Impact of HRM Practices on Affective, Continuance and Normative Commitment of Apparel Sector Employees in Sri Lanka

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Abstract: Organizational commitment is one of the most important human behavior to determine the success of any kind of organization in any scenario. This study is aimed to discuss the correlation between the HRM practices of the operational workers in the apparel sector and their commitment. 300 samples were selected randomly and used bivariate analysis to analyse the primary data. There is a strong and positive relationship between the HRM practices and organizational commitment and very strong positive relationship was found between the HRM practices and continuance commitment. A moderate and positive correlation was recorded between the HRM practices and normative and affective commitment.

Keywords: HRM Practices, Organizational Commitment, Affective Commitment, Continuance Commitment, Normative Commitment

1. Introduction

In today's world, one of the most important assets of an organization is human resource and it plays a lead role to gain competitive advantages for the organization (Sendogdu, Kocabocak & Guven, 2013). According to Dawles, Andrews and Bucklew (2010) talented and loyal employees are essential to achieve competitive advantage by the organization. Competitive environment requires the innovative behavior of employees and performance beyond expectation (Sial et al., 2011). In this context, organizations have to focus the capability of their workforce (Nasurdin, Hemdi & Guat, 2008). Generating and increasing knowledge, motivation, synergy and commitment through effective HRM practices bring about a source of sustainable competitive advantages for the firms (Harter, Schmidt & Hayes, 2002). There are different studies illustrated the impact of HRM practices on organizational performance (Delaney & Huselid, 1996; Huselid, 1995; Paul & Anantharaman, 2003; Den Hartog & Verburg, 2004; Pfeffer, 1998; Jayaram, 1999; Cho et al., 2006). However, very few studies stressed the impact of HRM practices on intangible performance measures such as organizational commitment (Ahmad & Schroeder, 2003, p23-25). Importance of commitment on organizational outcomes has been pointed out in several studies such as Pfeffer (1998), Riketta (2002), and Steel and Louwsbury (2009). However, the new look HRM focuses more on commitment (Schahnavaz & Juyal, 2006, p. 172). As Absar et al. (2010), there is a significant impact of HRM practices on commitment and it is important to generate employee commitment for large and small scale companies (Schahnavaz & Juyal, 2006). Through the well designed HRM practices, organizational management can build commitment of employees (Bal, Bozkut & Ertemisir, 2014). As Kumar and Krishnaveni (2008), satisfaction of employee with HRM practices elicits the employee commitment. Therefore, this study is aimed to discuss the impact of HRM practices on organizational commitment of apparel sector operational workers in Sri Lanka.

2. Literature Review

2.1. HRM Practices

Tan and Nasurdian (2011) said that there are different views of scholars used to define the practices of HRM in different contexts. Schuler and Jackson in 1987 defined HRM practices as a system that attracts, develops, motivates, and retains employees to ensure the effective implementation and the survival of the organization and its members (Tan & Nasurdin 2011, p. 157; Jeet & Sayeeduzzafar 2014, p. 69). As Delery and Doty (1996) mention HRM practices mean that organization designs and implements its human resources in the purpose of achieving the overall objectives through consistent policies and practices. HRM consists of the policies, practices and systems that influence behavior, attitude and performance of employee (Noe et al., 2007). In the organizational context, HRM practices lead to different organizational consequences. As Wright et al. mention in 2001, practices of HRM in an organization persuade the practices of employee and their behavior (Lee & Lee 2010). The evidence of a positive relationship between HRM practices and labour productivity/organizational performance are there.
The labour productivity/ organizational performance is positively related with recruitment training programs (Bartel, 1994); performance evaluation (McDonald and Smith, 1995); compensation and benefits (Gerhart & Trevor, 1996; Gomez-Mejia, 1992); and innovative practices (Delaney & Huselid 1996). As Delaney and Huselid in 1996, Delery and Doty in 1996 and Huselid in 1995, HRM practices such as training, incentives and employee participation influence the organizational productivity and profitability (Lee & Lee 2010). It is clear that the HRM practices lead to different consequences of an organization.

