

Organizational support in light of human resource management practices and their effects on organizational commitment: cases of employees in the commercial banking sector in the wilaya of Bejaia

الدعم التنظيمي في ضوء ممارسات إدارة الموارد البشرية وتأثيراتها على الالتزام التنظيمي: حالات العاملين في القطاع المصرفي التجاري بولاية بجاية

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Abstract:

This study aims to analyze the existing links between HRM practices, perceived organizational support (POS) and organizational commitment of employees in the banking sector. Based on a descriptive approach, a qualitative study was conducted with a sample of 23 employees. The data collected during interviews conducted with an interview guide show that perceptions of three major HRM practices (training, remuneration and career management) have an influence on the dimensions (affective, normative and continuance) of the commitment of these employees.

Keywords: HRM practices, organizational commitment, perceived organizational support, employee commitment

Jel Classification Codes: M12; M54; O15; J24; J28

الملخص

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تحليل الروابط القائمة بين ممارسات إدارة الموارد البشرية، الدعم التنظيمي المدرك (POS) والالتزام التنظيمي للموظفين في القطاع المصرفي لولاية بجاية. استنادًا على المنهج الوصفي، تم إجراء دراسة نوعية مع عينة من 23 موظفًا. تُظهر البيانات الناتجة عن المقابلات التي أُجريت باستعمال دليل المقابلة أن تصورات ثلاث ممارسات رئيسية لإدارة الموارد البشرية (التدريب، والمكافآت، وإدارة الحياة المهنية) لها تأثير على الأبعاد (العاطفية، والمعيارية، والاستمرارية) للالتزام هؤلاء الموظفين.

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الكلمات المفتاحية: ممارسات إدارة الموارد البشرية، الالتزام التنظيمي، الدعم التنظيمي المدرك، التزام الموظف.

تصنيف JEL : J28 , J24 , O15 , M54 , M12

Introduction

Since its appearance in organizational psychology, the concept of perceived organizational support has been used to explain and understand the voluntary intention to leave and the employees' loyalty (Paillé, 2007). However, it would also be interesting to try to explain through this concept other behaviors and attitudes within organizations, such as employee commitment. Indeed, in a competitive sector such as the banking sector, where it is necessary to mobilize and involve its employees to face competition and achieve its objectives, the perception of employees of organizational support certainly has an influence on their commitment.

Previous studies having demonstrated that HRM practices constituted a strong antecedent of perceived organizational support (Kuvás, 2008, Snape & Redman, 2010, Tillou & Igalens, 2012), led us to verify through this research the influence of the perception of these factors on the organizational commitment of employees.

Therefore, this research will try to answer the following problem: **is there an effect of organizational support in light of human resource management practices on organizational commitment?**

This research is based on the following research hypotheses:

H1: The perceived organizational support of training practices influences the normative commitment of employees.

H2: The perceived organizational support of compensation practices influences the continuance commitment of employees.

H3: The perceived organizational support of career management practices influences the continuance commitment of employees.

In order to respond to this problem and to verify the formulated hypotheses, we carried out a qualitative study with a sample of bank employees. The latter allowed us to have a corpus of data on which a thematic content analysis was carried out with NVivo 11 software.

Importance of the study

The importance of this study lies in approaching the concept of organizational commitment through the concept of Perceived Organizational Support and being able to better understand the influence that certain HRM practices have on employee attitudes, and to our knowledge, no study has been conducted

before on this issue in the Algerian context.

1. Literature review

1.1. The organizational commitment

During the past sixty years, organizational commitment has been one of the themes that has most mobilized researchers from different specialties: psychology, sociology, economics, management, industrial relations (Etzioni, 1961; Porter & al., 1974; Meyer & Allen, 1991; Morgan and Hunt, 1994; Brasseur and Mzabi, 2003; Cherfouh & Zebouchi, 2019...). This interest of researchers for the study of the link which unites the employee to his organization is explained by Meyssonier (2005) by the predictive power that has the commitment on attitudes and behaviors at work (Mowday & al., 1982; Neveu , 1993; Meyer & al., 2002; Cole & Bruch, 2006).

Such popularity does not always have only positive points, it also generates confusion in the definitions of the various concepts and theories related to this notion, and makes the research effort more difficult.

