. This is consistent with an article from Bakkah Inc. (2021) stating that HR maintenance helps enhance organizational success by increasing employee work commitment. According to Allen & Meyer (1990) organizational commitment theory, continuance commitment arises from employees' perception of costs associated with leaving the organization. Good employee retention measures make employees aware of what they would lose if they left the organization, which increases commitment in this dimension.

5. Work meaningfulness factor affects organizational commitment

Work meaningfulness, where employees feel that work is important, valuable, and affects others, is consistent with research by Allan et al. (2019) on "Outcomes of Meaningful Work: A Meta-Analysis", which found that meaningful work has a highly positive relationship with organizational commitment. When employees feel that work is important, it results in greater job satisfaction and work motivation.

6. Independence and responsibility factor affects organizational commitment

Independence and responsibility, where employees have freedom in making decisions about work methods and are responsible for outcomes. Research by Spector (1986) shows that perceived work control is related to higher commitment. Ward (1997) also found that work groups with independence have higher organizational commitment, while Steers (1977) found that jobs with work independence have high organizational relationships. These research studies support the accepted hypothesis results that independence and responsibility factors affect organizational commitment.

7. Growth opportunity factor affects organizational commitment

Growth opportunities, where employees have opportunities to learn new skills and advance in positions, may contradict general research but can be explained by the specific context of private university lecturers in Thailand. In the higher education system, academic promotion has clearly defined criteria and standards. Lecturers must proceed independently through academic work rather than receiving opportunities directly from the organization. Additionally, research by Mathis et al. (2017) found that growth opportunities were not identified as factors affecting employee organizational commitment but were found to be important factors for managers.

8. Organizational support factor affects organizational commitment

Organizational support means employees feel supported by supervisors and colleagues. According to social exchange theory, organizational commitment arises from the exchange of benefits between employees and the organization. Employees will dedicate themselves to the organization when they perceive support. Gagne & Bhawe (2011) found that quality and good relationships between colleagues and supervisors have positive relationships with organizational commitment. Steers (1977) also found that feelings of importance to the organization and feelings toward colleagues have high organizational relationships.

The research results show that factors affecting organizational commitment of private university lecturers in Thailand include both human resource management factors and job-related factors, with 6 confirmed factors: human resource acquisition, human resource development, human resource maintenance and protection, work meaningfulness, independence and responsibility, and organizational support. Meanwhile, human resource reward factors and growth opportunities do not affect organizational commitment in the context of this study, which may have specific characteristics in the academic environment and work culture of private university lecturers in Thailand.

Body of knowledge

This research reveals that organizational support is the most influential factor affecting faculty commitment. Private universities seeking to retain quality faculty should prioritize creating an environment where faculty feel supported and valued by the organization. Additionally, human resource management practices in recruitment, development, and retention significantly impact commitment. Job characteristics that influence commitment include job meaningfulness, autonomy, responsibility, and organizational support. Interestingly, growth opportunities and rewards showed no statistical relationship with commitment, which may reflect that private university faculty prioritize intrinsic factors over extrinsic ones, particularly pride in their institution and sense of belonging to the organization. The findings suggest that addressing the faculty shortage crisis in Thai private universities should focus on creating a positive work environment, providing work autonomy, and fostering a sense of full organizational support for faculty, rather than competing solely on salary and benefits. This knowledge challenges the conventional assumption that

financial compensation is the primary retention strategy, emphasizing instead the importance of psychological and organizational factors in building faculty commitment and loyalty to private institutions.

Suggestions

1. Suggestions for applying research results

Based on the research findings, three main strategies are proposed for practical application.

1.1 Strategy 1: Cultivate a Supportive Culture

Because organizational support has the strongest influence, administrators should dedicate resources to make this a tangible reality.

1.1.1 Establish an Academic Support Team: Create a unit to assist lecturers with non-teaching duties, such as applying for research grants, managing documents, and coordinating with various departments. This would reduce the administrative burden on lecturers.

1.1.2 Promote a Mentorship Program: Organize a program where senior lecturers can advise and support new lecturers in teaching, research, and navigating university life.

1.1.3 Open Two-Way Communication Channels: Regularly hold forums like “President Meets the Community” or “Dean's Dialogue” to listen to concerns and show that administrators care and are ready to help.

1.2 Strategy 2: Redesign Jobs for Meaning and Autonomy

Instead of focusing solely on rewards, the emphasis should shift to designing a meaningful and autonomous work experience.

1.2.1 Grant Autonomy in Teaching and Research Design: Give lecturers the freedom to choose research topics they are passionate about and to design innovative teaching methods, as long as they adhere to curriculum standards.

1.2.2 Connect Work to Impact: Establish a platform for lecturers to present their research to the public or industry, allowing them to see the tangible value and impact of their work.

1.2.3 Cut the Red Tape: Review and streamline redundant or unnecessary procedures so lecturers have more time to dedicate to their core academic duties.

1.3 Strategy 3: Rethink Rewards & Growth

Although the reward and growth factors were not statistically significant, they should not be completely ignored. They must be adjusted to align with the true needs of the lecturers.

1.3.1 Maintain Competitive Baseline: Ensure salaries and benefits remain competitive enough to prevent dissatisfaction, but recognize they won't significantly increase commitment

1.3.2 Support Individual Development: Provide resources for those who seek growth, but acknowledge this is a personal choice rather than an organizational commitment driver

1.3.3 Focus Resources on Proven Factors: Prioritize investments in organizational support.

2. Suggestions for future research

2.1 Expand the Variables Studied: Future research should incorporate new variables such as organizational values, work-life balance, or leadership factors to gain a more comprehensive understanding of what influences organizational commitment.

2.2 Expand the Scope of the Sample: The study sample should be more diverse, including lecturers from private universities in other regions or making a comparison with public universities. This would lead to more broadly applicable findings.

2.3 Use a Mixed-Methods Approach: Qualitative research, such as in-depth interviews or focus group discussions, should be used alongside quantitative methods. This would provide deeper insights into the experiences and perspectives of the research participants.

2.4 Compare with Past and International Research: The findings should be compared with past studies or research from other countries to analyze similarities and differences and to explain factors unique to the Thai context.

2.5 Study Individual Factors: The effects of personal factors, such as age, gender, education level, and work experience, which may influence organizational commitment, should be studied.

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