2.2. Organizational Commitment

As Salancik (1977), commitment is a state of being in which an individual bound by his actions to beliefs that sustain his activities and his own (Soltani, 2015, p. 1466). Mowday, Steers and Porter (1979) defined the organizational commitment as the extent of employees’ willingness to exert their effort for the organization’s success and the degree of fit between the employees’ values and the organization values. During the 1970s and 1980s, organizational commitment was perceived as key factor of the relationship between individual and the organizations (Mowday et al., 1982). Today, organizational commitment is perceived as the driving force behind organizational performance (Meyer et al., 1989). It is the psychological attachment of individual to the organization and presents something beyond loyalty to an organization (Bal, Bozkut & Ertemsir, 2014). Organizational commitment was conceptualized as a multidimensional model by Meyer and Allen (1990) and has increased considerable recognition since its inception.

Affective commitment symbolizes an emotional attachment to, identification with and involvement in the organization (Meyer et al., 2002, p. 21) and emotional commitment of an individual to the organization and identification with it (Wolowska, 2014, p. 130). As Meyer et al. continuance commitment refers to the perceived costs associated with leaving the organization (2002, p. 21) and it is the awareness of costs connected with abandoning the organization (Wolowska, 2014, p. 130). Normative commitment reflects a perceived obligation to remain in the organization (Meyer et al., 2002, p. 21) and as Wolowska (2002, p. 130) it is the sense of moral duty to stay in the organization.

and selection (Koch & McGrath 1996);

2.3. HRM Practices and Organizational Commitment

Wright, McMahen and MacWilliams (1994) said that organization can use the HRM to mould the employee behavior, perception and attitudes and as Ogilvie (1986), Meyer and Smith (2000) and Arthur (1994) state one of the major influencing factor to improve organizational commitment is HRM practices and policies. The positive impact and relationship between HRM practices and organizational commitment has been recorded by Wright, Gardner and Moynihan (2003), Koys (1988; 1991), Bal, Bozkut and Ertemsir (2014) Paul and Amantharaman (2004), Yeung and Berman (1997), Whitener (2001) and Shahnawaz and Juyal (2006) through their research studies. Browning (2006) also stressed that HRM systems have relationships with commitment. As Gellatly et al. (2009), HRM practices strategically help to shape the nature of overall commitment of employees. Finegold, Mohrman and Spreitzer (2002) showed that there is a significant relationship between HRM practices and organizational commitment. However, according to Meyer and Allen (1997), there are some of the HRM practices that are linked with commitment. Warsame (2015) and Hiltrop and Despres (1994) also pointed out the significant relationship and strong impact of HRM practices to the employees’ commitment. However, Payne and Huffman in 2005 found through a longitudinal study that there is mediate relationship between organizational commitments with HRM practices.

Different HRM functions/activities have been recorded different relationship or impact with organizational commitment by researchers. Fiorito et al. (2007) pointed out that grievance resolution mechanism positively related with organizational commitment. While Imra and Ahmed (2012) said that training and development have direct and positive impact on organizational commitment. Igbaria and Wormley (1992) and Shore and Barksdale (1998) pointed out level of training and selection does not correlate with organizational commitment.

As a significant HRM activity training plays an important role to employee commitment. As Rainbird (1994) Heyes and Stuart (1996) training is a way of engaging committed employees. Positive relationship or impact of training on the organizational commitment was recorded by Ahmad and Bakar (2003), Al-Emadi and Morquardt (2007), Lam, Lo and Chan (2002),

Pay satisfaction of workers is a significant factor as recorded by Giauque et al. (2010) but haven’t any impact for organizational commitment. However, many researchers such as Miller (n.d.), Imra and Ahmed (2012) and Whitener (2001) have pointed out that compensation has positive relationship or impact on organizational commitment. Fiorito et al. (2007) said that cutting compensation by the company leads to negative relationship with organizational commitment. Bhagat and Chassie (1981) and Shore and Barksdale (1998) found that level of compensation have no significant influence on organizational commitment. Positive relationship between performance-reward contingencies with organizational commitment was recorded by Lee (1971) and Rhodes and Steers (1981).

Markham, Harlan and Hackett (1987) have concluded their findings of the study stating that promotion increases the organizational commitment and positive relationship was recorded by Kanter (1977), Slocombe and Bluedorn (1999), Nasurdin, Hemdi and Guat (2008) and Whitener (2001) identified that performance evaluation has positive influence on organizational commitment. Brown and Benson said that when company practice proper performance evaluation, then it becomes a significant role to determine organizational commitment and Folger and Cropanzano (1998) and Konovsky and Cropanzano (1991) revealed that fair performance evaluation leads to positive commitment. As Caldwell, Chatman and O’Reilly (1990), recruitment results the high level of organizational commitment. Whitener (2001) found that employee selection is highly related with organizational commitment and Caldwell, Chatman and O’Reilly (1990) stressed that higher level of organizational commitment can be gained through a careful selection procedure.

