

Influence of Human Resource Practices on Thai Pharmaceutical firm Performance with moderating role of Job Involvement

Chutikarn Sriviboon¹, Kittisak Jermsittiparsert^{2, 3*}

¹Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, Bangkok, Thailand
E-mail: chutikarn.sr@ssru.ac.th

²Department for Management of Science and Technology Development, Ton Duc Thang University, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

³Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, Ton Duc Thang University, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

Corresponding author: E-mail: kittisak.jermsittiparsert@tdtu.edu.vn

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ABSTRACT

Better business performance is necessary for the survival of business. It is necessary for the organizations to understand the factors that influence their business operations and adopt the appropriate strategies to enhance their performance and compete with their rivals. Thus, this study aimed to examine the role of HR practices (Selection, Compensation, Training and development) in organizational performance of Thai pharmaceutical firm. This study also envisioned to test the moderating role on the relationship of HR practices with organizational performance of Thai pharmaceutical firm. To test the proposed relationship, the data was collected from the 300 employees of Thai pharmaceutical firm by using survey questionnaire. This study adopted cross-section method for data collection and data was collected in one shot.

Collected data was analysed by PLS software for hypotheses testing. Findings of this study revealed that HR practices are crucial for the performance of Thai pharmaceutical firm. Implementation of HR practices significantly could enhance the performance of pharmaceutical firm.

Furthermore, study also found significant moderating role job involvement on the association of HR practices with organizational performance of Thai pharmaceutical firm. Findings of current study offer fresh insight on HR practices and firm performance. Findings also provide assistance to policymakers and HR practitioners of pharmaceutical firms in recognising that business success depends on the organization's HR practices and involvement of employees in their jobs.

Keywords: HR practise, job involvement, selection, compensation, firm performance

Correspondance:

Kittisak Jermsittiparsert

Department for Management of Science and Technology Development, Ton Duc Thang University, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

Email: kittisak.jermsittiparsert@tdtu.edu.vn

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INTRODUCTION

Business organizations are recognized as the controlling force of economy of a country and social growth that significantly play a role in the advancement (Villa, Gonçalves, & Villy Odong, 2017). They provide employments for people and generating revenues for the state that will ultimately contribute in the growth of gross domestic product (GDP) of the country. Since last two decades, researchers are studying the performance of the business organization by considering their significance in the development of national economy. Resultantly, researchers are able to identify the reasons that why some organizations are successful and some are facing failure. For better performance, business must possess the element of resilience to face the challenges that include market variations, market share control, observation of rivals, materials prices increase, currency variations, global legislations and lack of capable human capital resulting from the market and act fast in response to the market changes (Alipour et al., 2012). This suggests that organizations must quickly integrate their human capital capability and empowerment to face with the market changes in the current corporate culture (Muhammad & Abdullah, 2016). More specifically, developing a group of capable human resource in the business, regulate their

commitment and motive them to perform efficiency to produce appropriate performance (Gupta & Shaw, 2014). By doing so, they can meet their core objectives of generating profits and maximizing the wealth of their participants. However, due to the constant changes and volatilities in the external environment, organizations find it increasingly challenging to achieve their best performance. Today's organizations are consistently pressured by economic and social developments, such as the instability of global economies, strong competitions in various industries, and changes in customer and investor demands (Alqhtani & Sabir, 2011).

In order to meet the business performance and to survive, it is necessary for the organizations to understand the factors that influence their business operations and adopt the appropriate strategies to compete with their rivals. One of the ways they can do so is by developing their competitive competence by being more flexible, adaptable, and proactive (Hung et al., 2011). Scholars, such as Gavrea, Ilies, and Stegorean (2011) argued that adopting a new approach to a good strategy, i.e., one that combines speed, openness and flexibility of business strategies will likely result in the enterprises increasing their performance. This means that the organization has to improve organizational performance progressively by adopting cost efficiency,

enhancing productivity, engaging in differentiation and innovation of products and process as well as increasing its speed into the market (He, 2012). It is crucial for organizations to manage tangible resources (e.g., capital, facilities, technology, production process) and non-tangible resources (e.g., employees) effectively ((Cheese, Craig, & Thomas, 2007). This is because organizational performance is affected by the utilization of each resource, which supports each other to exploit opportunities and neutralize the threats from the external setting.

By above discussion, the concept of business performance is derived from the idea of how flexible organizations manage their business strategies, which is associated closely with tangible and non-tangible resources. Rose and Kumar (2006) stated that tangible resources like facilities and capital are essential tools for organizations to sustain and deliver the best performance. However, it is also vital for business organizations to develop their non-tangible resources (e.g., employee). The underlying assumption is that employees' abilities (e.g., skill, knowledge, and experience) are necessary components for organizations to achieve their best performance (Char Fei Ho, Hazlina Ahmad, & Thurasamy, 2013). This means that organizations have to be proactive in looking for ways on how to manage their human resources effectively for the purpose of increasing their productivity, performance, and profitability, and for ensuring that they will be resilient to withstand the unforeseen external environment challenges (Crook et al., 2011; J. Tang & Rowe, 2012). Indeed, previous studies in human resource management (HRM) have demonstrated that employees' abilities serve as the main element in improving productivity, competitiveness, as well as performance (Al-Tit, 2016; N. Theriou & Chatzoglou, 2014). In other words, the ability of organization to be highly competitive in the global market depends on how they manage their internal resources effectively.

Despite having a thorough understanding of the role of human capital in affecting business performance, pharmaceutical organizations in Thailand today do not perform at their optimal level due to the severe shortage of talent-intensive skilled employees (e.g., those who have a combination of a high degree of expertise, who are knowledgeable, skilled, capable, experienced, and possess a great skill of learning ability, tactfulness, integrity and will). Similarly, many developing and developed countries face a shortage of skilled employees and mismatches in the labour market (Tajuddin, Ibrahīm, & Ismail, 2015). Pharmaceutical organizations in Thailand are also confronting a severe shortage of the skilled employees, affecting the performance of the organization adversely. Another issues facing Thai pharmaceutical is the lack of communication between the departments, which prevents the organization to expand its learning capability, internal coordination, knowledge creation, and social relationship (Nemoto, Akasaka, & Shimomura, 2015) and makes it challenging for them to

strengthen their performance and prosper in a competitive environment. An effective communication is crucial as it is able to disseminate new ideas and share innovative development that benefits the organizations in the long term. It is also key to help employees in understanding that what is obligatory and likely of them toward accomplishing the organizational performance. Therefore, it is crucial to recruit employees whose values match the values of the organization (Wu & Zhu, 2012).

According to Wu and Zhu (2012), the significant contribution to the organizational performance derived from people willingness to deploy their capabilities and abilities in the interest of the organizations growth and prosper. Despite the strong evidence, scholars have repeatedly called to examine the effectiveness of the bundle of HRM practices and its influence on organizational performance (Armstrong & Taylor, 2014; Mufeed & Gulzar, 2015; Sacchetti, Tortia, & Lopez Arceiz, 2016). The call is made because it is still uncertain which specific HRM capabilities have a stronger effect than others on enhancing business performance. Other scholars such as (Hameed & Mohamed, 2016) also contended that it is premature to conclude that HRM practices and business performance relationship have been adequately established.

Additionally, there are calls for more empirical research to support the association of HRM practices and business performance with various contexts and perspectives. The existing literature highlights that the majority of the researchers investigated the relationship among variables of the study have been conducted on organizations in their country of origin (e.g. West). However, the findings may not be generalizable to multinational organizations situated in Southeast Asian countries such as Thailand (Sekiguchi, Froese, & Iguchi, 2016). Therefore, there is a need for additional studies to investigate the relevance of the HRM practices and performance in pharmaceutical organizations. In line with this call, this research intends to investigate the relation of specific HRM practices commonly regarded as commitment-based HR practices and business performance.

As discuss above, it is notice that the influence of HRM practices on business performance is significant, especially when the organization considers the competitive requirements (Hooi & Ngui, 2014; Lazim, 2016). However, in the past 30 years, the literature on organizational studies has emphasized organizational learning capability as one of the crucial elements of competitive gain. Organizational learning capability is the process of acquisition of new knowledge or skills that assist in achieving better performance. It has been suggested that some of the HRM practices should be tailored to encourage individuals to create, acquire, transfer and integrate knowledge in the business process (López-Cabrales, Real, & Valle, 2011).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Organizational performance

Organizational performance means the organization has achieved its objectives by meeting its strategies and policies (Folan & Browne, 2005). Similarly, (Li et al., 2006) related organizational performance to the organizational achievement of the market-oriented and financial goals. Organizational performance refers to how well human, physical, and capital resources are being utilized to accomplish the organization's shared purpose. According to Abu-Jarad, Yusof, and Nikbin (2010), each researcher has his or her own definition of performance depending on the objective of his or her study. Similarly, Lebas and Euske (2002) stated that the best definition of organizational performance corresponds to the purpose of the study, be it financial, non-financial or a combination. Following this definition, this study examined organizational performance from two perspectives: (a) non-financial perspective which covers aspects such as customer satisfaction, product quality, product enlargement, ability to appeal employees, employee's consistency and relation of employees with management and (b) financial perspective which looks at aspects such as advertisement of products or service, sales growth, productivity and market place.

It is important that the organizations to evaluate its financial and non-financial as it cover the management, process, handling and evaluating outcomes. Importantly, the organization executives as several of them have emphasised on strengthening their businesses bring on aims and objectives. Financial and nonfinancial assessment is essential to achieve success, and it involves deep understanding of the linkages between monetary and non-monetary elements. In this way, it enables the organizations to ensure the business operations are conducted efficiently and effectively. This means, plans and strategies should be communicated by financial and non-financial perspectives and an appropriate understanding of the outside competitive culture and internal organizational performance. Past studies of Nasomboon (2014) and Al-Tit (2016) emphasized that how well an association achieves its performance is by looking into its financial success, such as sales growth, profit growth, and net profit. This is because financial success can be regarded as a great achievement for any organization. Chung-Min and Jun-Ren (2007) had the same view because financial indicators, such as profit growth, assets growth, growth of sales, return on shares, and increase in the market share and return of net assets enable the organization to gauge its profitability and performance. However, Griffin, Neal, and Parker (2007) and Gray et al. (2001) argued that financial indicators are insufficient to predict future performance as they communicate about financial objectives only. Therefore, they suggested that the evaluation of organizational performance should be accompanied with non-financial performance measures that include customer satisfaction, product quality, product enlargement,

ability to appeal employees, employee's consistency and relation of employees with management.

Human Resource Practices

Human resource (HR) management used to be known as personnel management. In the earlier stage, HR functions focused on recruiting candidates who are able to fulfil the organization's requirements, ensured that the hired candidates fulfil the working contract, organized salary and other administration benefits for employees, and took action in terminating employees who did not perform up to the organization's expectation or when their services were no longer needed. In short, the HR functions were primarily regarded as playing an administrative role rather than a strategic partner in the organization's development and growth, thus failing to receive much attention from the top management. However, the constant changes in the internal and external environments have significantly demanded that the HR functions deviate from their administrative role to being a strategic partner (Zakaria, Zainal, & Nasurdin, 2011; Zheng, O'Neill, & Morrison, 2009). As a result, personnel management was transformed and known as human resource management. HRM, according to Bratton and Gold (2017), "is the policies, practices and systematic approach of managing employment in the organization". Ijigu (2015) defined HRM as a philosophy, policy, practices and system that is able to affect employee's behaviour, attitudes, and performance. Indermun (2014) argued that HRM functions are to manage human resources development effectively and efficiently while at the same time establish a solid relationship between the employer and employees and to establish a sense of belonging in the work environment so that employee motivation, commitment, and productivity are enhanced.

Based on the current definitions, HRM in contemporary business has two different roles that are to foster performance of business (Zakaria et al., 2011) and to enhance competitive ability with the help of employees (Khan, 2010). According to Ferguson and Reio Jr (2010), application of different practices namely "commitment-based human resource practices" encouraged the organizations to attain greater performance result in the actual commitment of workers. Raharjo and Achmad Rinaldo Fernandes (2018) believed by using the term 'commitment', it enables the organizations to shape positive attitude and lead high commitment between organizational and employees goals. Similarity, Lee and Cheng (2018) and Lin and Tang (2016) noted that particular HR practices generate better performance irrespective of the corporate contexts for instance, commitment-based HR practices also being named as "high-involvement work system" or "high-involvement work practices". Therefore, it is generally accepted that a certain set of HR practices as the objective is to motivate employees to develop a strong commitment to the organization and exert their effort to accomplish the organizational objectives (Collins & Smith, 2006; Jung & Takeuchi,

2014; Siriyanun, Mukem, & Jermstiparsert, 2019). Past studies have showed that organizations that implement commitment-based HR practices tend to have a direct relationship with performance compared to organizations that utilize event-based HR practices (Bourne et al., 2013).

Selection

Selection is a process of choosing candidates who have the qualification that matches with the organization's requirement to occupy the vacant positions in a firm (Dessler & Tan, 2009). In the selection process, human resource practitioners need to make an effort to inform the individual about the qualifications needed, and provide information of all the legal requirements relating to the employment, career opportunities and benefits that the organization can offer to its employees (Boohene & Asuinura, 2011). The candidates who have nearer abilities that are demanded by the organization have more chances of selection to occupy the available position. For current research, commitment-based HR practices selection is termed as "a process of selecting qualified employees to fill the vacant position in the organization and match the broad organizational criteria rather than specific job requirements". Taylor and McGraw (2006) asserted that selection is the main activity of human resource management. This is because organizations continuously seek growth opportunities and having the qualified candidates can help them achieve their goals. Paul and Anantharaman (2003) contended that employees are able to assist the organization to achieve higher performance if effective selection and hiring process are handled strategically. The stiff competition in the business world today demands organizations to stress on the type of employees to be selected. In particular, the employees must possess the requisite mix of knowledge, skills, aptitude and motivations to enable the organization to grow, develop a competitive edge, and compete against their rivals.

Compensation

In today's business world, employees are regarded as one of the important assets which have to be managed in an effective manner. Organizations want to attract, motivate and retain their employees so that they could contribute towards the organizational effectiveness. Toward this end, compensation management is one of the tools the organization can use. "Compensation" is a broad term that encompasses financial (compensation, salary and incentives) and non-monetary incentives (awards, recognitions, compliments and status) to appeal and retain workers (Johari, Yahya, & Ahmad, 2012). Therefore, in this context of study, commitment-based HR practices compensation is defined as the "incentive package provided by the organization for its employees to increase their commitment and thus encouraging them to perform their job effectively to facilitate the accomplishment of the organization's goals". Past researchers such as asserted that compensation is able to advance the outcomes of the

employees toward attaining the organizational desired objectives (Boohene & Asuinura, 2011; Jabbour et al., 2012). When the employees' efforts are recognized and rewarded, they are more likely to develop positive feelings and have the willingness to contribute towards the organization. In this regards, it is necessary for the organization to manage the compensation system strategically so that it is aligned effectively with the organizational objectives, Auw (2009) indicated that organizations must develop compensation strategies to achieve organizational objectives. Past studies have showed a positive significant association of compensation and organizational performance (Subramony et al., 2008).

Training and Development

Training indicates the formal training organized internally to assist personnel to attain the desired capabilities and abilities needed to carry out their responsibilities (Tooksoon, 2011). To Dessler and Tan (2009), training is a method to provide the employees skills required in performing their work in the organization. In regard to development, Tooksoon (2011) defined it as an opportunity for the employees to enhance their career development in the organization. By this study, commitment-based HR practices training and growth refer to the long-term expansion of the knowledge, skills and encourage long-term growth required for the organizational effectiveness. Training involves the process of designing learning activities so that the employees are able to develop the necessary skills and knowledge toward the accomplishment of the overall organization objectives. In other words, training is an investment in upgrading the employees' knowledge and skill, which result in efficiency and productivity for the organization. Islam and Siengthai (2010) argued that organizations should increase their training budget in order to develop and expand the skills of employees so that they can be an adaptable and flexible workforce. G. Tang et al. (2015) indicated that training also helps the employees to adapt to the changes at the workplace. On the other hand, development gives employees a chance to promote their positions. Kim and Gray (2005) mentioned that the purpose of training is to improve the existing knowledge, skills, and behaviour, whereas development aims to widen the career path opportunities for the employees. Development opportunity means preparing employees for further career advancement. Therefore, through training and development practices, organizations are able to develop competencies of its workforce and this helps to expand organizational performance.

Job Involvement

Job involvement is an attitudinal construct defined "the degree to which one is cognitively preoccupied with, engaged in and concerned with present job" (Rotenberry & Moberg, 2007); the degree to which a person recognizes with their job. Subramaniam, Shamsudin, and Ibrahim (2011) stated job involvement

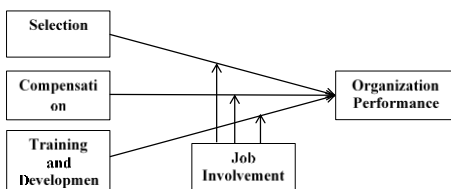
is a description of how an employee believes his/her present job can satisfy his/her needs. When the person is highly involves with his/her job, the person is said to engage in the process of internalizing the values of the goodness of the job. For a highly involved person, the job is considered to be a significant element in the person's life. It is postulated that how well the person performs his/her job is an important determinant of his/her esteem (Mohsan et al., 2011). Hence, the level of one's involvement in his/her job determines one's self-image. Good performance at work signifies good feeling about oneself and definitely important for the development of his/her self-image. Due to this, a highly involved person is genuinely interested in and highly concerned about his/her job and how he/she performs the job (Ahmad, Ahmad, & Shah, 2010). Thus, a highly involved individual is expected to put in a high level of effort in performing his/her tasks.

Job involvement is an affective reaction to the job and is concerned with employee identification with work experience (Rotenberry & Moberg, 2007). Brown (1996) in his meta-analysis found that job involvement is not directly related to the general overall performance and affects performance in an indirect way. A few recent studies on job involvement, on the other hand, yield contradictory results. There is a positive relationship between job involvement and a few individual outcomes that include organizational citizenship behaviour and in-role performance (Diefendorff & Gosserand, 2003). According to Mikkelsen and Olsen (2019), job involvement is one of the important factors that influence organizational effectiveness and individual motivation. A greater amount of involvement and enthusiasm in one's job will lead to an increase in motivation those later effect job outcomes and other associated outcomes such as absenteeism and turnover.

RESEARCH FRAMEWORK:

This study is planned to examine the effect of human resource capabilities on financial performance of pharmaceutical firms in Thailand. The proposed research framework of this study is presented Figure 1.

Figure 1: Proposed research framework



H1: Selection has a significant positive role on organizational performance of pharmaceutical firms in Thailand.

H2: Compensation has a significant positive role on organizational performance of pharmaceutical firms in Thailand.

H3: Training and development has a significant positive role on organizational performance of pharmaceutical firms in Thailand.

H4: Job involvement has significant moderating effect on the relationship of HR practices with organizational performance of pharmaceutical firms in Thailand.

METHODOLOGY

The main objective of the research is to investigate the relationship of "commitment-based HR practices" with "organizational performance" with moderating role of "job involvement". This study used a quantitative research method to test the link between the variables. The researcher applied a cross-sectional survey method to study the association of variables. The unit analysis is organization level and respondents of this study were HR managers or other senior management staffs of Thai pharmaceutical firms. This study used a survey questionnaire as the key tool to collect data. This tool allows the data to be analyse quantitatively for understanding the trends of the targeted participants. The researcher used the PLS software to conduct the reliability investigation for all the scales. Three methods to assess the reliability of measurement scale are available, namely, measurement model assessment (Cooper, Schindler, & Sun, 2006; Sekaran & Bougie, 2016).

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The measurement model and the structural model are the process for evaluating the PLS model estimation and interpretation of the results (Hair et al., 2010).

Assessment of Measurement Model

The evaluation of the measurement model was done by using two methods namely convergent and discriminant validity. The research evaluate the reliability of scale by means of measuring the internal consistency of the constructs by examining the coefficient of Cronbach's alpha, that emphasizes to what extent a combination of variables evaluate a unidimensional underlying construct (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). A Cronbach's alpha measures the internal consistency or the average correlation of items in a survey instrument. The reliability and validity of the measurement items were conducted to assess the measurement model. Reliability assessment focuses on the internal consistency of the model by looking into Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability results. In the case of validity assessment, it emphasizes on convergent validity (e.g., average variance extracted (AVE)), and discriminant validity which involves the cross-loadings and Fornell-Larcker's criterion. The threshold value for alpha and CR 0.7 was used and for AVE 0.5 was used.

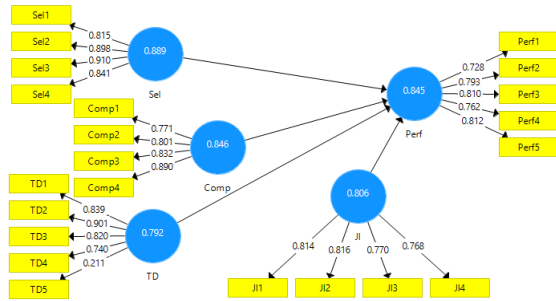


Figure 2. Measurement Model Assessment

Table 1: Values of alpha, CR and AVE

Sr#	Constructs	alpha	CR	AVE
1	Comp	0.846	0.894	0.680
2	Jl	0.806	0.871	0.628
3	Perf	0.845	0.887	0.611
4	Sel	0.889	0.924	0.752
5	TD	0.792	0.847	0.556

Table 2 presents that the “square root of AVE” for the investigation of Validity of constructs.

Table 2: Discriminant Validity

Sr #	Constru cts	1	2	3	4	5
1	Comp	0.82				
2	Jl	0.58	0.79			
3	Perf	0.54	0.70	0.78		
4	Sel	0.63	0.60	0.56	0.86	
5	TD	0.41	0.50	0.52	0.32	0.7

Structural Model:

The second phase of PLS includes testing of structural equation modeling to confirm the hypothesized relationship regarding predictive inference. The results of structure model are given in Table 3 and Table 4.

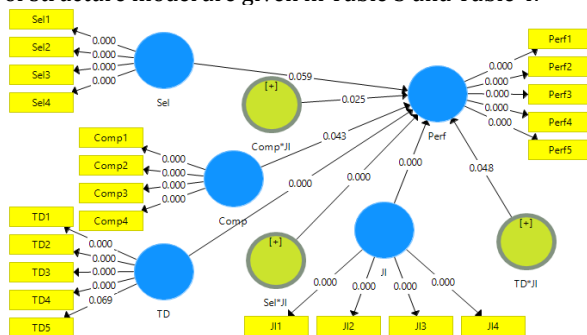


Figure 3. Structural Model Assessment

Table 3. Structural Model Assessment (Direct Results)

	(B)	(STDEV)	T Statistics	P Values
Sel -> Perf	0.151	0.080	1.891	0.059
Comp -> Perf	0.141	0.069	2.033	0.043
TD -> Perf	0.198	0.055	3.626	0.000

Findings of this study illustrated that selection has significance influence on organizational performance of pharmaceutical firms in Thailand. The β value 0.151 indicated that selection has positive effect on organizational performance of pharmaceutical firms in Thailand. The t-value 1.891 and p-value 0.059 indicated that H1 is supported and it is significant at 10% level of significance. Findings also show that compensation practice was also found to be positively related to organizational performance. This finding was expected because today’s organizations such want to recruit, retain and motivate employees to work together to achieve the organizational objectives. One of the tools organizations use to keep their human resources is compensation. A comprehensive and well-designed compensation system would benefit the organization in terms of the development and retaining of employee knowledge and skills for the organization (Delaney & Huselid, 1996). Training and development practice was also found to be positively significant associated with performance of pharmaceutical firms in Thailand. Training and development practice enables employees to build and develop their knowledge and skills in yielding better output for the firms. These findings are consistence with the studies of Collins and Smith (2006) and Hooi and Ngui (2014).

Table 4. Structural Model Assessment (Moderation)

	(B)	(STDEV V)	T Statistics	P Values
Sel*JI -> Perf	0.267	0.059	4.525	0.000
Comp*JI -> Perf	0.135	0.060	2.247	0.025
TD*JI -> Perf	0.079	0.040	1.951	0.048

Table 4 shows the results of moderating role of job involvement on the relationship of HR practices with organizational performance of pharmaceutical firms in Thailand. Findings indicated that job involvement positively and significantly moderate the association of selection practice with organizational performance at 1% level of significance. It also has moderating effect on the association of compensation practice with organizational performance of pharmaceutical firms in Thailand. Job involvement also positively moderate the relationship of training and development practices with organizational performance at 5% level of significance.

CONCLUSION:

The aim of this study was to examine the role of HR practices (Selection, Compensation, Training and development) on organizational performance of pharmaceutical firms in Thailand. This study also intended to investigate the moderating role of job involvement on the relationship of HR practices with performance of Thai pharmaceutical firms. For the accomplishment of objectives of the study, quantitative research approach with cross-sectional method was adopted and data was collected by using survey questionnaire. The collected data was analysed by using PLS for the examining the relationship between the variable. This study found that HR practices are significant to enhance organizational performance of pharmaceutical firms in Thailand. Moreover, this study also found the moderating role of job involvement on the relationship of HR practices with organizational performance of pharmaceutical firms. Findings of present study were able to support resource-based view (RBV) and social capital theory (SCT) to explain the relationship between commitment-based HR practices and organizational performance. The RBV theory postulates a bundle of resources that can sustain organizational performance and competitive advantage. The findings of study provide guidance to policymakers and HR practitioners to understand that business success depends on the organization's HR practices and involvement of employees in their jobs.

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