However, some definitions are cited more in the literature than others. Among these are two important definitions. The first is that proposed by Mowday & al. (1982), who define involvement in the following way: *“Three factors characterize organizational commitment: a strong belief and acceptance of organization’s goals and values, a willingness to exert considerable effort behalf the company and a strong desire to maintain membership in the organization”*. The second definition is that proposed by Allen & Meyer (1997, p.11) who define organizational commitment as being: *“a psychological state that characterizes the employee’s relationship with the organization, and has implications for the decision to continue or discontinue membership in the organization”*.

If the definition of Mowday & al. (1982) is criticized for the fact that it is limited only to describing the components of the commitment (Colle, 2006), the definition of Meyer & Allen (1997, p.11) is considered to be more complete, because it synthesizes many other definitions (Ndayirata, 2017).

1.2. Organizational commitment dimensions

Nowadays, the approach that forms the basis of much research is that of Allen & Meyer (Allen and Meyer, 1990; Meyer and Allen, 1997). This approach is a three-dimensional approach. These dimensions are: affective, continuance and normative.

- Affective commitment:

Affective commitment refers to the emotional attachment of individuals to their organization, their identification and their involvement in it. This dimension is consistent with the attitudinal commitment proposed by Mathieu

& Zajac (1990), of which it shares the ideas of identification of the employees with the company.

- **Continuance commitment:**

Allen & Meyer (1990) explain that the continuance commitment refers to the employee's awareness of the costs generated by their leaving from the organization. Employees with continuance commitment stay in the organization because they need it. Some authors use the concept of "commitment to continue" in place of continuance commitment.

In their work of 1984, Meyer & Allen believed that it is the fear of losing certain advantages that generates this form of employee commitment.

- **Normative commitment:**

This third dimension of organizational involvement is defined by Bentein & al. (2004, p. 1) as: *"an attitude of loyalty to the organization, derived from a feeling of moral obligation towards it"*. Referring to the logic of commitment linked to the adequacy of the organizational and individual values of individuals.

1.3. Perceived organizational support

Perceived organizational support is considered to be a fundamental construct of social exchange theory, it is defined by Eisenberger & al. (1986, p.501) as *"the employee's perception of the organization's commitment to them, based on the employee's global beliefs concerning the extent to which the organization values its contribution and cares about their well-being."*

The exchange we refer to in our research is that bank employees develop commitment and loyalty behavior in exchange for perceived organizational support for certain HRM practices. In other words, the perceived organizational support plays the role of mediating variable in the relationship between the commitment of bank employees and HRM practices.

1.4. HRM practices and POS

Shore & Shore (1995) explain that human resource practices, which demonstrate recognition for the employee contributions, are positively associated with perceived organizational support.

Indeed, these practices (promotion, training, career management, flexible working hours...) are perceived as an investment in human capital, they lead to perceived low or high organizational support, because they signal to employees that they are valued and recognized (Narang & Singh, 2011).

These HRM practices influence the working conditions and environment of employees. The working conditions and environment will further generate strong perceived organizational support if the employees think that these

variables come from voluntary actions of the organization (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002).

2. Methods and materials:

In order to determine which HRM practices have an influence on the organizational commitment of employees in the banking sector, we carried out a qualitative study with a sample of employees. This type of study is considered by Malhorta & al. (2007) as the most appropriate for identifying the variables that will be included in a model.

2.1. Methods:

The method used to collect the data needed to answer our initial question is the semi-directive interview, which is according Colle (2006) the most used method in HRM and marketing. We used an interview guide to complete our study. This guide is structured in such a way that the employees describe to us initially the different HRM practices that they face in their organization, and express their perceptions of these practices in a second step. In the end, we asked them if what they told us about the different practices had an influence on their commitment to their organization.

These interviews, which lasted one hour and thirty minutes, were carried out in September 2019 and were subject to recording and taking notes to facilitate their transcription. This gave a corpus which was treated and studied by a thematic content analysis. The coding made on the basis of the literature review has been improved as the data processing carried out with NVivo 11 software progressed.