Career and career development facilities provided by the companies are important factors to the employees. As Baruch (2004), career development opportunities have positive influence on commitment and positive relationship or impact between career development and organizational commitment was recorded by Imra and Ahmed (2012), Wayne et al. (1997), Nasurdin, Hemdi and Guat (2008) and Whitener (2001). However, according to Chan (2008), there is no relationship between career development and organizational commitment and Smeenk et al. (2006) pointed out negative impact of career development on organizational commitment.

The HRM activities and practices such as procedural justice (Giauque et al., 2010), employee involvement (Fiorito et al., 2007), reputation (Giauque et al., 2010), decentralization (Knoke, 1988; Bateman & Strasser, 1984), work life policies (Imra & Ahmed, 2012), empowerment (Imra & Ahmed, 2012), leadership style, security, team empowerment, job diversity, feedback, independence, alternative working activities, flexible working hours (Cicekli, 2008) have positive impact or relationship with organizational commitment. While Cicekli (2008) identified the involving decision making by the employees make impact on organizational commitment. Giauque et al. (2010) pointed out that involving in decision making do not have any impact on organizational commitment. There is positive impact of communication and organizational commitment as Imra and Ahmed (2012), Knoke (1988) and Galunic ad Anderson (2000). As Wallace (1995a) and Mayer and Schoorman (1998), there is positive effect of employee participation for organizational commitment. However, negative significant relationship between participation and organizational commitment was found by Wallace (1995b).

3. Objectives of the Study

There are different research findings recognized by researchers to show the relationship between HRM practices and organizational commitment. However, the absence of a single study on the impact of these two phenomena in Sri Lanka is obvious. In other words, there are no sufficient research findings about the impact of HRM practices on affective, continuance and normative commitment in the global context. Therefore, this study is aimed to discuss the impact of HRM practices on organizational commitment using the three component model.

4. Method

This study was a field study and non-contrive setting because the study was conducted in a natural working environment where the employees were attending to their normal functions. According to Sekaran (1992) most of the correlation studies are usually done in a non-contrive field setting with minimal researcher interferences. This research was a cross-sectional
study, which gathered data from a one-time. The unit of analysis used in this study was individual: Operational workers in the apparel industry.

The population of the study was all operational level workers in the apparel companies in Colombo District, Sri Lanka and the size of the real population was difficult to calculate because of lack of government/BOI information. The sample size of the study was 300 operational workers from the large garment companies in Colombo district and the simple random sampling method was used to collect the primary data. 350 questionnaires were distributed and 312 questionnaires were completed and returned. However, 12 questionnaires were not completed properly and the rate of response was 85.71%.

5. Measures

5.1. HRM Practices

There are various HRM practices as discussed by various researchers and academicians (Jeet and Sayeeduzzaar 2014). Referring Opatha (2009) job design, job analysis, human resource planning, recruitment, selection, hiring and induction, performance evaluation, training and development, career management, pay management, welfare management, management of incentives, employee movements, health and safety management, discipline management, grievance handling and labour relations or labour-management relations are the dimensions of HRM practices. As Noe et al. (2007), HRM is composed of the policies, practices, and systems that influence employees’ behaviour, attitude, and performance. Tan and Nasurdin (2011) used performance appraisal, career management, training, reward management and recruitment as HRM practices while Ahmad and Schroeder (2003) used employment insecurity, selection hiring, use of team and decentralization, compensation/incentive contingent on performance, extensive training, status differences and sharing information as dimensions of HRM practices. Recruitment and selection, involvement, training, development and education, work condition, performance appraisal and compensation and reward were used by Demo et al. (2012) to measure HRM practices. Compensation, participation, internal labour market and training were used by Tzafrir (2005) to measure HRM Practices.

In this research, job itself, job re-design (job analysis), human resource planning, recruitment, selection, hiring and induction, performance evaluation, training and development, career management, pay management, welfare management, management of incentives, employee transfer, employee promotion, health & safety management, discipline management, grievance handling, labour relations, HR Department/section, job security, work condition, team orientation, policies of HRM, communication strategies and employee empowering are the dimensions measuring HRM practices perceived by the operational workers in the apparel industry.

5.2. Organizational Commitment

Organizational commitment was measured by an instrument consisting of 24 statements developed by Meyer & Allen in 1990. Each dimension of organizational commitment (affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment) was measured by eight items. Rather than seven-point scale of Allen and Meyer, five-point Likert scale of 1 for strongly disagree to 5 for strongly agree was used to get the possible responses.

5.3. Validity and Reliability

The external reliability of the instruments was examined by Test–retest method. This test was carried out using 10 responses of the apparel industry in Sri Lanka with two weeks’ time interval between two administrations. The external reliability of each question was measured and in the HRM practices, it was recorded more than 0.73 (this is the minimum value among the 60 question statements) and in the organizational commitment questionnaire, it was more than 0.78 (this is the minimum value among the 24 question statements). Then the coefficients of the Test–retest of the instruments indicate that each instrument has a high external reliability.

Inter item consistency reliability was examined with Cronbach’s Alpha test. The results of Cronbach’s alpha test are; in HRM practices, minimum value was 0.72 and in organizational commitment, minimum value was 0.79, which suggests that the internal reliability of each instrument is satisfactory.

6. Findings of the Study

The correlation between HRM practices and organizational commitment depicts in Table 01 and according to Table 01, there is strong and positive correlation between HRM practices and organizational commitment (r is .743, sig is .000). When considering continuance commitment and the HRM practices of the sample, very strong and positive correlation between these two variables are found (r is .921, sig is .000). However, moderately positive correlations are recorded
between affective commitment and HRM practices (r = .568, sig is .000) and normative commitment and HRM practices (r = .429, sig is .000).

Table 01: Correlation between HRM Practices and Organizational Commitment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Affective Commitment</th>
<th>HRM Practices</th>
<th>Affective Commitment</th>
<th>Continuance Commitment</th>
<th>Normative Commitment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>.568 **</td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuance Commitment</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>.921 **</td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normative Commitment</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>.429 **</td>
<td>.430 **</td>
<td>.511 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Commitment</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>.743 **</td>
<td>.933 **</td>
<td>.902 **</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 02 presents the correlation between HRM functions and organizational commitment.

Table 02: Correlation between HRM functions and three dimensions of organizational commitment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Affective Commitment</th>
<th>Continuance Commitment</th>
<th>Normative Commitment</th>
<th>Organizational Commitment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>r</td>
<td>Sig (2-tailed)</td>
<td>r</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Itself</td>
<td>.485</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.904</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Redesign</td>
<td>.996</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.714</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HRP</td>
<td>.985</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.705</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment</td>
<td>.994</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.712</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee Selection</td>
<td>.994</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.712</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hiring and Induction</td>
<td>.996</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.714</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PE</td>
<td>.629</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.028</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T &amp; D</td>
<td>.978</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.873</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Management</td>
<td>.996</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.714</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pay Management</td>
<td>.697</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.942</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welfare Management</td>
<td>.601</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incentives</td>
<td>.597</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee Transfer</td>
<td>.985</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.708</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee Promotion</td>
<td>.298</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.439</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health and Safety</td>
<td>.208</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.447</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discipline</td>
<td>.524</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grievance Handling</td>
<td>.528</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.097</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labour relations</td>
<td>.263</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HR Department</td>
<td>.873</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.784</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job security</td>
<td>.850</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.929</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working condition</td>
<td>.346</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.304</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team orientation</td>
<td>.365</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.680</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HR Policies</td>
<td>.038</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.584</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>.641</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.037</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empowering</td>
<td>.516</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.107</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When comparing the HRM practices and organizational commitment, 11 HRM functions have very strong correlation with organizational commitment (r > .8), which are job redesign, HRP, recruitment, selection, hiring and induction, training and development, career management, pay, transfer, HR department and job security. Job itself is recorded as strong positive correlation with organizational commitment (.60 < r > .79). Moderate and positive correlation (.40 < r > .59) was recorded for the team orientation with organizational commitment. Performance evaluation, welfare, incentives, promotion, discipline, grievance, HR policies, communication
and empowering are weakly, but positively correlated with organizational commitment (.20 < r > .39) and health and safety, labour relation and working conditions are very weakly correlated with organizational commitment (.00 < r > .19).

Job redesign, HRP, recruitment, selection, hiring and induction, training and development, career management, transfer, HR department and job security are very strongly and positively correlated with affective commitment and performance evaluation, pay, welfare and communication are strongly and positively correlated with affective commitment. There are 5 HR activities such as job itself, incentives, discipline, grievance and empowering have moderate and positive correlation with affective commitment and promotion, labour relation, working condition and team orientation are weakly positive correlation with affective commitment.