2.2. Materials:

Our study being qualitative, we opted for a convenience sampling, which is according to Igalens & Roussel (1998) the most used method for this kind of study. Our sample consists of 23 employees taken from a population of 1176 employees at the end of 2019. Our sample has an average age of 37.56 years and an average seniority of 10.3 years. Working in seven different commercial banks, three are private and four are public, spread over three cities: Akbou, El kseur and Bejaia. Our sample size and the number of banks were established according to the method of semantic saturation recommended by Romelear (2005).

The classification of the functions being specific to each bank led us to classify the functions occupied by the questioned employees in terms of manager and non-manager. (See table 1 in the appendix for the main characteristics of our sample)

3. Results and discussion:

On the basis of the number of references collected which are related to the codification of the different HRM practices, and the nodes created with NVivo we will present and discuss the different results.

3.1. Items associated with perceived organizational support

The table below summarizes the main items chosen to measure the perceived organizational support of employees:

Table 1: The different items associated with POS

| Content | Source | References |
|--|---------------|-------------------|
| Perceived Organizational Support | 23 | 119 |
| Importance given by the bank to the work of employees | 23 | 35 |
| The interest of the bank in the well-being of employees. | 20 | 47 |
| Gratitude and reward of employee contributions. | 21 | 37 |

Source : developed on the basis of the processing done with NVivo

These items are taken from the work of Eisenberger & al. (1986) cited in the literature review.

3.2. Representations of organizational commitment of employees

The table below summarizes the main items selected to measure organizational commitment of employees:

Table 2: The different representations associated with organizational commitment

| Content | Source | References |
|--|---------------|-------------------|
| Organizational Commitment | 23 | 109 |
| The feeling of being member of the bank | 21 | 48 |
| Feeling an obligation to stay working for the bank | 20 | 31 |
| Feeling difficulties to leave the bank, even if they want. | 19 | 30 |

Source : developed on the basis of the processing done with NVivo

The selected items are consistent with those cited in the work of Allen & Meyer (1997).

3.3. Representations of HRM practices

The table below summarizes the main results obtained concerning representations of HRM practices:

Table 2: The different representations associated with HRM practices

| Content | Interview_Source | References | % |
|--|------------------|------------|--------------|
| HRM practices | | | |
| Recruitment | 3 | 4 | 2% |
| Based on skills | 1 | 1 | |
| Recruitment process not clear enough | 1 | 1 | |
| The process is not based on needs | 2 | 2 | |
| Training | 23 | 53 | 27.7% |
| Training program is very weak | 21 | 36 | |
| The training program is not clear is misdirected | 14 | 15 | |
| The training is of high quality | 2 | 2 | |
| La remuneration | 23 | 57 | 30% |
| Salaries are low compared to the efforts made | 23 | 35 | |
| Bonuses are not paid on merit | 19 | 22 | |
| Career management | 23 | 69 | 36.1% |
| The stages of career development are not clear | 14 | 21 | |
| Internal promotion opportunities are limited | 17 | 36 | |
| No career advancement system | 8 | 9 | |
| Career management is clear | 3 | 3 | |
| Communication | 5 | 8 | 4.2% |
| Communication with superiors | 3 | 3 | |
| Communication with colleagues | 5 | 5 | |
| Total | N=23 | 191 | 100% |

Source : developed on the basis of the processing done with NVivo

Thematic content analysis highlighted three main HRM practices. These practices which have collected the biggest number of references cited in the speeches of the interviewed employees are: training, remuneration and career management.

The interviewed employees perceive the training programs followed in their banks as being too weak, lacked clarity and are misdirected. In fact, these employees believe that in view of the knowledge needs required to master all of the products and services offered to customers, more extensive training programs are needed and these training programs should be better oriented to remedy certain weaknesses.

This verbatim transcription of the interview with this employee illustrates these perceptions: *“Trainings are not frequent, and when there is training it is misdirected in relation to needs. Many times, customers ask us for information on certain services and we ourselves do not have all the necessary information”* (Interview with S9).

The second practice is the remuneration. This practice is perceived through two representations. The first representation is that for the questioned employees the salaries within their banks are low and that they are not in line with the efforts made. The second representation is that for these employees the bonuses offered by the banks are not paid on merit. *“I receive bonuses which do not really reflect the efforts I make to reach the objectives assigned to me and these bonuses are paid collectively to all employees.”* (Interview with S11).

The third HRM practice, which is the career management, is perceived by employees through two main representations. For these employees, the management of careers within banks is characterized by the fact that the stages of development are not clear and by the scarcity of internal promotion opportunities. These representations can be found in the example of what this employee said: *“I have been working in this bank for ten years and I do not know how I will be able to progress in my career and claim to positions of responsibility. I just know that with the seniority that I will have in a few years I will surely be promoted at one time or another.”* (Interview with S19).

3.2. Relationships between HRM practices, POS and organizational commitment

Based on the previous results, we have selected the three main practices which collected the highest number of frequencies of citations in the speech of employees.

Referring to the relationships and nodes that emerged through the NVivo software, we will now analyze the different relationships existing between these selected HRM practices, perceived organizational support items and the organizational commitment.

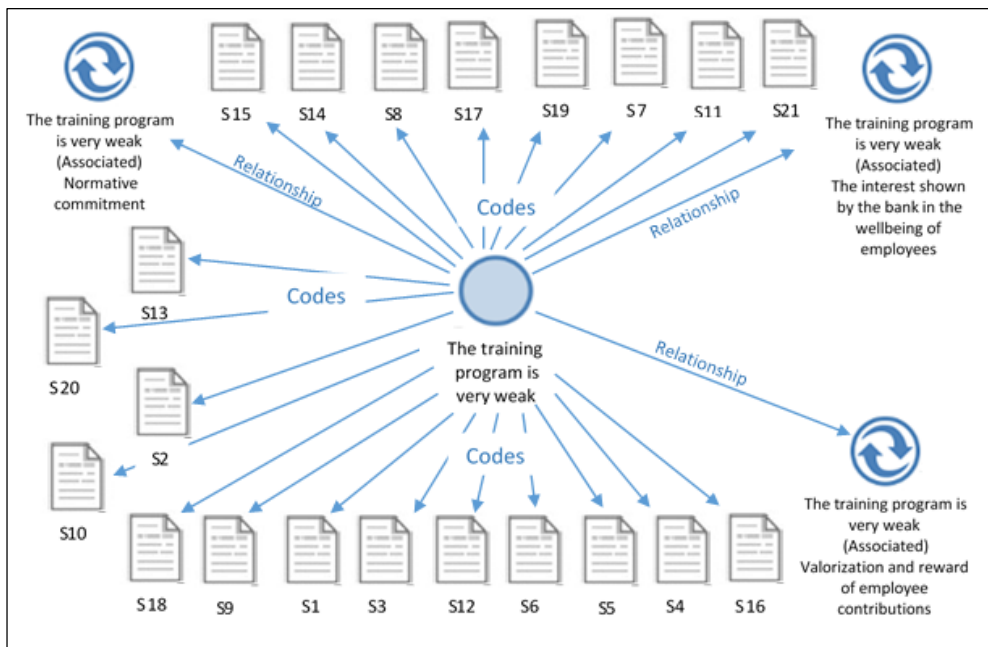
3.2.1 The relationships between training, POS and commitment

Concerning the practice of training, the interviewed employees expressed dissatisfaction with this practice, and banks were criticized by the employees for the fact that the training programs were weak and lacked of clarity and they were misdirected.

These weaknesses in terms of training are perceived by employees as being a lack of interest of banks towards their well-being, because it is thanks to training that they could aspire to better jobs. They are also seen as a lack of importance and appreciation of their contributions to the results of their organization.

These two previous perceptions to which employees relate representations of this practice are items of perceived organizational support.

Figure 1 : Links between training, POS and organizational commitment



Source: developed on the basis of the results obtained with NVivo 11.

The figure above shows first that the most important representation of training practices is in relation with the items of perceived organizational support. Second, it shows the existence of a relationship with normative commitment.

This last relation is also found in the following verbatim transcription:

"In five years in this bank, I have not yet been able to benefit from training that will allow me to update my knowledge. This is real a problem, and sincerely, I don't feel any obligation to stay in this bank as long as I don't owe them anything." (Interview with S16).

In other words, the weakness of training programs within banks generates a perceived lack of organizational support which, in turn, causes a lack of normative commitment among employees.

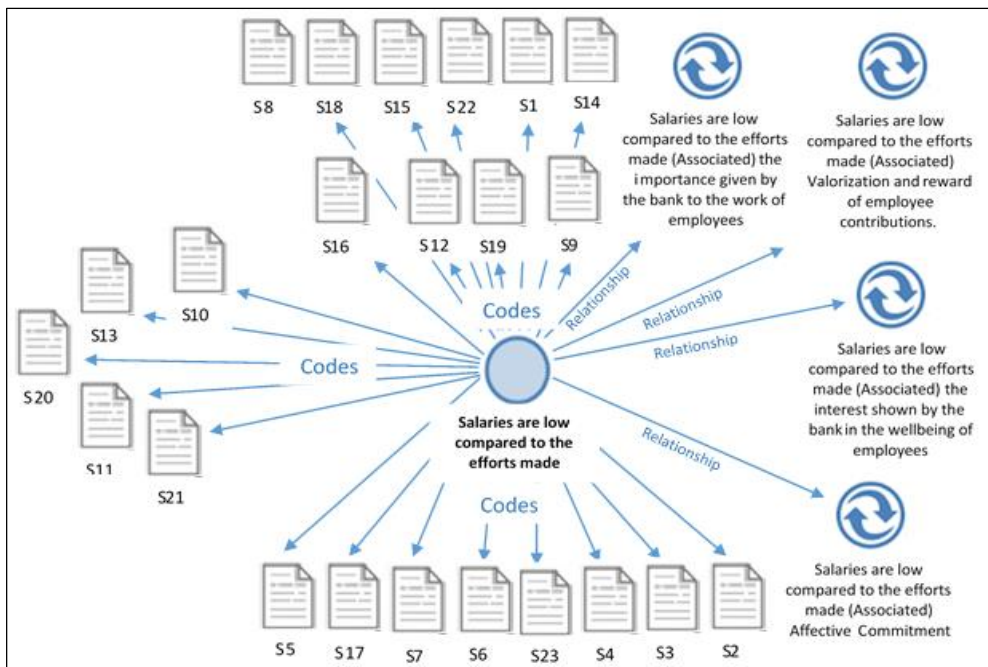
3.2.2. The relationships between remuneration, POS and commitment

The remuneration practices being perceived through two representations, which are: "salaries are low compared to the efforts made" and "bonuses are not paid according to merit", express dissatisfaction with these practices.

This dissatisfaction is felt by most of the interviewed employees and connect this low salaries to a lack of importance given by the banks to their work and the efforts they make. The following verbatim transcription illustrates this perception: "Frankly, they know that our salaries are low, but they think that we do not deserve more than that." (Interview with S13).

These levels of salaries, perceived as being low, are also linked to a lack of valorization of the work of employees by the banks. It can be illustrated by this verbatim transcription: "My salary does not allow me to make ends meet, without talk about leisure or other distractions, but here it does not really concern them, the main thing is that the work is done." (Interview with S 21)

Figure 2 : Links between compensation, POS and organizational commitment



Source: developed on the basis of the results obtained with NVivo 11.

This figure shows, first that the main representation of remuneration practices is related to the items of perceived organizational support. Second that this representation is also related to affective commitment. This relationship is clear in the speech of this employee:

"The low salary I receive does not make me feel self- satisfaction and does not make me feel that I am a member of this bank." (Interview with S12).

In summary, dissatisfaction with remuneration practices (salaries and bonuses) generates a perception of a lack of organizational support and fuels the feeling of not belonging to the organization. This last sentence is an item of affective commitment.

3.2.3. The relationships between career management, POS and commitment

The third practice, which collected a large number of references during interviews, is indeed career management. Its two representations that are: *"The stages of career development are not clear"* and *"Internal promotion opportunities are limited"* reflect a form of dissatisfaction with these career management practices.

Indeed, the interviewed employees believe that they do not know exactly the steps to take to progress in their careers and that the opportunities to be promoted to a position of responsibility are very limited.

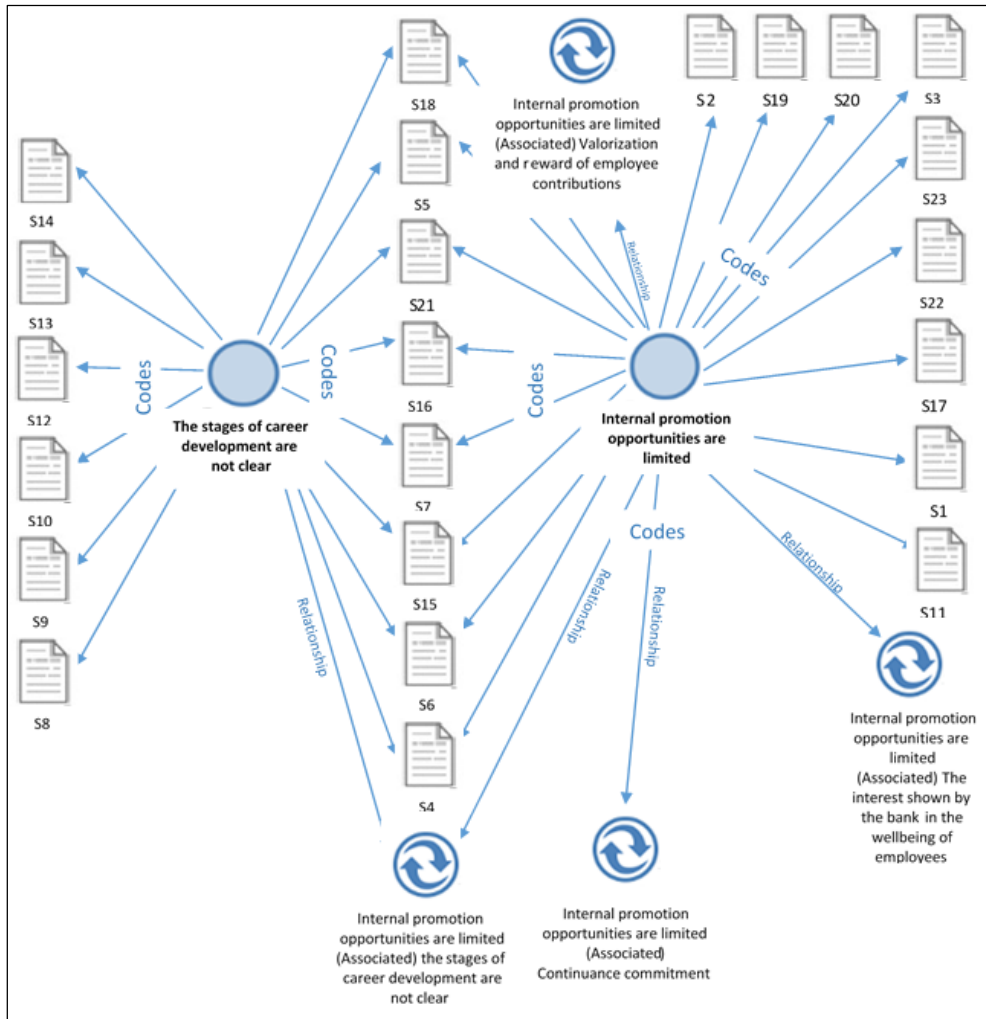
This dissatisfaction with career management practices is related to the perceived lack of organizational support, because employees perceive this lack of development opportunities as a lack of valorization and a lack of interest from the banks. The following verbatim transcription illustrates this fact:

"What I think is that I am not ready to have a promotion, because the opportunities are rare and regarding the interest they have in the work I do, it is not this bank that will offer me a position of responsibility." (Interview with S3).

The figure below shows the existence of this relationship between career management and perceived organizational support, but also the existence of a relationship with the continuance commitment of employees. This relationship can be illustrated by the words of this employee:

"This stagnation in my career due to the lack of promotion opportunities is problematic. However, it would be very difficult for me to leave this bank right now, even if I wanted to." (Interview with S17).

Figure 3: Links between career management, POS and organizational commitment



The source: developed on the basis of the results obtained with NVivo 11.

In summary, the perceived lack of organizational support generated by the stagnation of employees' careers, makes them say that the only thing that keeps them from not leaving their companies is just the lack of external alternatives. This last sentence is an item of continuance commitment.

3.3. Discussion:

Analysis of the data reveals three categories of results. First, it shows the representations of the various HRM practices (training, compensation and career management) selected on the basis of the number of frequency of quotes obtained in the speech of the employees. These representations express the dissatisfaction felt by the employees with these HRM practices.

Second, it confirms the existence of relationships between the perceived organizational support of employees and their organizational commitment. This result joins the results of recent work by Cherfouh and Zebouchi (2019), and those of Rhoades and Eisenberger (2002). Effectively, in this studied sector of activity, which is the banking sector, the lack of perceived organizational support by the employees generates a lack of commitment among them.

Third, the most important results of this study relate to the links between the perceptions of these main HRM practices and the different dimensions of organizational commitment.

Indeed, it has clearly emerged that the dissatisfaction caused by the weakness of training practices in this sector is at the origin of a lack of normative commitment, which confirms our first hypothesis.

Concerning the dissatisfaction felt by employees due to remuneration practices, it generates a lack of affective commitment. While we hypothesized that the perceived organizational support of remuneration practices influences the continuance commitment of employees, it has been shown through the obtained results that this hypothesis is not verified and that the influence of these practices is exercised rather on the affective commitment of employees. This is explained by the fact that the perceived lack of organizational support, caused by these remuneration practices, generates a feeling of non-belonging to the organization.

Finally, the dissatisfaction caused by the perceived lack of organizational support for career management practices has an influence on the continuance commitment of employees. This result confirms the hypothesis formulated concerning these practices. This is explained by the fact that even if the employees are not satisfied with the development of their careers, the lack of alternative solutions on the job market pushes them to stay and develop this continuance commitment.

Conclusion:

The aim of this study was to explain the organizational commitment of employees through the concept of perceived organizational support of HRM practices within banks.

If the results obtained actually show the influence of certain HRM practices (training, remuneration and career management) on the different dimensions of employee commitment, it nevertheless appears necessary to carry out a quantitative study to determine the importance of these different influences. However, the obtained results allow us to make certain managerial recommendations. These recommendations concern what banks can do to improve the commitment of their employees. Indeed, firstly, it is clearly emerged that the weakness of training and career management programs has a negative impact on their commitment. Which means that these practices should be certainly reviewed, this by offering an adapted training to needs of the moment which are the digitalization of banking services (e-banking, e-payment ...), as well as offering better opportunities for internal promotion to better involve their employees. Secondly, banks need to provide managerial responses to the lack of organizational support perceived by employees, which directly influences the three dimensions of employee organizational commitment. Indeed, these banks can improve the perception of organizational support by offering a better working environment, by instituting a real gratefulness of the efforts made by the employees, by sharing better information with the employees will allow them to involve them more. These banks may also opt for an Employee Advocacy strategy. Indeed, by making a few employees ambassadors of his bank and inviting them to relay the bank's content on their own social networks, the banks will improve their organizational support, and develop their feeling of belonging to the bank and maximize their commitment in their professional life.

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Appendices

Table 1 : The main characteristics of the sample

| The main characteristics | Total | % |
|--------------------------|-------|------|
| Gender | 23 | 100% |

| | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------|-------------|
| male | 12 | 52% |
| Female | 11 | 48% |
| Age | 23 | 100% |
| 18 to 30 y.o | 6 | 26% |
| 31 to 40 y.o | 6 | 26% |
| 41 to 50 y.o | 9 | 39% |
| 51 y.o or more | 2 | 9% |
| Seniority | 23 | 100% |
| 0 – 5 y.o | 5 | 22% |
| 6 – 10 y.o | 6 | 26% |
| 10 y.o or more | 12 | 52% |
| Function | 23 | 100% |
| Cadre | 8 | 35% |
| Non-cadre | 15 | 65% |
| Geographical distribution | 23 | 100% |
| Akbou | 7 | 30% |
| Bejaia | 7 | 30% |
| El kseur | 9 | 40% |
| Activity area | 23 | 100% |
| Public | 13 | 43,5% |
| Private | 10 | 57,5% |
| Type of banks | 23 | 100% |
| Commercial | 23 | 100% |
| Specialized | 0 | 0% |

Source : developed on the basis of the processing done with Nvivo