When comparing the HRM practices with continuance commitment, job itself, training and development, pay and job security are very strongly and positively correlated with continuance commitment and job redesign, HRP, recruitment, selection, hiring and induction, career management, transfer, HR department and team orientation are strongly and positively correlated with continuance commitment. While promotion, health and safety and HR policy make a moderate and positive correlation with continuance commitment, labour relation and working condition make weak and positive correlation with continuance commitment. Performance evaluation, welfare, incentives, discipline, grievance, communication and empowering are very weakly correlated with continuance commitment.

The simple regression analysis (Table 03) about the HRM practices and organizational commitment illustrates that 55% (R is .743) variance of organizational commitment explained by the HRM practices. There is 32% (R is .568) variance of affective commitment explained by the HRM practices and 85% (R is .921) variance of continuance commitment is explained by the HRM practices. As Table 03, 18% variance of normative commitment was explained by the HRM practices.

### Table 03: Simple regression analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>HRM + OC</th>
<th>HRM + AC</th>
<th>HRM + CO</th>
<th>HRM + NC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>.743</td>
<td>.568</td>
<td>.921</td>
<td>.429</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R Square</td>
<td>.552</td>
<td>.323</td>
<td>.848</td>
<td>.184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted R Square</td>
<td>.551</td>
<td>.321</td>
<td>.848</td>
<td>.181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>367.326</td>
<td>142.258</td>
<td>1.664</td>
<td>67.164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-0.070</td>
<td>-1.253</td>
<td>-5.43</td>
<td>1.586</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>1.062</td>
<td>1.370</td>
<td>1.359</td>
<td>.455</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The simple regression analysis (Table 03) about the HRM practices and organizational commitment illustrates that 55% (R is .743) variance of organizational commitment explained by the HRM practices. There is 32% (R is .568) variance of affective commitment explained by the HRM practices and 85% (R is .921) variance of continuance commitment is explained by the HRM practices. As Table 03, 18% variance of normative commitment was explained by the HRM practices.

7. Conclusion and Recommendation

The primary objective of the study is to find out the impact of the HRM practices on organizational commitment of operational workers in the apparel sector and researcher used correlation and simple regression analysis to analyze the primary data collected from the sample to attain the objective. The major finding is that there is a positive and strong relationship and impact between the HRM practices on organizational commitment of the workers. This finding can be confirmed using the research findings of Wright, Gardner and Moynihan (2003), Koys (1988), Bal, Bozkut and Ertemesir (2014), Paul and Anantharaman (2004), Koys (1991), Yeung and Berman (1997), Whitener (2001), Shahmwaz and Juyal (2006), Browning (2006), Gellatly et al (2009) and Finegold, Mohrman and Spreitzer (2002).

As Morrow (2011), there is a little attention that has been give to the correlation between affective commitments with the HRM practices. However, this study found the moderate and positive relationship between these two phenomena. As McElroy (2001b), affective commitment has positive effect to the HRM functions like employment security, selection
process, decentralization/ self-management, awards, training and information sharing. Scheible and Bastos (2013) also pointed out through their research findings that there is a strong and positive relationship between affective commitment with HRM practices. As Meyer ad Alle (1997) and Allen et al. (2003), the HRM practices positively influence affective commitment of employees. Bal, Bozkurt ad Ertemsir also found the strong and medium positive relationship between HRM practices and affective commitment.

As the finding of the study, there is a moderate and positive correlation between the HRM practices and normative commitment. This finding can be justified by the findings of Bal, Bozkurt and Ertemsir (2014). As them, strong and medium positive relationship between the HRM practices and normative commitment were found. McElroy (200b) also highlighted that HRM practices like employee security, selection process, decentralization/ self-management, training and information sharing have positive relationship with normative commitment.

Very strong correlation between the HRM practices and continuance commitment was found by this study. As Bal, Bozkurt and Ertemsir (2014), there is no correlation between the HRM practices and continuance commitment. However, McElroy (2001b) pointed out that the HRM functions like employee security, decentralization/ self-management and rewards have positive relationship with continuance commitment.

The research findings reveal that the companies in apparel sector have to enhance the effective and efficient HRM practices to gain the higher level of organizational commitment of the employee. Among the dimensions of organizational commitment, continuance commitment has strong relationship with the HRM practices and it indicates that the many HRM functions create the cost association to leave of the operational workers in this sector. Therefore, the management of the company has to provide proper HRM practices to retain the workers as well as gain the higher level commitment from the workers.

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References:


