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# UNIVERSITY OF PLYMOUTH

**THE INFLUENCE OF HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT ON JOB  
EMBEDDEDNESS AND VOLUNTARY TURNOVER INTENTION: A CASE  
STUDY OF THE CONSTRUCTIONS INDUSTRY IN SAUDI ARABIA**

by

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A thesis submitted to the University of Plymouth in partial fulfilment for the degree of

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May Allah bless them all.

## **Author's Declaration**

At no time during the registration for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy has the author been registered for any other University award without prior agreement of the Doctoral College Quality Sub-Committee.

Work submitted for this research degree at the University of Plymouth has not formed part of any other degree either at the University of Plymouth or at another establishment. This study was financed with the aid of a studentship from the Saudi Cultural Bureau in the United Kingdom.

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## **Abstract**

This thesis investigated the effect of six antecedent HRM (Human resource Management) practices on intention to remain of Saudi national employees in the Saudi Arabia construction industry based on a job embeddedness model that includes testing of the mediating impact of on-job embeddedness. 374 Saudi national construction employees from two Saudi construction organisations completed the questionnaires, measuring their intention to stay in their present organisation of employment based on their perceived notion of the HRM practices such as perceived employee selection, perceived employees training, perceived employee's compensation, perceived employee participation, perceived job security and perceived supervisor support in their respective organisation. Path analysis was used to examine the hypothesised relationships in the model. The results of the primary research that was conducted supported all the hypotheses, though on-job embeddedness only partially mediated the relationship between the investigated antecedent HRM practices and intention to remain. Additionally, though positive correlation was established between off-the-job embeddedness and intention to remain. The study findings indicated that there was positive moderately significant relationship between on-job embeddedness and the six antecedent HRM variables of perceived employee selection, perceived employees training, perceived employee's compensation, perceived employee participation, perceived job security and perceived supervisor support. Furthermore, the results suggest that consistent and targeted use of HRM practices by organisations can increase employee intention to remain, which in turn will reduce turnover intentions. In terms of off-the-job embeddedness, the study results showed that community embeddedness accounted for 4.4% of intention to remain and that improvement in community embeddedness can lead to up to 36.5% increase in intention to remain. Accordingly, the study has valuable implications for managing the turnover intentions of Saudi national employees in the Saudi Arabia construction industry, including specific HRM strategies can be used to deepen on-the-job embeddedness of Saudi national employees and HRM strategies for increasing the value of the fit, Link and sacrifice that would have to be made by employees that leave the organisations. Hence, contributing to HRM literature in the construction industry and to research on the applicability of SHRM models in cross-cultural, non-Western contexts.

## **Dedication**

To my Mother, whose prayers and love never left me while I was working on this task away from home, without her unflinching support and encouragement, I would not have been able to achieve all that I achieved today. May Allah grant perfect rest to her soul in heaven. To the memory of my father to whom I extremely owe a debt of gratitude, after God (Allah), for all that I have achieved. To my lovely and adorable wife Noura this thesis would not have been possible without your unconditional love, encouragement and dedication. You are truly the best thing that ever happened to me. To my little angels, Jana, Lateen and Naif whose young lives have been disrupted during this study. And to my family and friends in Saudi Arabia and the UK.

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## List of Abbreviations

COR	Conservation of Organizational Resources Theory
EP	Perceived Employees' Participations
ES	Perceived Employees Security
ET	Perceived Employees Training
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GOSI	General Organization for Social Insurance in Saudi Arabia
HCT	Human Capital Theory.
HPWPs	High Performance Work of Work Practices
HRD	Human Resource Development
HRM	Human Resource Management
IC	Perceived Employees Compensation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IR	Intention to Remain
KSA	Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
LMX	Leader–Member Exchange
OJE	On-Job Embeddedness
OJM	Off-Job Embeddedness
PSS	Perceived Supervisor Support
RS	Perceived Employees Selection
SAMA	Saudi Arabian Monetary Agency
SEM	Structural Equation Modelling
SET	Social Exchange Theory
SHRM	Strategic Human Resource Management

US	United States of America
WSS	Work Social Support
WTO	World Trading Organization

# **Chapter One: Introduction to the Study**

## **1.1 Introduction**

Currently, the demand for skilled construction employees in the Saudi Arabia construction sector grossly surpasses the country's availability of qualified and skilled employees (Jadwa Investment, 2019). Furthermore, government's nationalization efforts to reduce the country's dependence on foreign employees and increase the employment of Saudi nationals in the private sector, has resulted in further skills shortage in the private sector, as organizations are now limited in the number of foreign employees they can employ and there is shortage of willing and qualified work candidates in the current pool of Saudi nationals in the labour force (Ramady, 2013; Azhar et al., 2016). Given the shortage of qualified and skilled Saudi employees, there is high demand for the available pool of competent candidates, leading to increased risk for private organizations to lose qualified staff to other employers that can offer better employment benefits (SAMA, 2017/16). Therefore, it is increasingly important for the private sector of Saudi Arabia to dwell on the most effective human resource practices that would contribute to skilled employees' intention to remain in their organisations of employment and demonstrate positive organisational attitudes.

## **1.2 Research significance**

The Saudi construction sector, in 2017 alone, over 66,000 foreign employees left the sector and only 4,400 Saudis were employed during this period. Also, a continued decline in the number of foreign employees working in the sector was expected in 2018 as a result of the nationalization programme (Jadwa Investment, 2019). Specifically, the number of construction visas issued to migrant workers had reduced by almost 100,000 in 2018 in comparison with the previous year (Jadwa Investment, 2019), which clearly indicates the existing governmental and political barriers to the inflow of migrant workforce to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Moreover, due to various personal, attitudinal and socio-cultural reasons, Saudi employees have been identified as very selective of work opportunities and have a high turnover tendency (Moussa, 2013; Jehanzeb et al., 2013).

This is further compounded by the historical legacy of poor human resource management (HRM) and human resource development (HRD) infrastructure and practices in the country's private sector (Mellahi, 2007; Jehanzeb et al., 2013; Al-Ahmadi, 2014). Hence, the issue of employee retention in the Saudi construction sector is an important topic of consideration, within the context of job embeddedness as a mediator between HRM practices and Saudi employee turnover intentions. Having practiced inferior and insufficiently developed HR approaches for decades (Mellahi, 2007), private-sector organisations in Saudi Arabia will have a chance to reconsider their human resource strategies and successfully stimulate a higher degree of job embeddedness, due to the practical findings of this thesis. In accordance with Alofi et al. (2016), the private sector of Middle Eastern countries has always been more responsive to changes and innovation than the public sector; but at the same time, private organisations are more limited in terms of resources and funds. For this reason, it may be challenging for private construction companies in Saudi Arabia to undertake their own research aimed at testing the effectiveness of their HR efforts. The present investigation will provide a set of tested antecedent variables that have a potential to arouse stronger job embeddedness and may be immediately adopted by Saudi construction organizations.

The pursued investigation is significant, as it goes far beyond an administrative perspective on HR practices. Traditionally, human resource practices and the way they are implemented have been perceived as a representation of organisational policies (Piening, 2014). However, a more adequate approach is to view HR practices as a tool of socialisation and adaptation of employees (Holtom et al., 2013; Sekiguchi et al., 2008). Following this perspective, it will be possible to reveal the deep causes and motivation of Saudi national employees from the construction industry to continue their employment and remain loyal. There is a pressing need to make the HR practices implemented in the Saudi private sector more human-centred and engaging rather than simply regulating internal organisational routines and events (Darwish et al., 2013). This thesis will add to the gradual transformation of the Saudi construction industry, which has already started due to the existing skill shortages (Azhar et al., 2016) and the nationalisation trend (Jadwa Investment, 2019).

The identification of HRM best practices is not the only favourable outcome of this thesis. A lower turnover rate in the construction industry will potentially lead to better performance of private companies and stimulate the growth of ‘soft’ and ‘hard’ infrastructure in the KSA. In turn, this will contribute to attracting foreign investment to the country and faster economic development (Mensi et al., 2018). Given that Saudi Arabia is gradually decreasing its dependence on foreign labour force, the whole country will become more economically independent (Faudot, 2019). Finally, the overall quality of the human resource in Saudi Arabia will grow because of having a stable training and working environment.

### **1.3 Research Problem**

The topic of employee turnover has long been a subject of research interest due to the significant costs and disruption to organisations when valuable employees leave (Mitchel et al., 2001; Holtom et al., 2008). Over the last three decades, the government of Saudi Arabia has experienced a great surge in the growth of construction activities and the sector’s relevance to its domestic economy (Ikediashi et al, 2014). 15% of the overall labour market employees in the industry but there is high turnover of staff. This is partially due to the high level of foreign employees in the sector (Adihakary et al, 2017). Furthermore, the sector suffers from lack of effective HR practices in terms of talent management and retention and poor practices in relation to staff productivity (Odeh and Battaineh, 2002; Assaf and Al-Hejii, 2006). Furthermore, HR challenges are also identified in relation to the diversity of employees in the sector, which makes it challenging for human resource management due to the different cultural variations and the associated differences regarding what constitutes effective engagement, motivation and incentive practices (Al-Emad and Rahman, 2017). Additionally, serious concerns are identified in relation to health and safety management (Suresh et al, 2017), which can frequently come under the remit of human resources and is closely aligned with employee perspectives of job-security (Mathis and Jackson, 2008). Clearly therefore, there is a need to examine HRM practices in the industry, and specifically how these relate to job embeddedness and intent to remain. For the industry to be competitive, and productive, employers need to be retained, skills and knowledge developed and incentives appropriate to the culture. In this regard, therefore, an understanding of how culture may influence HRM also needs consideration.

This is because recognition of cultural factors will underpin any of the approaches and practices discussed in the subsequent sections of this work.

Furthermore, in relation to HRM practices in Saudi Arabia, it is also very important to consider the implications of religious and cultural norms and how they define social relations, workplace values and business practices (Vaiman and Brewster, 2015) and in terms of the potential challenges for the implementation of HRM practices and policies (Budwhar and Mellahi, 2016). The approach to management in the Middle East significantly differs from the Western approach due to the high sensitivity to cultural practices. For example, and the Arab culture is male dominated and highly collectivist. Furthermore, management practices and HR policies are significantly influenced by the Arab culture and religious values. Other important influences include obligations to extended family and tribal affiliations. Furthermore, while collectivist orientation is demonstrated within familial and tribal relationships, individualistic orientation is demonstrated with people that are outside of these groups. Also, due to prolonged period of being subsidised by the national wealth, which is used to provide welfare to all the citizens, in terms of work ethics and organizational performance, Saudi employees are considered to be less productive in comparison to their foreign counterpart. Another important aspect of the culture that has implications for HR practices relates to ‘wasta’ (which is Arabic slang for “who you know”), which is a critical factor in how decision are made and things get done, it is difficult to achieve anything without the intervention of an influential personality in areas like recruitment and selection, reward and promotion (Harbi et al., 2016).

#### **1.4 Research Aims and Objectives**

The main aim of this study is to investigate how selected HR practices related to On-job embeddedness of Saudi nationals and their attitudes of organisation (intention to remain). Additionally, this study examines the mediation relation of on-job embeddedness on the relationships between Saudi national “ selected HR practices and their attitudes (intention to remain) to their organisations in Saudi construction industry. Also, to examine the associations between off-the-job embeddedness and the intentions of Saudi construction Saudi nationals to remain in their jobs.

In order to achieve the aims stated above, the research study will focus on the following research objectives:

1. To examine the relation of the antecedent variables (selected HR practices) and on-job embeddedness and intention to remain within the construction industry of Saudi Arabia.
2. To identify the relation of (On and off-job embeddedness) on Saudi nationals' intentions of remaining in the Saudi construction industry.
3. To explore the mediating role that On- job embeddedness plays between the selected antecedents and Saudi nationals' intention to remain.
4. To provide suitable recommendations for improving HR practices that influence job embeddedness and employees' intentions to remain in the Saudi construction industry.

## **1.5 Research Questions**

**RQ.1:** What is the relation between the selected HR practices of Saudi nationals and their intention to remain in the construction industry in the KSA?

**RQ.2:** What is the relation between selected HR practices of Saudi nationals and on the on- job embeddedness in construction industry in the KSA?

**RQ.3:** What is the relation between the on-job embeddedness of Saudi nationals and their intention to remain in the construction industry in the KSA?

**RQ.4:** What is the relation between the of off- job embeddedness of Saudi nationals and their intention to remain in construction industry in the KSA?

**RQ.5** What is the mediational role of on-job embeddedness in the relation between selected HR practices and the intention to remain of Saudi nationals in the construction industry in the KSA?

## **1.6 Research Contribution**

The primary significance of this research lies in the fact that there is a shortage of studies that have investigated the mediated relationship between HRM practices and employee retention through the job embeddedness construct.

Furthermore, given that most turnover models were developed in the US (United States) and have also historically been tested in the context of the U.S. business and cultural environment (Bergiel et al., 2009; Harris et al., 2011; Avey et al., 2015), the current thesis is one of the very few studies to take a cross-cultural approach to applying the job embeddedness model, a turnover model that originated in the U.S. in a non-Western context. Several studies in the field belonged to the Chinese context (Allen, 2006; Bambacas and Kulik, 2013; Tian et al., 2015), or examined the cross-cultural generalisability and applicability of job embeddedness between Western and Eastern (i.e. India) countries (Ramesh and Gefland, 2010). However, no other study to the knowledge of the author has investigated this topic in the Saudi Arabia construction industry context. Furthermore, given that employee turnover has been identified as a serious challenge in the Saudi private sector (De Bel-Air, 2018; SAMA, 2017), this thesis represents timely and thoroughly relevant insights that can help to provide a better understanding of the retention problem associated with Saudi nationals in the private sector and the construction industry in particular as well as better understanding of the ways for addressing the problems.

In terms of the research contribution, this thesis makes both theoretical and practical contributions to the field of SHRM, turnover studies and the literature on cross-cultural relevance of best practice HRM models. The study findings will make significant contribution to studies about SHRM practices, job embeddedness and employee retention. In particular, it will contribute to reducing the research gap in the areas of HRM practices, job embeddedness and employee retention in relation to the management and retention of Saudi national employees in the Saudi Arabia construction industry (Avey et al., 2015; Tian et al., 2015; Bambacas and Kulik, 2013).

Even though expanded classifications of the HR practices predicting on-the-job embeddedness were given before, there has been a marked trend towards identifying



reward-based (Bambacas and Kulik, 2013) and performance-related (Karatepe, 2013) determinants of job embeddedness. The contribution of this thesis is recognised in applying a more integrative approach, as the conceptual framework of this project combines compensation practices with job security, supervisor support and employee participation. Therefore, the existing gap in linking job embeddedness with non-performance antecedents is bridged by the current investigation (Bambacas and Kulik, 2013; Karatepe, 2013).

None of the reviewed empirical studies that approached job embeddedness as a mediating factor of employee retention analysed the construction sector (Murphy et al., 2013; Collins et al., 2014; Collins, 2015), and this limitation is addressed by the thesis. The uniqueness of this project is further highlighted by selecting an under-explored industry (i.e. construction) within an under-explored context (i.e. Saudi Arabia).

The theoretical contribution of this study is derived from the perspective of the Conservation Resource (COR) theory (Lin et al., 2018; Reina et al., 2018) and Social Exchange Theory (SET) (Hom et al., 2009; Haldorai et al., 2019), which provides insights about how HRM practices can be used to embed/enmesh employees in their job by enhancing the extent of the congruence between employees' job and community and other aspects of their life, their links to other people in the organisation and community and the sacrifice that they would have to make if they decide to leave the job.

From a practical perspective, the study provides managers in the Saudi construction sector with insights into how HRM practices can be designed to proactively manage employer-employee relationships in order to improve the retention of Saudi national employees in the Saudi Arabia construction industry. Studying the mediating role of job embeddedness is also beneficial, because it is always a set of factors that predicts skilled employees' decision to stay or quit. The concept of job embeddedness serves as a unifying mediator that implicitly or explicitly implies employees' decision-making, states and reactions to the selected set of HR practices (Mitchell et al., 2001; Lee et al., 2014).

This thesis also provides applied contribution in terms of its relevance to practitioners, given that there are limited resources for understanding and addressing turnover in cross-cultural contexts (Ramesh and Gefland, 2010; Allen, 2006). From this perspective, the results of this study will contribute useful insights and practical recommendations that can be utilised by practitioners in answering questions such as:

- How can we tailor HRM strategies to better support employee retention in different national/cultural contexts?
- What changes can we make to the current HRM practices to improve employee perception of the employee-organisational relationship?
- In what ways can we increase employee-organisational attachment and hence employee retention by uniquely targeting different aspects of the employment relationship with specific HRM practices?

Practitioners will be able to use the findings of this thesis to develop and implement HRM policies and strategies for managing turnover in the construction sector of Saudi Arabia. In summary, this thesis is based on the scientist-practitioner approach and hence makes valuable contribution to both theory and practice in studying turnover.

## **1.7 Structure of the Thesis**

This thesis is organized in following chapters

### **Chapter One: Introduction**

Chapter one has provided the research background including an understanding of the research context and justification for the current research objectives and the need to examine the relation of selected HRM practices on (on-job embeddedness) and voluntary turnover intention in the Saudi construction sector as it relates to Saudi nationals in this sector. Furthermore, the research aims, and objectives, importance and contributions have been presented.

### **Chapter Two: Research context of Saudi Arabia**

This chapter supplies information relevant to the background of the research context, including a discussion about the role of national culture in shaping HRM infrastructure and practices in Saudi Arabia and the unique context of the Saudi construction industry.

### **Chapter Three: Literature review**

In this Chapter researcher provides a comprehensive literature review of the research topic areas in including relevant SHRM theoretical concepts, HRM practices, employee turnover models and studies, the job embeddedness construct and turnover intention.

#### **Chapter Four: Research Framework and Development of Hypotheses**

Following the literature review, discussion of the research framework and development of the research hypotheses was presented in this chapter, which detailed the conceptual framework for the thesis and the development of the research hypothesis.

#### **Chapter Five: Research Methodology**

Chapter five provides a comprehensive discussion of the research philosophy and design, including the research methods that were adopted for testing the conceptual framework and hypotheses.

#### **Chapter Six: Main study Findings and Analysis**

This chapter presents the analysis of the primary research findings in terms of the details of the statistical analyses that were used to test the research hypotheses.

#### **Chapter Seven: Discussion of the main findings**

In this chapter researcher provides a detailed discussion of the research findings, making comparisons with relevant previous empirical studies and theories to reveal areas of commonalities and divergence and providing validation for the current research findings.

#### **Chapter Eight: Research conclusion**

In this chapter researcher provides a summary conclusion of the study in relation to the research hypotheses, the study limitations and recommendations for future research.

## **Chapter Two: Research Context**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This section of the thesis provides an overview of the construction industry in Saudi Arabia and the research context in terms of the country's economy and labour market. Additionally, the cultural and political context is provided in relation to the importance of Saudi national employees to the construction sector and the issues pertaining to recruiting and retaining Saudi national in the private sector. Furthermore, it provides an overview of the importance of human resources management practices in the private sector.

### **2.2 Saudi Arabia Background**

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is a monarchy headed by the Royal Family (Al-Rasheed, 2018; Hardyman, 2018). The Kingdom's economic prosperity began at the beginning of the 20th century, following the discovery of oil which propelled the country as the world's leading oil producer, with an estimated 16% of the world's oil reserves (Jeddah Chamber Report, 2016). The largest cities of Saudi Arabia include Riyadh (the capital city), Jeddah and Dammam, which is also where most of the important construction projects take place (SAMA, 2017). Saudi Arabia can be described as a devout country, whose economic, political, social, legal, civil and cultural institutions are governed based on Islamic principles. The government plays a central controlling role in the country's economic and industrial development and in areas such as energy, transports, finance, agriculture and communications. In addition, the Kingdom also has a vibrant non-oil based private sector that accounted for 38.6% of its national GDP in 2016 (SAMA, 2017). Furthermore, economic diversification is an area of strategic importance for the country and following its membership of the World Trading Organization (WTO) in 2005, it has become increasingly focused on transforming its national market structures to reflect real market systems in order to enhance the competitiveness of its global trade and production systems and access the benefits of global trade (Ramady and Mansour, 2006).

### **2.2.1 Localization Policy (Saudisation)**

Shortage of skilled national employees is a major challenge confronting Saudi Arabia, as a result of its historical political ties with various Western countries and other nations that had been contracted by the Saudi government to exploit its oil reserves in the years following the discovery of oil (Peterson, 2018). Furthermore, other factors such as the expanding population, the disparity between the educational qualifications and technical skills of the country's local workforce and what is required by the industry, the inability of the public sector to provide jobs for its growing population and the new entrants into its labour force have combined to create a situation of severe unemployment (Cowan, 2018). Hence, the Kingdom has relied on foreign employees for many years, especially in the oil sector, which has been the Kingdom's major economic activity until the government began making significant efforts to diversify the country's economy (Wald, 2018). In 2017, the total number of non-Saudi residents exceeded the threshold of 12 million and reached 37% of the entire residential population in this country (De Bel-Air, 2018; see Figure 2. 1). The largest labour migration flows to Saudi Arabia were registered from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Egypt and Syria. According to De Bel-Air (2018), the Saudi government issued more than 700,000 labour visas for non-national employees who were subsequently hired by the private sector, and almost 800,000 work visas for Saudi domestic sector employees. The government sector attracted only 180,000 labour migrants in 2017. It can be seen from ( Figure 2. 2) that the overall trend for approving labour visas by the Saudi government has been declining since 2015, which can be explained by the localisation policy (De Bel-Air, 2018).

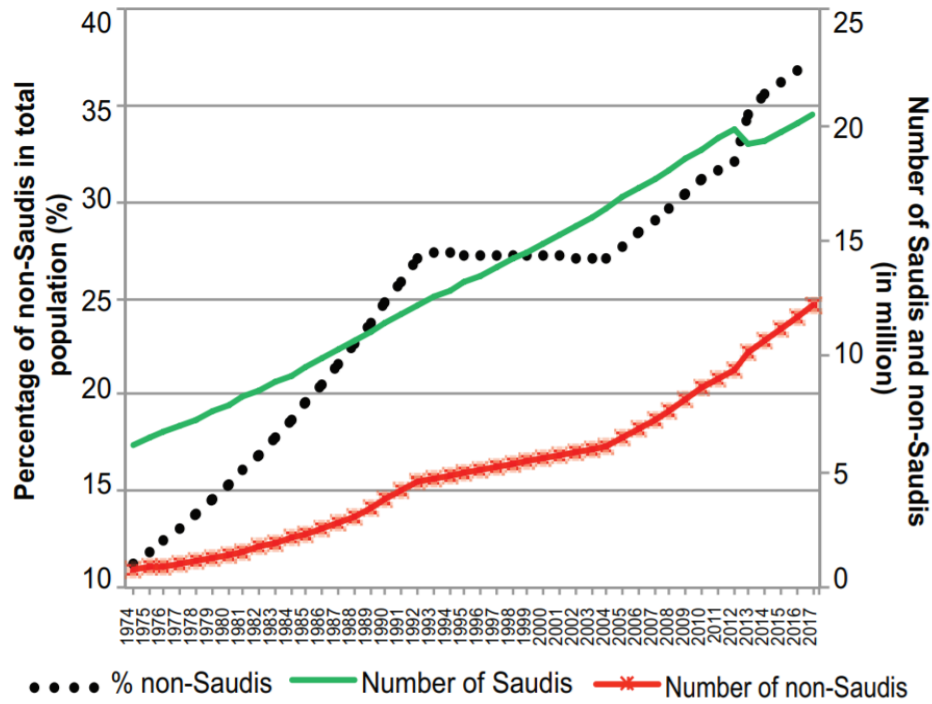


Figure 2. 1: Saudi vs. Non-Saudi Resident Population (1974-2017). Source: De Bel-Air (2018, p.8)

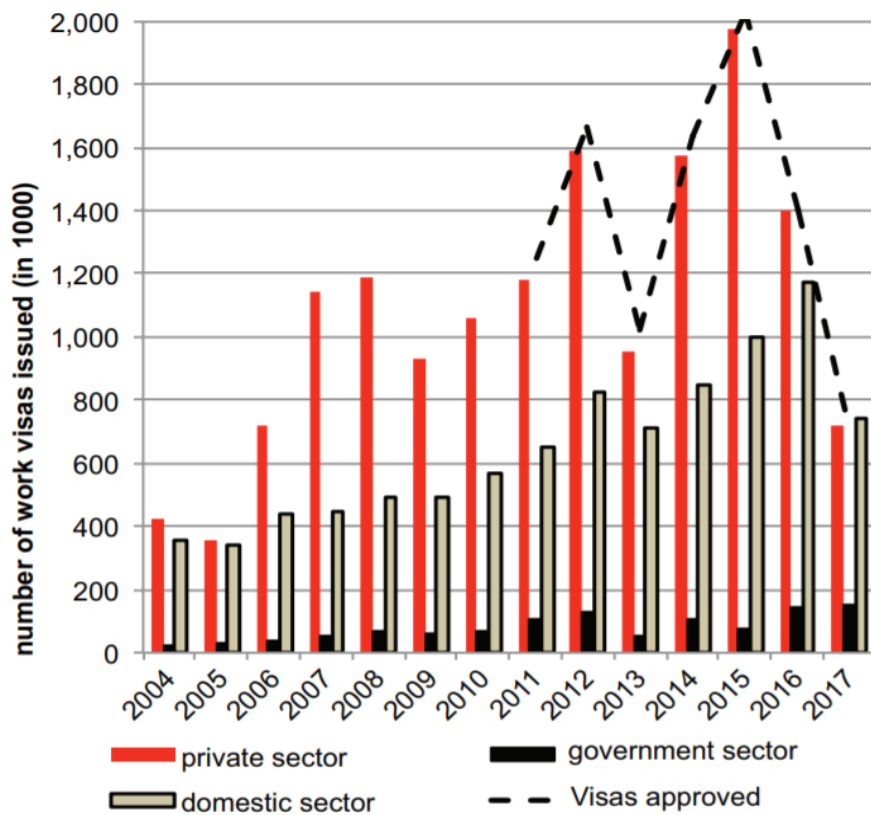


Figure 2. 2: Labour Visas Issued by the Saudi Government (2004-2017). Source: De Bel-Air (2018, p.15).

Taking into account that this thesis is aimed at the construction industry in Saudi Arabia, it would be reasonable to demonstrate that the number of construction visas given to migrant employees had reduced by 3% by 2018 in comparison with 2017 (Jadwa Investment, 2019). The localisation trend is also visible at Figure 2. 3, as the total number of construction visas started reducing in 2015.

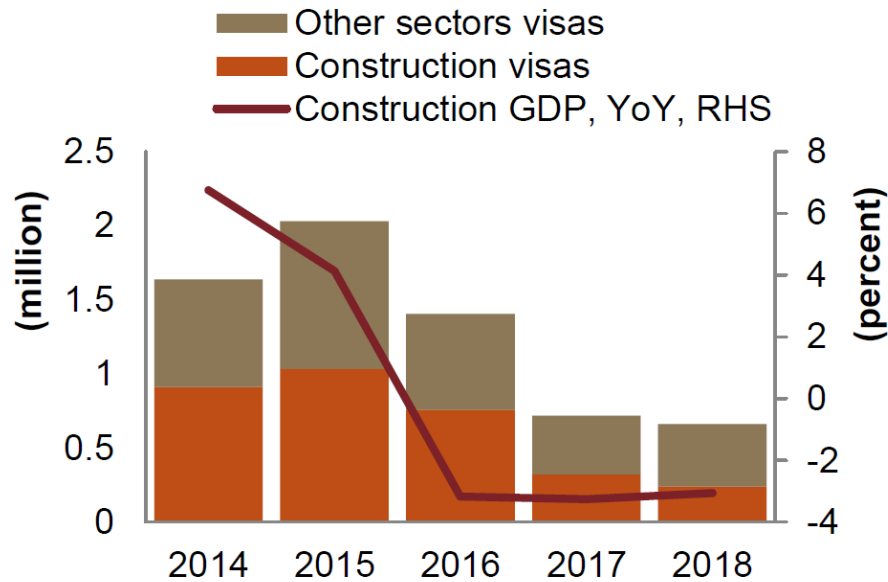


Figure 2. 3: Construction and Other Sectors Work Visas (2014-2018). Source: Jadwa Investment (2019, p.3)

By the beginning of 2018, the unemployment rate among Saudi nationals had constituted 12.9% (De Bel-Air, 2018), while only 0.5% of non-Saudi population remained unemployed (SAMA, 2017). This statistic shows that the inward migration to Saudi Arabia has been primarily motivated by labour opportunities. The next table (see Table 2. 1) demonstrates that 32.5% of Saudi females and 36.6% of Saudi young people remained unemployed in 2018, while only 6.6% of national males were unemployed in the same year (Jadwa Investment, 2019).

Table 2. 1: Unemployment Rate among Saudi Males, Females and Youth (%)

	2017	2018
Males	7.5	6.6
Females	31	32.5
Youth (20-24)	42.7	36.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>12.8</b>	<b>12.7</b>

Source: *Jadwa Investment (2019, p.1)*

This acute under-representation of the country's national population in its labour force has led to current efforts by the government to address the imbalance between the ratio of Saudi nationals and foreign employees in the labour market (De Bel-Air, 2018; Cowan, 2018). Given the country's historical reliance on the oil sector, which employs large numbers of expatriates, a major aspect of the government's approach in addressing the problem of providing employment for its nationals was to expand the focus of its economic activities by diversifying away from the oil sector and creating more employment opportunities in other economic sectors (Fadaak and Roberts, 2018). Furthermore, the government introduced a localisation policy known as *Saudisation*, as part of the effort to decrease the country's reliance on expatriate employees (Ramady, 2013). The aim of the Saudisation programme was to recruit, train and retain a knowledgeable and skilled Saudi labour force based on a well-structured strategy by systematically replacing its foreign labour force with Saudi nationals (Azhar et al., 2016). The localisation policy consisted of government programmes that were designed to reward or favour organizations employing local employees instead of foreign employees (Alsharif, 2018). Hence, through this strategic Saudisation programme, the government aims to achieve the following objectives (Alshanbri et al., 2014): to increase the employment levels of Saudi nationals across all of the country's economic sectors; to reduce and eliminate the country's over reliance on the expatriate labour force and to redirect labour earnings and investment back into the country's economy rather than to the foreign countries via expatriate employees.

The Saudisation programme has undergone several stages from its initial introduction as a five-year development plan for building a critical mass of Saudi labour force, whereby a policy was implemented stipulating that 75% of the country's workforce must be comprised of Saudi-nationals and 51% of the total salary paid in all organisations must



be allocated to Saudi nationals (Shayah and Sun, 2019). However, the implementation of this policy was not very successful as Saudi nationals only had interest in public sector jobs at the time (Al Abdulkarim, 2019). Subsequently, a new Saudisation programme was introduced in the millennium, whereby a more realistic quota of 25% Saudisation ratio was stipulated for the private sector as a target to be achieved by 2002. This target was further increased to 30% between 2006 and 2010 Eighth Development Plan. Despite the above regulations, by 2010, the achieved quota stood at a mere 10.4% in terms of the employment share of Saudi nationals in the private sector (Azhar et al., 2018). However, due to the increasing number of expatriates leaving the country, the overall Saudisation ratio increased to 43.1% as per the second quarter of 2017 (Jadwa Investment, 2019). Nevertheless, the Saudisation ratio in the private sector constituted only 21.8% in 2018 (compared to 19.9% in 2017), which is twice lower than the overall Saudisation indicator (Jadwa Investment, 2019). Conversely, the petrochemical sector has played a significant role in improving the employment rate of Saudi graduates. However, it may be difficult to sustain the growth of the Saudisation ratio, given the current decline in the number of science graduates and the increasing competition for qualified science graduates across the mining and petroleum sectors and academia, which will further intensify as the policies for the Saudi Vision 2030 and the National Transformation Programme are implemented (Jadwa Investment, 2016).

### **2.2.2 Nitaqat System and the Research Context**

Due to difficulty in achieving previous Saudisation quota systems, a new programme known as the *Nitaqat* Scheme was created in 2011, whereby the government sought to achieve Saudisation through a peer comparison framework that challenged organizations to compete with their peers based on a Saudisation agenda for specific industry sectors (Alsharbri et al., 2015). According to De Bel-Air (2015), the *Nitaqat* programme is a government sponsored nationalisation programme that is aimed at localising Saudi jobs and increasing the number of Saudi nationals in the private sector in order to reduce the country's reliance on foreign employees. In order to encourage the private sector to recruit Saudi nationals, the government utilized rewards and incentives for compliance and repercussions in the form of disadvantages that would be suffered by firms failing to comply with the government's objectives (Al-Dosary and Rahman, 2005; Table 2. 2).

While the previous quota systems tried to compel organizations to employ a certain percentage of Saudi nationals, which was difficult to fulfil due to skills shortage, under the Nitaqat programme, new Saudisation ratios were stipulated according to the availability of local talent in specific industry sectors, the size of the business and the capability of the individual business to employ Saudis (Alsharbri et al., 2014). Furthermore, a major factor in the Saudisation ratio was a minimum salary stipulation, which meant lower salaries could not be included as part of the Saudisation ratio. Hence, a Saudi employee earning less than the minimum salary cannot be counted as a Saudi recruit (De Bel-Air, 2015). Organizations that do not meet the Saudisation quota (green or premium color) are deprived of important services such as the freedom to apply for foreign employee's visas, the ability to recruit expatriates, to renew work permits or the freedom to register for new businesses or branches. With respect to the construction sector, the Nitaqat programme is particularly significant, as the ability of construction organizations (which are mostly in the large and huge organizations categories) to employ and retain Saudi nationals is crucial to the survival of their operations in terms of the freedom to employ foreign employees without restriction and in terms of their ability to diversify or expand their business portfolios (De Bel-Air, 2015). From this perspective, the successful operation of construction organizations in Saudi Arabia depends, to a large extent, on their Saudisation performance and the failure of the organizations to achieve the required level of Saudisation can result in serious disadvantages arising from the penalties, which include fines and blocked access to business expansion and essential work immigration services (De Bel-Air, 2015; Table 2.3 ). For the above reasons, the role of HRM practices in recruiting and retaining Saudi nationals is very important in construction organizations in relation to the Nitaqat programme, as the ability to hire and retain Saudi national is very important for both the government, who needs to achieve Saudisation and national development objectives and the construction organisations, which need to fulfil Nitaqat requirements and ensure government support and business continuity by recruiting and retaining competent and productive Saudi employees .

Table 2. 2: Saudisation Ratio Requirements According to Business Size.

Organization size	Red	Yellow	Green	Premium
Small (10-49)	0.4%	5-9%	10-39%	>40%
Medium (50-499)	0-5%	6-11%	12-39%	>40%
Large (500-499)	0-6%	7-11%	12-39%	>40%
Huge (3000+)	0-6%	7-11%	12-39%	>40%

Ministry of Labour in De Bel-Air (2015. p.14)

Table 2. 3: Consequences of Nitaqat Classification for Companies. Source: Hussein (2014) in De Bel-Air (2015, p.15)

Ratio Requirements		
Excellent/ Premium	Incentives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete freedom in hiring employees</li> <li>• Easier visa processing</li> <li>• Freedom to issue new visas for opened professions</li> <li>• Freedom to change profession of employees even for some restricted categories</li> <li>• Condition-free visa transfer: Freedom to hire employees from Red and Yellow zones and transfer their visas without approval from former sponsor.</li> </ul>
Green	Incentives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Freedom to apply for new visas</li> <li>• Freedom to change foreign workers' profession</li> <li>• Freedom to renew work permits</li> <li>• Freedom to recruit employees from Red and Yellow zones and transfer their visas</li> </ul>
Yellow	Incentives  Punitive Measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Freedom to issue one visa after the departure of two expatriates</li> <li>• Freedom to renew work permits but only for workers below maximal duration of stay</li> <li>• No freedom to issue new visas</li> <li>• No freedom to transfer visas and change professions</li> <li>• Barred from renewing work permit (capping of stay) after workers completed four years (since mid-2014) (since November 2011)</li> <li>• Fines for redundant expatriates (\$26,700)</li> <li>• No possibility to open files for new businesses and/ or new branches</li> </ul>
Red	Punitive Measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Banned from: changing profession, transferring visas, issuing new visas and opening files for new branches</li> <li>• Fines for redundant expatriates (\$26,700)</li> </ul>

### **2.2.3 The Saudi Labour Market**

Though the Saudisation policy was aimed at creating employment in the private sector for Saudi nationals, it has also created unintended problems for the private sector. Firstly, due to the welfare system of the Saudi government, which subsidised employment costs for Saudi nationals, only very basic criteria are required in order to employ them in the public sector in terms of educational qualifications, work experience and skills levels (Al-Dosary and Rahman, 2009). Hence, there is no appropriate system of employee selection or recruitment that is included in the Saudisation programme and the private sector is being forced to employ a labour force of employees that are not suitably qualified for the requirements of private sector employment from recruitment and work performance perspectives (Al-Dosary and Rahman, 2009). Furthermore, in comparison to the private sector, the public sector offers more attractive benefits as employees enjoy higher remuneration, greater job security, fewer work hours, generous holidays, less demanding work style and generally more employment benefits (Ramady, 2013). Hence, the public sector offers more job privileges and is more attractive to Saudi nationals than the more demanding and less rewarding private sector, leading to a lack of desire for Saudi nationals to work in the private sector and a greater employment of locals in the public sector (Achoui, 2009). As per 2014, 94.6% of the employees in the public sector were Saudi nationals (SAMA, Fifty Third Annual Report, 2017). Additionally, in terms of the construction industry context, the sector is facing serious skills shortage due to the restrictions imposed on the hiring of expatriate employees. Furthermore, many Saudi nationals lack discipline, proficiency in English language, necessary technical skills and qualification and the willingness to relocate (Ramady 2005). Also, Saudi nationals have attached social stigma to vocational and blue-collar work and consider only government, managerial and office-based roles to be socially acceptable (Al-Dosari and Rahman, 2009). However, despite the high subsidisation of the public sector using oil revenues, it has become saturated and unable to supply all the job requirements of the country's nationals. Furthermore, the Kingdom is faced with the ambition to establish itself as a key global economic player while they have to cope with several significant challenges including the diminishing oil revenues, the high growth rate of its population, the declining public-sector jobs and the severe youth unemployment (De Bel-Air, 2015; Construction Intelligence Centre, 2017).

This has led to increased government focus on the private sector as the vehicle for creating more jobs for Saudi nationals (Randeree, 2012) and as a way of tackling the challenges to economic growth and the Saudisation policy (Azhar et al., 2016).

#### **2.2.4 Importance of the Local Construction Industry**

Saudi Arabia's construction Industry can be considered as the largest in the Middle East due to on-going large-scale spending and economic activity in the sector as the country generates 44% of the total construction value in the Gulf Cooperation Council (Jeddah Chamber Report, 2016). Employment in the construction sector represents 40.7% of the Kingdom's total employed workforce. Furthermore, in 2017 alone, the sector lost over 66,000 non-Saudi employees and employed only 4,400 Saudis, with further loss expected in 2018 in the net employment figures for non-Saudis (Jadwa Investment, 2019). The General Organization for Social Insurance records also showed that the highest percentage of Saudi employees (33%) is in the construction sector (General Authority for Statistics, 2017; Figure 2.4). Additionally, the importance of the Saudi construction industry as a research context is strongly related to the importance of the sector to the national development plans of the country following a period of budget deficit and the country's ambitions to become a major economic and industrial global player (McKinsey, 2015). For instance, the construction sector plays a major role in various aspects of the country's infrastructural development. Due to the growing population, there is huge

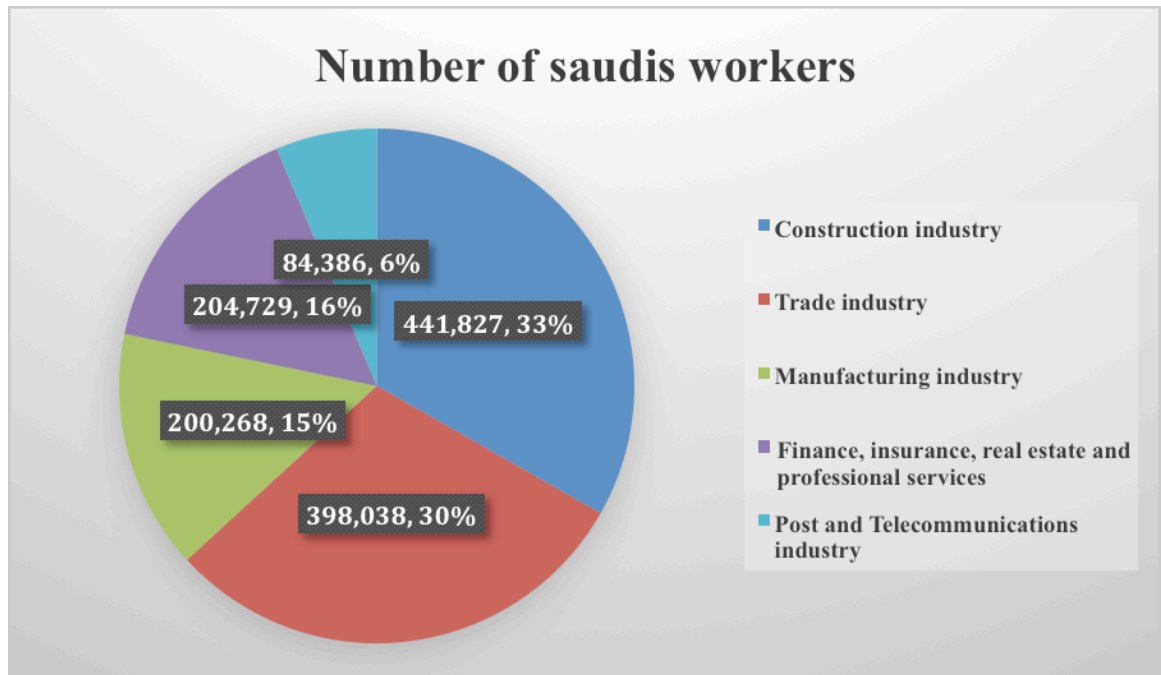


Figure 2. 4: Number of Saudi Employees in Different Industry Sectors

demand for housing projects to tackle the problem of the growing demand for affordable housing (Practical Law Company, 2013).

The Saudi construction industry is also strongly related to the development of its industrial sector, which has been experiencing a compounded annual growth rate of 13% since 2011, with a GDP of \$164,563M in 2015. This strong growth can be attributed to the government’s efforts to facilitate development in the major industrial sectors of construction and cement, mining and metals and petrochemicals and refining (Jeddah Chamber Report, 2016; Figure 2. 5).

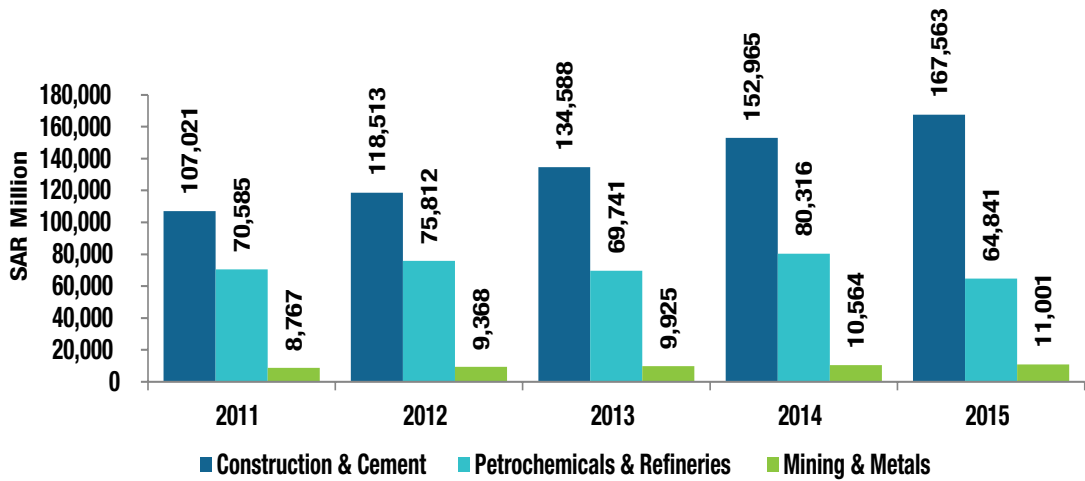


Figure 2. 5: Contribution of Industry Sector to GDP. Source: SAMA, GPCA in Jeddah Chamber Report, 2016

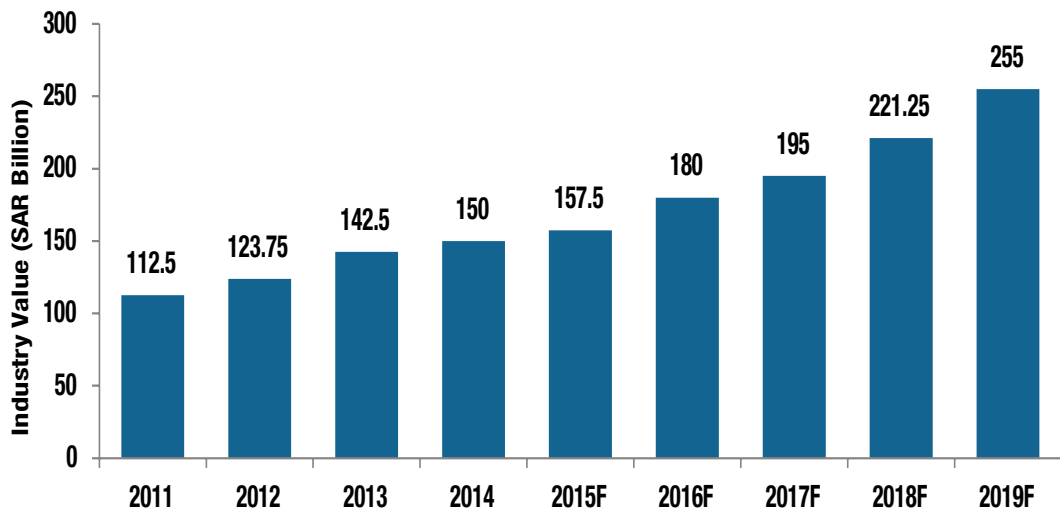


Figure 2. 6: Project Market Value of the Construction Sector in KSA. Source: SAMA, GPCA in Jeddah Chamber Report, 2016

Furthermore, the construction sector is expected to grow at a compounded annual rate of 7.05% and is valued at \$255 billion until 2019. Growth in this sector is also indirectly driven by the petrochemical industry which currently has the highest growth due to the country's dependence on this sector for the revival of its budget revenue, following the decline in oil prices (Jeddah Chamber Report, 2016; Figure 2.6).

The construction of infrastructure is also a major part of the Kingdom’s development strategy involving major construction projects such as Aldara Hospital, a SAR400 million joint venture project in the capital city, Riyadh, King Khalid International Airport Terminal 5, a SAR 1.5bn airport expansion project, the Jeddah Corniche development, a SAR 1.73bn real estate project, King Fahad Medical City Hospital, a SAR 522bn project in Riyadh, *Abraj Kudal*, a SAR13bn mixed-use, real estate development complex in Mecca and King Abdullah Financial District Museum a USD 300M science centre project housing the first national aquarium ever constructed in the Kingdom (Practical Law Company, 2013). Steady growth was achieved in the sector for over four consecutive years since 2011 (Figure 2. 7) and based on the growth statistics provided by the Saudi Arabia Monetary Agency (SAMA, 2016), the construction industry experienced relatively steady growth in 2012 and 2013. In addition, a higher increase in growth rate of 5% and 5.1% was experienced in 2014 and 2015 respectively, indicating a gradual growth in the sector’s economic activities. Furthermore, a cumulative ten-year comparison showed that the total economic contribution of the industry to the national GDP increased between 2005 and 2015 from 4.74% to 6.8% (SAGIA, 2016).

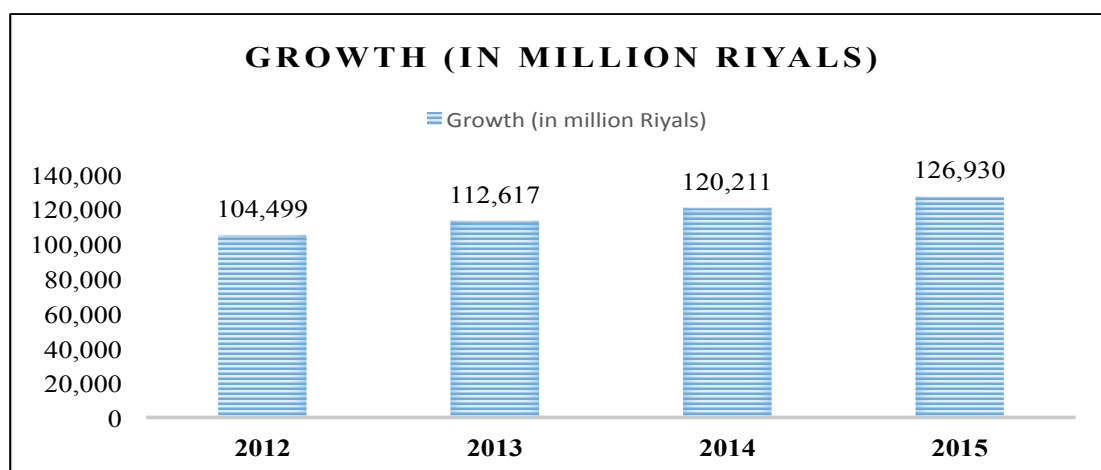


Figure 2. 7: Saudi Arabia Construction Industry Growth. Source: SAMA, 2016

Since then, the sector has been one of the country’s fastest growing sectors with a GDP of 9.5% in 2015 and a steady annual growth rate of 6.75% in 2014 and 2015 and expected to increase to 7.8% by 2019. A major contributing factor to the importance and growth of this industry can be attributed to government prioritisation of the sector for investment as part of its economic diversification efforts (Jeddah Chamber Report, 2016). Other factors include the government prioritisation of tourism and the subsequent investments in



hospitality infrastructure construction. The increasing size of the country's population and the vision to establish the Kingdom as a global trade centre demands further expansion in residential, transport, social and industrial infrastructures development including affordable housing, railway lines, seaports, airports, manufacturing, tourism and energy and utilities infrastructure. These construction developments are expected to take place at least until 2021 (Timetric Report, 2017; Deloitte, 2017) and it is also anticipated that there will be a concentration of construction developments in the retail, hospitality and infrastructure sectors.

Significant indicators of the sector's employment prospects and importance for Saudi Arabia's economic future include Saudi Arabia Vision 2030, the National Transformation programme 2020 and EXPO 2020 programmes (Deloitte, 2017), which are expected to invest up to \$71.5bn (SAR 268bn) in construction development in the transport manufacturing and tourism sectors. Furthermore, under these programmes, the government aims to increase the contribution of the private sector to the GDP in 2030 to 65% from the current level of 40% as per 2015 (Construction Intelligence Centre, 2017). Hence, due to its position as a vital employment generator for the foreseeable future and as one of the largest employers in the economy, the construction industry is a key private sector player in terms of providing jobs for Saudi nationals.

### **2.2.5 HRM Practices in Saudi Arabia's Private Sector**

As explained above, the Saudi construction industry is a major part of the country's private sector. Hence, it seems particularly significant to examine the issue of HRM practices in Saudi Arabia private sector from two main perspectives. Firstly, the Saudi Government's Industry 2020 goals and its Vision 2030 aim to establish the Kingdom as a global hub for trade, investment and industrial activities. The objective of Industry 2020 is to improve the overall business environment of the Kingdom and facilitate strategic global alliances with the aim of increasing industrial investment (Jeddah Chamber Report, 2016; Government of Saudi Arabia Report, 2018). From this perspective, the working conditions of employees in the country's private sector and hence, the quality of HR practices in the sector has important implications for its international reputation and its attractiveness as a destination for foreign direct investment from an economic, social and ethical/human rights perspective (Bourland et al., 2006 in Mellahi, 2007).

Secondly, given the urgent need for national development in terms of improving employment rate of Saudi nationals and building its national human capital, effective HRM practices are vital in the private sector, as the mechanism for driving human capital development and management.

From historical perspective, until the early 2000s, Saudi Arabia lacked formal regulatory framework for HRM that governed treatment and working conditions of private sector employees (Mellahi and Wood, 2002). In particular, existing HR regulations were outdated and limited to the contractual aspects of employment, without any coverage of the process of people management in the private sector (Mellahi, 2007). As a result, private sector organisations had minimal legal obligations with regards the development of the welfare of employees. This was further compounded by the fact that the majority of private sector employees were foreign expatriates. Hence, for a long time, the private sector was characterised by unfair treatment of employees, who had no legal protection, more so that they were mainly foreign employees (Mellahi, 2007). Furthermore, due to the country's weak legal system in terms of HR governance, various violations of employees' rights and unscrupulous HR practices were customary within private sector organisations such as arbitrary hiring and firing of employees , short and uncertain job contracts, a lack of fair employee grievance system and a tendency of employing only employees that are submissive to authority and willing to work with minimum employees' rights (Bhuiyan et al., 2001). In relevance to this study, a historical perspective of the state of HRM in the Saudi private sector was provided above to provide understanding of the current challenges that are being experienced in the sector as a result of its past poor HRM infrastructure and the lack of effective HRM practices. These challenges are discussed subsequently as follows.

### **2.2.6 Current HRM Challenges in the Saudi Private Sector**

One of the current HRM challenges facing businesses in the Saudi private sector is the lack of robust or effective human resource management system (Azhar et al., 2016). Furthermore, due to the historical reliance of the private sector on foreign labour, there is lack of HRM skills and infrastructure specifically designed to tackle the unique HRM challenges associated with Saudi employees as foreign employees are selected for their skills and are relatively easy to replace. Hence, there was no strong motivation to invest in human resources development (Al-bahussin and El-garaihy, 2013), more so given the historic lack of legislative support regulating the treatment of employees in the private sector (Mellahi, 2007). For example, a study conducted by Fadhel (as cited in Achoui, 2009) reported that only 63.5% of the surveyed organizations have any human resource management infrastructure. Furthermore, out of this proportion, only 40% had a human resource development infrastructure. It was also noted by the study that even though certain companies conducted training and development, they were merely disparate events conducted by different departments such as the finance or sales department, of which 78.8% of such training occurred randomly as on-the-job training. Achoui (2009) also points to the high cost of human resource development programmes and the shortage of competent human resource development staff as reasons for the lack of HRM infrastructure in Saudi private organizations. In terms of the current provision for HRM in the private sector, the large private organizations tend to have formal HRM departments and it is easier for them to invest in HR development due to their large financial resources, whereas this is difficult for the small and medium organizations, which are mainly family-owned and lack the necessary financial resources (see Table 2.4). Furthermore, the lack of focus on human resources development is also prevalent in these smaller organizations due to the disparity between their family and business values.

Table 2. 4: Disparity between family and business values in Saudi small family owned companies. Source: Achoui (2009, p.42).

<b>HRM/HRD issues</b>	<b>Family values</b>	<b>Business Values</b>
<b>Employees Recruitment</b>	Insuring recruitment for relatives, mainly sons	Recruitment should be based on competencies
<b>Employees Compensation</b>	Compensation on the basis of the individual needs and development	Compensating on the basis of the individual values in the market and performance
<b>Employees Evaluation</b>	No distinction among relatives. The individuals are not meaning but ends	There is differentiation among individuals to select and reward the best
<b>Employees Training and development</b>	Learning opportunities should be provided to the individual according to their development needs	planning learning and development based on the company needs

### **2.2.7 Underrepresentation of Female Employees and Turnover Intentions in the Saudi Private Sector**

Another key HRM issue in the private sector is the shortage of women employees. As per 2016, Saudi women constituted only 30% of employees in the private sector even though there were more females (53.1%) graduating from higher education than males (SAMA, 2017; Jadwa Investment, 2016; see Figure 2. 8).

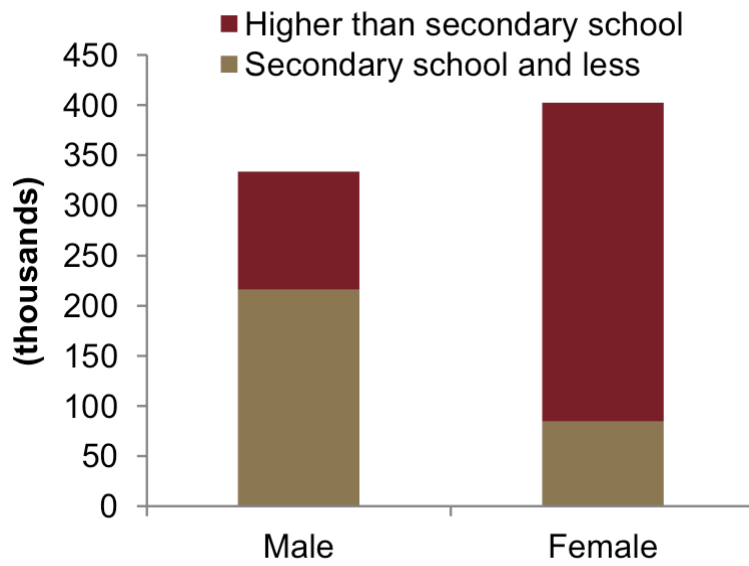


Figure 2. 8: Unemployed Saudi Females with Higher Education. Source: Jadwa Investment (2016, p. 4)

In addition, despite the fact that the employment of women has been prioritised by the Saudi government’s labour reform policy, participation of women in the labour force is still very low in the private sector (SAMA, 2017; Figure 2. 9).

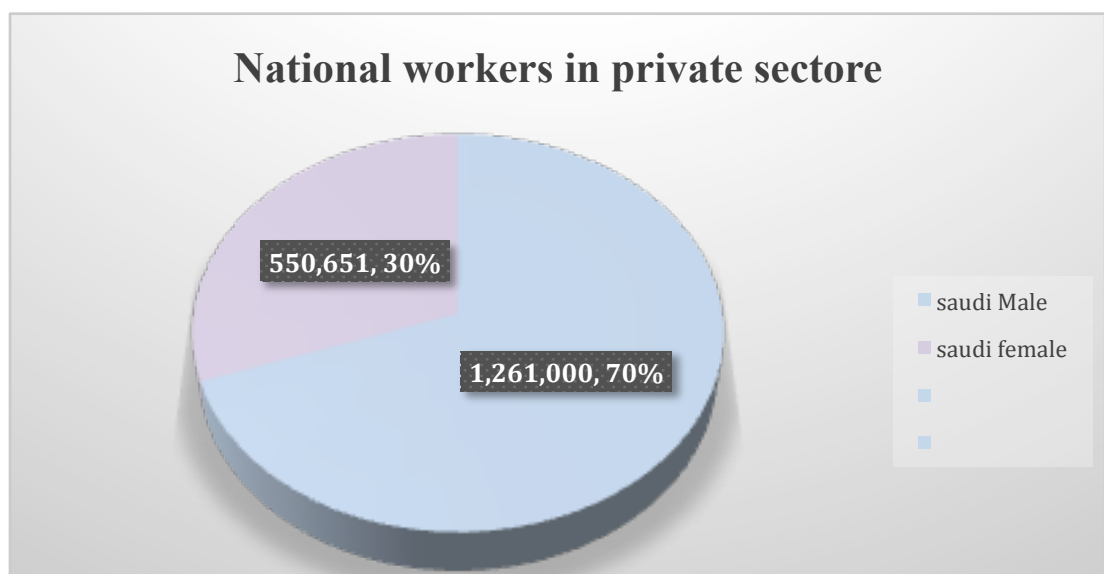


Figure 2. 9: National employees in private sector of Saudi Arabia. Source: SAMA (2017, p. 40)

Additionally, societal cultural norms tend to make it impossible for women to occupy leadership positions in organisations, due to workplace gender discrimination (Ramady 2010; Al Alhareth et al., 2015). Furthermore, there is contradiction between the government efforts to eradicate legislation that discriminate against women in the workplace and the restrictions imposed on women by religious, social, family and cultural constraints such as restrictions on female mobility in terms of travel, in public places and with regards the work environment (Ramady, 2010; Al Alhareth et al., 2015), gender segregation and the negative connotation attributed to women work performance as a result of their family and childbearing responsibilities (Al-Dosary and Rahman, 2009).

Moreover, as a result of laws segregating women, preclusion of women from jobs that are traditionally given to men (Hofstede et al., 2010), and other systematic restrictions placed on women and the types of careers that they can obtain employment in, there is an issue that relates to women graduates that are ill qualified for the private sector due to having been educated by women that do not have prior private sector experience. Furthermore, the majority of female graduates have specialised in disciplines that have been stereotypically cast as women career areas such as education, religion, and human studies (SAMA, 2017). Hence, there is a shortage of qualified female candidates for technical professions, more so as the educational system initially precluded women from studying in technical subject areas (Korany, 2010). Consequently, due to the unfavourable terms of working in the private sector, Saudi women prefer to work in the public sector such as education where there are less barriers and better working conditions (Ramady, 2010).

A significantly high employee turnover can be noticed with Saudi nationals employed in the private sector. Indeed, as briefly explained earlier, due to the lower salaries and work privileges associated with the private sector in comparison to the public sector, Saudi nationals are reluctant to remain employed in the private sector (Moussa, 2013). Furthermore, it has been argued that Saudi nationals have lower skills and poor work ethics in comparison to expatriate employees. Also, while Saudi nationals can be well educated, they are usually lacking in skills training. In addition to this challenge, they also tend to leave the employment of the private companies once they have been trained to higher skills level (Moussa, 2013).

Furthermore, according to Al-Dosary and Rahman (2009) due to the high-status and socially conscious cultural context of Saudi Arabia, only government positions and managerial roles are considered by Saudi nationals to be sufficiently prestigious. However, regardless of these shortcomings associated with Saudi employees, private organizations are constrained in the number of foreign employees they can recruit due to the Nitaqat programme, which mandates the recruitment of Saudi nationals. Furthermore, as previously explained, the development and retention of Saudi employees in the private sector is also important for national development and economic competitiveness in the global market, as expatriate employees only represent temporary talent that will eventually leave, leading to a talent drain in the absence of competent Saudi nationals to replace them (Randeree, 2012). These issues are particularly significant for the construction industry, which is currently experiencing an intense volume of construction projects. Indeed, research suggests that absenteeism and the shortage of skilled/qualified labour are major causes of project delays in the Saudi construction industry (Albogamy et al., 2013). This is an important problem for construction organizations as they operate according to project deadlines and employees leaving the organization can lead to project delays, additional costs, loss of productivity, loss of investment in recruitment and training, operational disruption and loss of organisational knowledge (Iqbal, 2010).

Selmer (1998; 2001) studied the phenomenon of expatriation and analysed the behaviour of Western expatriates in a foreign setting, which makes this empirical study suitable to the context of Saudi Arabia and the current research. It was concluded that corporate policies had a little effect on Western expatriates' adjustment and adaptation, while the personal intentions of the foreign labour force predicted their cultural adaptation to a substantial degree (Selmer, 1998). On the one hand, the implications of Selmer (1998) cannot be fully applied to stimulate expatriates' adjustment in Saudi Arabia because the state policy (i.e. localisation aimed at reducing expatriate employee numbers) is above corporate policies (Wald, 2018). On the other hand, personal intentions and motivation of non-expatriate employees will allow them to achieve a better fit with the local construction industry and satisfy its skill, experience and time requirements (Moussa, 2013; Albogamy et al., 2013). A clear limitation of Selmer's (1998; 2001) research is that the scholar conducted a mail survey and did not meet the examined expatriate population in person to run observations or one-on-one interviews.

Interestingly, Selmer (2001) noted that the complicated selection criteria developed for expatriate employees made the whole recruitment process unattractive for potential candidates. Thus, hiring a higher percentage of national labour force in the Saudi private sector in general, and in the construction industry in particular, will lead to a simplification of the recruitment process. In turn, Richardson and McKenna (2006) noted that the relationships of expatriate employees with their host country are characterised by 'complexity and dynamism' (Richardson and McKenna, 2006, p.6). In addition to other benefits associated with hiring nationals, Saudi Arabia will manage to reduce the overall level of social pressures after increasing the share of Saudis in the private sector. Individual employees' pressures can be converted into turnover intentions and conflicts with employers (Moussa, 2013). Alternatively, to Selmer (1998; 2001), Richardson and McKenna (2006) collected qualitative data and run 30 interviews with the target expatriate population, which offered a valuable insight on the consequences of expatriate employment causes of Employee Turnover in the Private Sector.

According to Iqbal (2010), major reasons for the high level of Saudi employee turnover in the private sector include personal reasons and employee attitude towards the job, such as employee job dissatisfaction, which in turn leads to absenteeism and eventually turnover. Other common reasons include the perception of Saudi employees about the social status of their job (Moussa, 2013), the lack of job security in comparison to the public sector, the lack of career and personal advancement opportunities, poor performance appraisal systems, poor management-employee communication, and a lack of recognition (Iqbal, 2010). Previous studies investigating the issue of voluntary employee turnover have also identified organisational factors, such as the working conditions, HRM practices and socio-cultural issues, as major reasons for the high employee turnover in the Saudi private sector (Al-Ahmadi, 2014). In terms of working conditions and HRM practices, issues such as work design, flexible working conditions and work-life balance were found to be significant factors contributing to the "intention to leave" due to the pressures of family responsibilities and the conflict between the demands of work and their personal lives, especially in the case of the female employees (Almalki et al., 2012). Additionally, HRM variables such as pay, relationship with co-workers, supervision and the type of work were found to be important determinants of job satisfaction, which in turn had significant influence on employee intention to stay with the organisation (Alshetri, 2013).



Moreover, as far as social and cultural issues are concerned, research suggests that Saudi nationals usually find it difficult to integrate in multicultural work environments due to their feeling of superiority and their reluctance to degrade their social status by integrating with people from different cultural backgrounds or nationalities (Ramady, 2013).

### **2.2.8 Culture and HRM**

It seems fair to say that national culture, which can be identified as the system of values, beliefs and behaviours of a society (Thomas and Peterson, 2014) will have an influence on the characteristics of the legal, political, economic and social systems of a country. As such, the culture of a country such as Saudi Arabia will also influence the implementation and practice of HRM processes and approaches (Vaiman and Brewster, 2015). In terms of understanding culture, one of the dominant works is the Hofstede framework (2010; 2003), which sets out a range of dimensions against which different countries can be evaluated, and which can provide a tool for comparing various nations. The overall Hofstede dimensions are shown in Table 2. 5 below.

Table 2. 5: Hofstede's Dimensions. Source: Hofstede (2003).

<b>Dimension</b>	<b>Description</b>
Power Distance	Low: Society is broadly equal, and citizens are involved in all aspects.
	High: There is a strong authoritarian leadership and citizens accept that they are not equal.
Masculinity vs Femininity	Masculinity: Focus is on achievements, and awards and recognition are key drivers of motivation.
	Femininity: Focus is on quality of life rather than recognition.
Individualism vs Collectivism	Individualism: Citizens look after themselves, and their goals are personal.
	Collectivism: Citizens look after one another and goals are group focused.
Orientation (Long or short)	Long: Reverence for tradition and rules and patience is preserved to impulsiveness and there is a focus on the past.
	Short: Focus is on the present and near future.
Uncertainty Avoidance (attitude to risk taking behaviours)	Low: High tolerance for change and alternative behaviours.
	High: Low tolerance for change and deviations from expected or usual situations.
Indulgence vs Restraint	High: Focus on individual gratification of desires, quickly.
	Low: Long term focus and curbing of impulses through law and rules.

In order to relate these dimensions to the context of the Saudi construction industry, the Hofstede scores for the country can be found below.

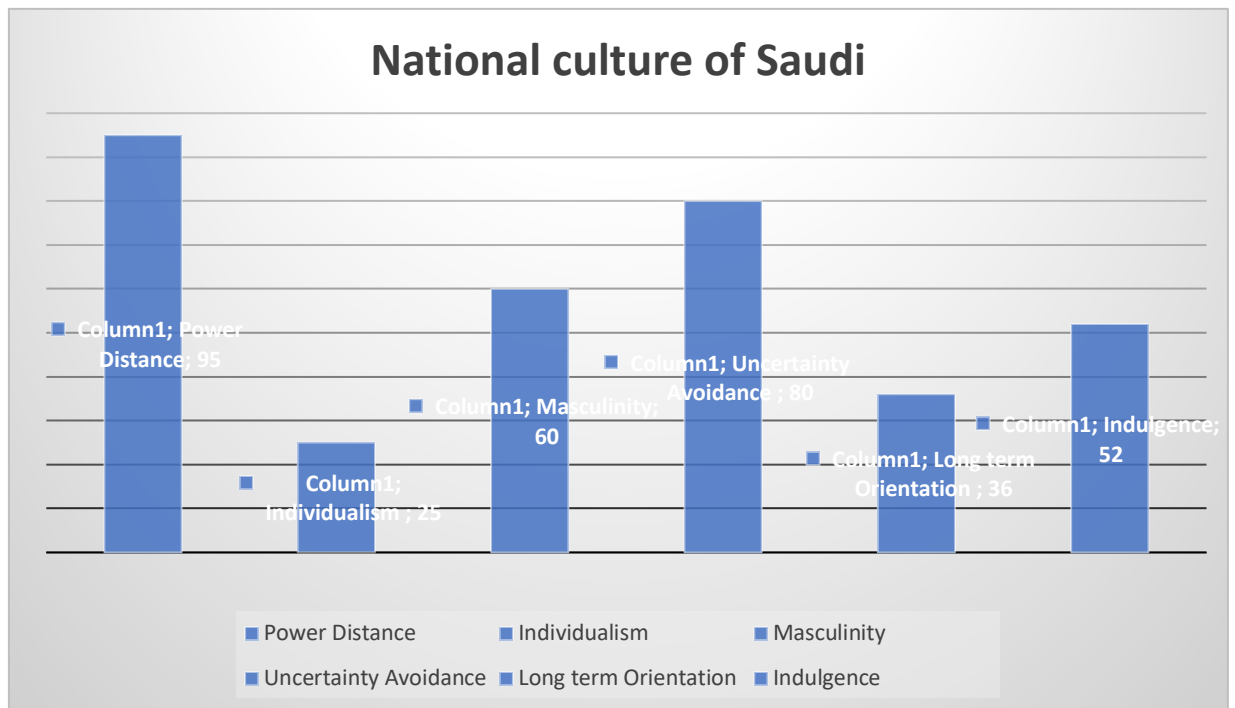


Figure 2. 10: Hofstede Scores for Saudi Arabia. Source: Hofstede (2018)

As the graph indicates, the Saudi culture is characterized by a high-power distance, low individualism and high uncertainty avoidance. This tends to suggest that, in general, Saudi nationals will be looking for long-term benefits that are shared by the group and provide security and future investment. However, if employees in the industry come from cultures which contrast with these scores (for example the UK and some Asian countries) there could be challenges for the implementation of HRM practices and policies, which may ultimately impact on job embeddedness and intent to remain (Mellahi, 2007; Budwhar and Mellahi, 2016). Such cultural influences will permeate all aspects of HRM from recruitment and selection practices, incentives and rewards, encouragement of development, employee participation and strategic perspectives. Therefore, it is essential to gain deep understanding of the role and importance of cultural factors in order to investigate the Saudi construction industry due to the level of diversity that exists within the workforce.

In terms of the Hofstede national culture profile for Saudi Arabia above (Figure 2. 10), the following implications can be identified with respect to the attitude, values and beliefs that can influence Saudi HRM practices and Saudi employees' preferences and workplace

behaviour. The high-power distance profile of the Saudi culture suggests a general acceptance of power and authority of management or those of higher social status (Hofstede et al., 2010). Based on this cultural orientation, Saudi employees' preference for the managerial and high-status jobs offered in the public sector, which prioritises seniority, authority and social status can be attributed to the high-power distance culture, whereas, such values tend to be lacking in the private sector, which prioritises merit or performance-based recognition over social status (Al-Dosary and Rahman, 2005).

In terms of the high Collectivism/Low Individualism cultural profile, this aspect is reflected in organisational cultures that support teamwork in terms of task accomplishment and the reward and recognition strategy. Furthermore, this can also be reflected in the job preferences of Saudi nationals who tend to gravitate more towards jobs that involve teamwork, rather than those that promote personal achievement (Afaneh et al., 2014). Hence, this can be inferred as a reason for poor recruitment and retention of Saudi employees in the private sector, where they have to prove their individual contribution to the organisation and earn their pay grade, as such reward system is only likely be attractive to individuals with individualistic values and personal gain motives. Furthermore, this also has implications in terms of the nature of the job role and responsibilities in addition to the fact that work relationships can affect employee turnover intentions (Mitchel et al., 2001; Moynihan and Pandey, 2007). In terms of the importance of studying HRM practices in Saudi Arabia's private sector, the above summarised implications demonstrate the possible impact of national culture on workplace values, attitude and behaviour and how cultural factors can affect the retention of Saudi employees and, in turn, the implications of HRM practices. Furthermore, gaining a deep understanding of these cultural elements broadens the scope for the development of HRM strategies that are effective and relevant for the specific environment (Budhwar and Sparrow, 2002).

Hofstede's (2002) cultural dimensions theory was heavily criticised by McSweeney (2002), who challenged the use of surveys as a method of examining cultural differences. In addition, McSweeney (2002) argued that nations could not serve as a representative unit for analysing cultural disparities. Finally, the outlined differences between single participants representing one organisation could not be generalised to the whole nation. In turn, Hofstede (2002) replied to McSweeney (2002) that he did not attempt to arrive at absolute indicators for each nation, but rather found an acceptable way to quantify the

basic cultural characteristics through his survey. The criticisms of McSweeney (2002) prompt that the Saudi population is heterogeneous and not all the representatives may be attributed the same level of power distance (i.e. acceptance of managerial power and authority) and masculinity (i.e. adherence to achievement values) (Hofstede et al., 2010). For instance, employees from the construction industry may have a more vivid long-term orientation, as construction projects take more time than marketing projects.

Similarly, Baskerville (2003; 2005) admitted that Hofstede's (2002) theoretical approach had at least three flaws. Specifically, the cultural dimensions theory heavily relied on matrices, failed to differentiate clearly between nations and cultures, and underestimated the role of observations after conducting a survey. These limitations of the theory (Baskerville, 2003; 2005) suggest that the above discussed cultural preferences of Saudis in terms of HRM practices and routines are very generic and cannot be generalised to the whole nation. Further practical analysis will be required to understand how Saudi nationals perceive HRM initiatives and what factors drive them to continue working for the local construction industry.

Interestingly, Kirkman et al. (2006) analytically approached 180 literature sources that applied Hofstede's (2002) cultural dimensions to the analysis of cultural differences in various contexts. These researchers argued that "Hofstede-inspired research is fragmented, redundant, and overly reliant on certain levels of analysis and direction of effects" (Kirkman et al., 2006, p.313). Kirkman et al. (2006) recommended that all further researchers studying cultural phenomena should be better driven by a context and search for alternative dimensions going beyond Hofstede's (2002) quantified dimensions and criteria. For example, given the Saudisation or localisation policy that is popularised at all governmental and organisational levels (Fadaak and Roberts, 2018), it would be reasonable to focus on the dimension of nationalism or cross-cultural tolerance among construction employees. Even though Hofstede's (2002) cultural paradigm is attributed a number of conceptual and methodological limitations (Holden et al., 2015; Signorini et al., 2009; Fang and Bird, 2009), its use is still justified for the purposes of this project, as it accounts for the basic cultural characteristics and 'presets' that are typical to Saudi nationals and moderates their perceptions of HRM.

## **Chapter Three: Literature review**

### **3.1 Introduction**

The main aim of this study is to investigate how selected HR practices related to On-job embeddedness of Saudi nationals and their attitudes of organisation (intention to remain). This study examines the mediation relation of on-job embeddedness on the relationships between Saudi nationals “ selected HR practices and their attitudes to their organisations in the Saudi construction industry. To examine the relationship between off-the-job embeddedness and the intentions of Saudi construction Saudi nationals to remain in their jobs. The chapter begins by discussing the concept of employee turnover, the consequences of employee turnover and the traditional models of turnover intention. Subsequently, the job embeddedness construct is introduced, followed by a discussion of the fit, links and sacrifice components of the on-and off-the-job dimensions of job embeddedness. This is followed by a discussion of the conservation of resources (COR) theory and social exchange theory (SET), which provide the theoretical foundation for the thesis. An analytical overview is provided of the previous studies that have investigated the relationship between selected HRM practices and job embeddedness. The third section of the literature review provides a theoretical discussion of the HRM functions, practices, HRM approaches, the SHRM concept and the SHRM-organisational performance link and fundamental normative SHRM theories. The HRM practices, which form the independent variables for the primary research are explained about the research context. The final section of this chapter is the conceptual framework for the research study and highlights various factors (dependent, mediating and independent), which will be studied about the concept of job embeddedness and employee’s voluntary turnover intentions. The conceptual framework analyses the relation of selected HR practices (on job embeddedness) and outlines how it contributes to the employee intention to remain.

### 3.2 The Notion of Turnover in the current Research Context

Employee turnover is an essential factor that affects organisational productivity and performance (Heavey *et al.*, 2013). Joarder *et al.* (2011) define employee turnover as the act of quitting or ceasing membership with an organisation by an individual employee. Two types of employee turnover are identified in the literature – voluntary and involuntary. Voluntary turnover occurs when the employee makes a conscious and deliberate personal decision to leave the organisation, usually due to a variety of reasons such as dissatisfaction with the job, poor performance appraisal, lack of growth opportunities, lack of recognition and personal reasons (Olubiyi *et al.*, 2019; Iqbal, 2010).

On the other hand, involuntary turnover occurs when the organisation deliberately lets go of the employee due to reasons such as poor performance, redundancy programme and layoffs (Perugini and Conner, 2000); Torrington *et al.*, 2011; Trevor and Nyberg, 2008). However, of the two types of employee turnover, voluntary turnover is considered to be more harmful to the organisation (Barrick and Zimmerman, 2005; Lee *et al.*, 2008; Trevor and Nyberg, 2008). The current study is concerned with the deliberate turnover intention. Wright (2006) defines turnover intention as “the cognitive process of thinking, planning, and desiring to leave a job”. Hence, the focus of this thesis is to examine voluntary employee turnover intention rather than actual turnover. This approach has been adopted due to the difficulty in predicting actual turnover (Maertz *et al.*, 2007) and the difficulty in obtaining data that is related to actual turnover (Currivan, 2000).

Furthermore, this approach is supported by several studies such as Perugini and Conner (2000), Chen *et al.* (2011) and Jiang *et al.* (2012) that had utilised turnover intention as a surrogate for turnover, when it was not possible to obtain quit data. It has also been argued by several authors that turnover intention is the single most effective predictor of actual turnover and that actual turnover can be reduced by lowering turnover intention (Firth *et al.*, 2004; Hom *et al.*, 2017). Furthermore, from a theoretical perspective, the rationale justifying turnover intention as the best proxy for actual turnover is based on the strong relationship between attitude and behaviour (Perugini and Conner, 2000) and between intent and behaviour (Maertz *et al.*, 2007) as it is argued based on the theory of planned behaviour that the best predictor of the behaviour of an individual is a measure of the individual’s intention to carry out that behaviour (Gawronski *et al.*, 2010)

### 3.3 Traditional Models of Turnover Intention

Over the past two decades, there has been extensive research conducted on the traditional behavioural attributes of voluntary turnover. The two of the significant behavioural attributes researched were job satisfaction and commitment to the organisation. The studies revealed that employee job satisfaction and commitment to the organisation, alternative job opportunities have a consistent and considerable negative impact on employee turnover (Zatzick and Iverson, 2006; Aldatmaz et al., 2018). (see Figure 3. 1) The recent research on employee turnover has altered the traditional attributes and introduced new attributes or measures. For instance, Meyer *et al.* (2001) stated that there is some attribute based on the expected organisational support by the employees. At the same time, other studies on employee turnover have indicated that equality and fairness at the workplace have a negative influence on employee turnover (Perugini and Conner, 2000). Understanding the behaviours leading to turnover expands our knowledge on what causes these behaviours in the employees.

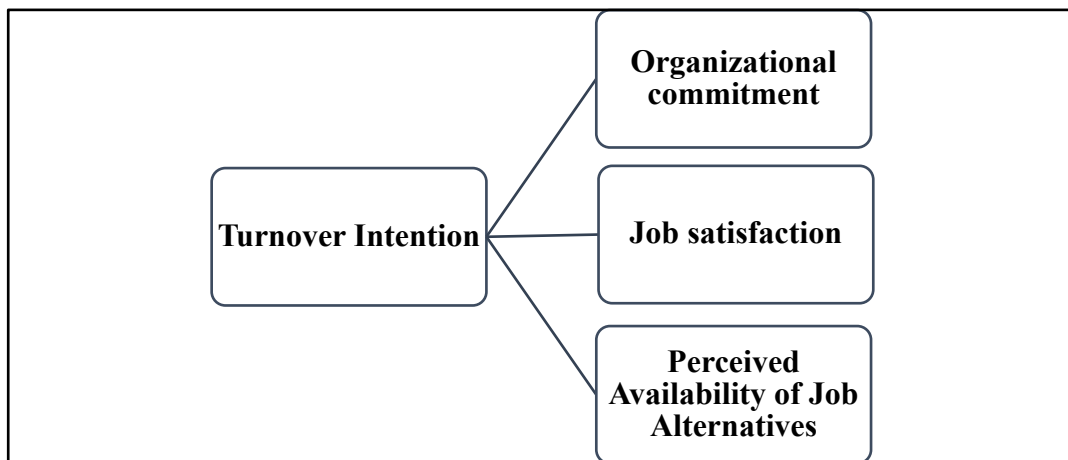


Figure 3. 1: Traditional Model of Turnover Intention.

Over the years, various models of voluntary employee turnover have been proposed including March and Simon (1958) ease of movement and desirability model; Porter and Steers (1973) met expectations model, Mobley (1977) intermediate linkage model, Price (2001) causal model, Sheridan - Abelson (1983) Cusp Catastrophe Model and Mitchell and Lee (2001) job embeddedness model.



### 3.3.1 March and Simon Model

The March and Simon (1958) desirability and ease of movement model is a widely used framework for studying voluntary turnover that is based on the argument that employees are empowered to make turnover decisions based on the interactions that they have with their workplace and based on two key variables - desirability and ease of movement (Phillips and Connel, 2003). This model is based on the assumption of relationship equilibrium between organisations and individuals, whereby organisations offer their employees commensurate reward for their contribution. Hence, when the compensation/reward provided by organisations no longer matches the contribution of the employee, this results in the employee leaving (Morgeson and Campion, 2003). The model highlights individual differences in skills and biodata (e.g. gender, tenure and age) as key determining factors of perceived ease of movement, while job satisfaction and the size of the organisation are key determinant factors influencing perceived desirability of movement (Holtom *et al.*, 2006) According to the assumptions of the model, employees will make decision to voluntarily leave the company based on their perception of how desirable it is to move/leave the organisation and based on their perception of how easy it is to move/leave (Allen and Shannock, 2012).

Furthermore, employee perception of how easy it is to move is also predicated upon their perception of the number of alternative opportunities that exist outside the organisation, their characteristics and the ease of access to other firms either through personal contacts or published vacancies (Samad and Yusuf, 2012). Hence, from this perspective, it was established that employee voluntary turnover intentions can be reduced by increasing the level of incentives. However, limitations are found with the March and Simon desirability and ease of movement framework because of its static conceptualization of turnover, which does not take account of the procedural aspects in terms of the role that other variable such as stress and commitment related factors can play in the turnover decision process. Hence, from this perspective, it is difficult to ascertain the extent to which other factors such as stress and organisation commitment influence the turnover process (Holtom *et al.*, 2006; Allen and Shannock, 2012). (see Figure 3. 2).

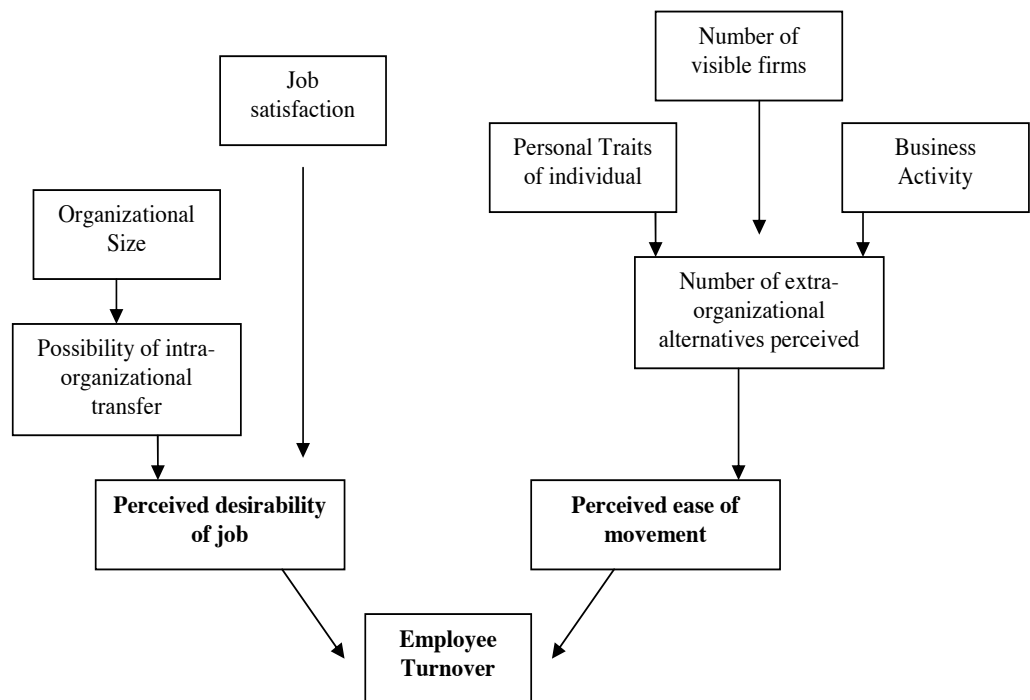


Figure 3. 2: March and Simon (1958) Desirability and Ease of Movement Turnover Model.

### 3.3.2 Porter and Steers Met Expectations Framework

The Porters and Steers (1973) framework has its origin in the Vroom's Expectancy theory of motivation. According to the model, there are three common factors that underline motivation: 1). Factors that energise human behaviour 2). Factors that guide/direct such behaviours 3). How to maintain and sustain such behaviour.

Furthermore, based on the assumptions of this model, goals, expectations/needs, behaviour and feedback are foundational building requirements. From this perspective, the "met expectations" hypothesis is measured by the extent of deviation between what was expected and what was experienced. Hence, when there is a failure to meet the expectations of employees, their propensity to leave the organisation will increase.

Furthermore, the theory uses the level of job satisfaction as a proxy for measuring the cumulative degree to which employees' expectations have been met (Holtom *et al.*, 2006).

Additionally, based on the underlying assumptions of Vroom's expectancy theory, expectancy and hence motivation is derived from the expectation that the desired outcome will follow a particular act. Hence, from this perspective, the degree of job satisfaction can be predicted based on expectancy theory (Samad and Yusuf, 2012). However, in order to obtain a direct measurement of met expectation, the individuals will need to accurately recollect what their prior expectancy was before joining the firm or the job. This also creates further limitation, as the individuals will have to recall prior expectations after some time on the job, which can be filtered or distorted by more recent behaviour and experiences (Phillips and Connel, 2003).

### **3.3.3 Mobley and Associates Models.**

Mobley (1977) advanced a process model of turnover that explained how dissatisfaction develops into turnover based on a linear sequence of progression involving dissatisfaction, quitting thoughts, assessment of “subjective expected utility” regarding job search and quitting costs, search intentions, assessment of alternative opportunities, evaluation of the current job and the alternative opportunities, intention to quit and quit (Hom *et al.*, 2017).

Critical components of Mobley (1977) model included job satisfaction, conscious thoughts about quitting, leave intentions and actual turnover. Furthermore, conditional causality was a major premise of the model, whereby job dissatisfaction did not always result in turnover except where there was successful search, positive search utility, desirable job alternatives and action towards quitting. However, Mobley (1977) model was only a preliminary model that was subsequently developed in later models and even though it explained linkages in the turnover process, it did not take account of the factors that affected job satisfaction and commitment. Subsequently, Mobley *et al.* (1979) pioneered a content model that identified several indirect factors that explained why people leave their jobs such as unpleasant/undesirable job features or the desirable attributes of alternative jobs that can lead to job dissatisfaction. The authors also presented a model for examining direct antecedent of search intentions and intention to quit that was based on job satisfaction and the “subjective expected utility” of current job and alternative.

Furthermore, based on the expectancy theory, Wayne *et al.* (2002) theorised that employees might remain in dissatisfying jobs because of the positive utility that they expect to achieve as a result of staying, for example, in terms of promotion, career advancement or desirable internal job postings. Conversely, employees may also decide to quit a job that is satisfying because of the better utility that they expect to receive from the alternative employment-based cost-benefit evaluation of the present and alternative job (Hom *et al.*, 2017). Additionally, Allen *et al.* (2003) identified the effect that non-work values and non-work consequences of quitting have on moderating how job satisfaction and the subjective expected utility of present and alternative jobs affect turnover (Figure 3. 3).

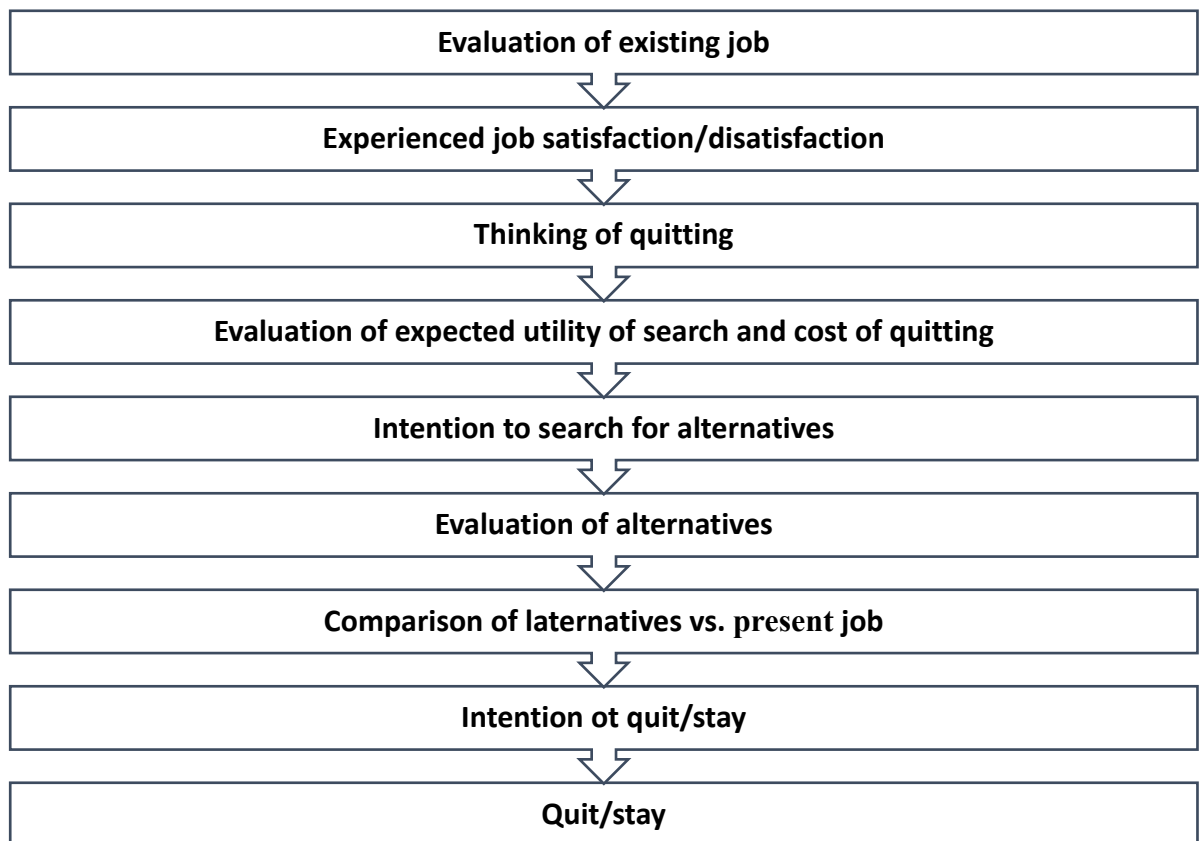


Figure 3. 3: Mobley 1977 Intermediate Linkage Model (Mobley, 1977).

### **3.3.4 Causal Models**

Drawing from a variety of research fields, Price (1977) and Price and Mueller (1981; 1986) identified a wide range of causes of turnover that included workplace causal factors such as pay and integration, labour market causal factors such as availability of job opportunities, occupational factors that relates to professionalism and community causal factors such as kinship obligations. Price (2001) identified leave intentions and job satisfaction as factors mediating the relationship between environmental antecedents and turnover. Furthermore, similar to Mobley (1977) and Mobley *et al.* (1997), the author also highlighted the process and content perspectives of turnover, emphasising more on turnover content. Price (1977; 2001) also significantly emphasised causal environmental factors over attitudinal drivers, which also highlighted the importance of external influences on turnover such as social interactions, social networks and family/community embeddedness (Felps *et al.*, 2009; Mitchell and Lee, 2001; Ramesh and Gelfand, 2010).

### **3.3.5 Cusp Catastrophe Model**

The Sheridan-Abel (1983) model conceptualises turnover in terms of a range of related withdrawal behaviours such as lower performance and absenteeism that occurs due to diminished interest in the organisation. Furthermore, the causes of the withdrawal behaviour are cumulative and gradually changing until a threshold point is reached, which can then result in abrupt voluntary quitting (Sheridan and Abelson, 1983). Hence, the model theorises that employees with different levels of job tension and commitment may exhibit the same withdrawal behaviour. Furthermore, abrupt voluntary employee turnover/withdrawal may occur as a result of past stressors (Sheridan and Abelson, 1983 in Gilmartin, 2012). From this perspective, the Sheridan-Ableson model provides a provocative departure from the traditional linear attitudinal models and is the first model to theorise turnover as a discontinuous dynamic process (Morgeson and Campion, 2003; Holtom *et al.*, 2008). It also highlights several gaps in previous turnover studies, which were often conducted based on a heterogeneous cross-sectional sample of respondents from the same organisations and failed to control/account for differences in demographic variables such as stage in a career which can affect the withdrawal process (Karatepe, 2010).

Furthermore, Karatepe (2011) highlight that previous studies did not take account of the effect that time interval has on predictive validity in terms of the time lapse between when the study is conducted and when turnover eventually happens. The Sheridan-Abelson model also differed from previous studies in the sense that, they failed to capture the dynamic nature of the turnover process and their assumption of continuous linear relationships between antecedent variables and turnover also failed to capture the threshold characteristics (Sheridan and Abelson, 1983). However, unlike other more comprehensive models such as McCarthy *et al.* (2007) Price and Mueller (2001), the Sheridan-Abelson (1983) model only provides a partial explanation for the motives for a turnover.

### **3.4 Consequences of Employee Turnover**

The ability to manage turnover intentions of employees is a crucial topic of interest for managers, organisations and researchers due to the financial costs that are associated with loss of an employee, in terms of the investment made in recruitment and training and development and the cost of recruiting and training new employees. Various adverse outcomes have been identified with employee turnover, including the demotivating effect that it can have on the rest of the employees in the organisation due to increase in the workload burden that can arise in the short-term (Yamamoto, 2011) Also, when an employee intends to leave an organisation, discussing such intentions with other colleagues can also influence other employees to start to think of leaving the organisation. Furthermore, loss of productivity and customers (Self and Dewald, 2011) and the additional expense involved in recruiting new staff in terms of the financial expenditure that is incurred in advertising, shortlisting, selecting and training new staff have also been associated with loss of employees (Nair, 2009 in Haider, 2015). According to Li *et al.* (2016), the cost of turnover to organisations in terms of recruiting and training replacements can be as much as between 90 - 200% of the annual salary of the employee that is being replaced. Furthermore, when employees leave the organization it can lead to loss of vital job knowledge and skills (Heavey *et al.*, 2013), lower profits and disruption in the organisational structure and operating processes (Li *et al.*, 2016) as well as decline in customer service and productive capacity (Hancock *et al.*, 2013).

### 3.5 Summary of Turnover Intention Models

Several models of turnover have been proposed in the literature since the original theory that was advanced by March and Simon (1958). Many of these models proposed several other factors including the perceived usefulness/desirability of existing and alternative job opportunities (Mobley, 1977), communication and compensation (Price, 1977), individual values (Mobley *et al.*, 1979) and job performance (Kim *et al.*, 2012). However, none of these models provided any radical departure from the original theory in terms of explaining the turnover construct beyond the causal links that had been identified with employee attitude and job alternatives. Additionally, the models failed to take into consideration the implications of transitional costs and the social and emotional aspects of the job that can cause people to stay in the job regardless of what other opportunities exist outside of the organisation (Mitchell *et al.*, 2001).

Furthermore, according to Griffeth *et al.* (2000) meta-analysis, the explanation provided by these models accounted for less than 15% of the differential in actual turnover. The best turnover predictors that were identified by the authors were job satisfaction, commitment to the job and job alternatives, which explained between 5 to 15% of the differential in actual turnover. Hence, the other predictive factors that were identified by these models contributed even less to the research area, raising doubts about their utility in explaining turnover. Hence, while these models provided the benefit of increasing knowledge about the numerous factors that can influence turnover, they failed to explain the most important reasons that motivate employees to leave (Griffeth *et al.*, 2000). Furthermore, even though some of these models included non-work components such as external social relations and non-work-related values (Bandura and Locke, 2003; Lam and Chen, 2012), they were not extensively incorporated and were rarely tested empirically. This represents an essential flaw in the theoretical development, especially within the context of cross-cultural application due to the significant role that non-work elements play in explaining turnover in all cultural contexts, and in collectivist cultures in particular, whereby people see themselves as intrinsically connected to others in their family and community (Meyer *et al.*, 2002).

### 3.6 Job Embeddedness in the Research Context

Over the past two decades, job embeddedness has emerged as an important predictor of turnover intentions and actual and hence also as a useful predictor of employee intention to remain (Mitchell *et al.*, 2001; Holtom *et al.*, 2006; Hom *et al.*, 2017). Concerning turnover intentions, job embeddedness explains an additional variance that was not explained by job satisfaction, perceived alternative jobs and job search activities (Griffeth *et al.*, 2000). The literature review identified several trends that have emerged in the literature. One of the significant developments was the separation of job embeddedness into its two main dimensions: on-the-job and off-the-job embeddedness (Mitchell *et al.*, 2001).

Additionally, the job embeddedness construct was further extended to predict other organisational outcomes such as job performance and in terms of its mediating role in facilitating organisational outcomes such as job satisfaction and employee retention (Hom *et al.*, 2017). Hence, establishing the construct as an important moderator of the relationship between HRM practices and important organisational outcomes. Furthermore, as a mediating factor, job embeddedness cushions employees from the negative impacts of shocks and dissatisfactory organisational experiences (Hom *et al.*, 2017). Hence, its potential as an effective factor in reducing turnover intentions, actual turnover, which in turn can improve intention to remain. Traditional turnover models have been advanced, which were not able to explain the turnover construct beyond job-related causal links such as employee attitude/job satisfaction, job alternatives and organisational commitment. The models also failed to take into consideration the implications of transitional costs and the social and emotional aspects of the job that can cause people to stay in the job regardless of what other opportunities exist outside of the organisation (Griffeth *et al.*, 2000).

Furthermore, the explanation provided by traditional models accounted for only a marginal proportion (15%) of the differential in actual turnover (Griffeth *et al.*, 2000). Hence, limiting the usefulness of the traditional models in explaining turnover intentions from the perspective of the current research context. Based on the above reasons, the job embeddedness model will be utilised for the current research due to its effectiveness in providing a more comprehensive explanation for turnover and its potential to facilitate and predict employee retention/intention to remain.



### 3.6.1 Defining Job Embeddedness

Mitchell et al. (2001, p. 7) define the term 'job embeddedness' "as a broad constellation of psychological, social and financial influences on employee retention." These influences are present both on the job and outside the employee's immediate job environment, which may create greater difficulties for individuals to leave their job. Also, Job embeddedness is defined as "an employee retention strategy that hampers employees' cognitive or behavioural withdrawal "(Karatepe, 2013, p. 904). Furthermore, beyond its effect on general employee work attitudes, job embeddedness has been identified as being a mediator between management factors and key organizational consequences (Holtom and Inderrieden, 2006) such as actual turnover, employee turnover intentions and job performance (Lee et al., 2004; Mitchell et al., 2001).

Traditional models of turnover intention suggest that people leave the organisation if they are unhappy or dissatisfied with their current job role and if job alternatives are available (Lee et al., 2014). Hence, it emphasises the reasons why an employee would not leave a job, rather than highlighting the psychological process that an individual goes through when leaving the job. Although job attitudes and job alternatives have shown some consistency with turnover, their relationship appears to be rather weak and play only a marginal role in employee retention (Bandura and Locke 2003); Griffeth et al., 2000). For this reason, Mitchell et al. (2001) have developed a construct called job embeddedness and outlined a theory to explain why people stay in the job. Hence, the new insight is about finding ways to make people want to stay in the organisation rather than focusing on the factors that cause them to want to leave the organisation (Mitchell et al., 2001). Though this approach may appear insignificant at the start, it provides a different perspective for understanding employee turnover differently. Job embeddedness evaluates different factors that have a positive impact on employee retention by understanding different elements (Lee et al., 2004). Firstly, job embeddedness analyses how well the employee's work and organisational culture are prevailing other aspects of an employee's life. Secondly, it analyses how well the employee is blended into the social activities of the organisation. Finally, the flexibility of the employee to leave the organisation and what employees would give up if they leave the company especially if they were relocating. These three elements are categorised as fit, links and sacrifice, which are significant both inside and outside the organisation (Mitchell et al., 2001).

The concept of job embeddedness focuses more on the process of retention and on the reasons why employees remain at their present job. In other words, it suggests that situational aspects of an individual's work-life may influence his or her decision to stay in a job and thereby be committed to the long-term objectives of the organisation (Feldman and Ng, 2010). The study by Mitchell et al. (2001) showed that job embeddedness is a critical aspect to predict turnover and indicates that people's intentions to leave the job are above and beyond factors such as job satisfaction and job alternatives. According to Lee et al. (2004), job embeddedness is a formative measure and has a significant influence on employee retention. The concept of Job embeddedness consists of three key components such as links, fit and sacrifice, each of which is important both on the job and in the non-work environment (Mitchell et al., 2001). Furthermore, each of these dimensions is a cause of embeddedness and can be categorised into two aspects, organisation and community, which are based on whether the influences occur on the job or off the job. In other words, job embeddedness can be conceptualised into six dimensions, that is, links, fit and sacrifice between the employees and the organisation and links, fit and sacrifice between the employees and the community (Lee et al., 2004).

### **3.6.2 Dimensions of Job Embeddedness**

As a new construct that is distinct from another turnover model that emphasises attitudinal factors and ease of movement, Job embeddedness provides a more holistic perspective of how the employment relationship affects turnover decisions as it examines both on-the-job and off-the-job factors. Furthermore, it also differs from traditional turnover models because it focuses on how to retain employees in the organisation rather than on how to prevent them from leaving (Mitchell et al., 2001). Furthermore, as explained in Holtom and O'Neill (2004), the critical dimensions of the job embeddedness construct are: the degree to which the job and community aspects fit with other aspects of the employee's life, the degree to which the job provides employees with links to other people and activities and how easy it is to break those links in terms of what employees will have to sacrifice if they gave up the job and especially if they had to move to another geographical location. These dimensions are further explained below as on-the-job and off-the-job Fit, Link and Sacrifice (see Figure 3. 4).

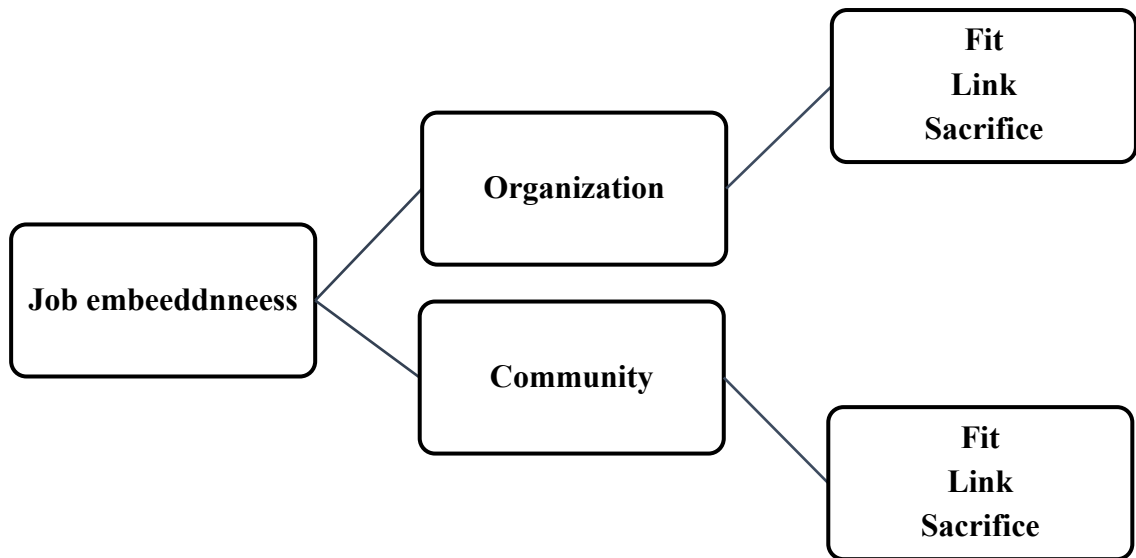


Figure 3. 4: Dimensions of Job Embeddedness (Based on Mitchell et al., 2001b, 1104-1105).

### 3.6.2.1 Employee Fit

The Fit dimension relates to the level of comfort and compatibility with the organisation that is perceived by employees in terms of the job, the organisation and the community (Mitchell et al., 2001). From the perspective of on-the-job embeddedness, the proper dimension refers to the degree of congruence between the goals, values and career aspirations of the employee and the broader organisational goals and culture (Holtom and O'Neill, 2004). Hence, the tighter the compatibility between the values, goals and plans of employees and their work tasks and organisational culture and goals, the deeper the fit and the less likely employees are to leave as they will feel tied to the company both personally and professionally (Holtom et al., 2006). This concept was demonstrated by Westerman and Yamamura's (2007) study, which showed that there was a higher likelihood of the employees in an accountancy firm to remain with the organisation the more that the organisation provided them with opportunities that fit with their preferences for participation, challenge and goal accomplishment. From the perspective of off-the-job embeddedness, the proper dimension refers to the degree to which the individual feels compatibility or ease with the environmental characteristics of the community and the degree to which these community aspects match their non-work life.

Kiazad et al. (2015) provide examples of such community fit factors to include the nearby presence of strong, good family support network that is important for babysitting, and family gatherings/celebration. Ghosh and Gurunathan (2015) also identify community fit examples to include the extent to which the community culture matches with the personal preferences of the employee in terms of the religious and political climate and terms of the weather and or other cultural characteristics such as arts.

### **3.6.2.2 Employee Link**

From the perspective of on-the-job embeddedness, the links dimension refers to “formal or informal connections between a person and institutions or other people” (Mitchell et al., 2001, p. 1104), which are financial, psychological, and social and effectively tie employees to the organisation and community. In this context, an example of the links dimension of job embeddedness is provided by Moynihan and Pandey (2007) whereby positive intra-organisation relationships in the form of the positive co-worker relationships served as a web that bonded employees to the organisation. Furthermore, relationship with and support from supervisors, work teams and colleagues are considered as essential links that can enhance organisational attachment (Ghosh and Gurunathan, 2015). From the perspective of off-the-job embeddedness, the links dimension refers to the extent to which the community characteristics align with the values/preferences of employees and their families (Kiazad et al., 2015). This includes the informal/non-work connections that employees have in the community such as spousal employment, religious affiliations, non-work friendships, membership in community organisations (Ghosh and Gurunathan, 2015) and proximity that allow frequent interactions between the employee/their family and talented family members such as parents and kids’ cousins (Kiazad et al., 2015). Based on the assumptions of the job embeddedness model, it is theorised that the number and types of social links that an individual has in and outside of the job help to define the nature of the bond that he/she has with the job and the organisation due to the emotional and psychological attachments and the associated sense of belonging (Lee et al., 2004). Hence, from this perspective, the more the linkages/factors that connect individual employees with other individuals in their web, the less likely employees will be to quit, as leaving may result in loss or rearrangement of those connections (Mitchell et al., 2001).

### **3.6.2.3 Employee Sacrifice**

Sacrifice is defined as the “perceived cost of material or psychological benefits that may be forfeited by leaving a job” (Mitchell et al., 2001, p. 1105). According to Mitchell et al. (2001) the term ‘sacrifice’ concerns with the perceived cost of material or psychological benefits that an employee may forfeit by leaving one’s job. For instance, an individual leaving an organisation may likely have some personal losses, such as leaving well-liked colleagues, business networks and relationships, a highly effective work team or unique rewards). This is because even though an employee may find comparable salary and benefits easily, it will be difficult to overcome switching costs associated with the personal losses derived from workplace relationships (Bratton and Gold, 2017). Furthermore, in some cases, non-portable benefits such as defined pension schemes or profit sharing may also involve sacrifices. However, research studies observed that these factors had been negatively related to voluntary turnover (Mitchell et al., 2001).

The sacrifice dimension relates to the perceived material costs and loss of psychological benefits that the individual employee associates with leaving the company (Mitchell et al., 2001). From the perspective of on-the-job-embeddedness, such sacrifices are conceptualised in terms of organisational constructs such as job security, career advancement, flexible work hours (Holtom et al., 2006), good supportive work environment and valued company benefits such as organization car or employer-sponsored holidays to attractive destinations (Vandenberghe and Tremblay, 2008; Dawley et al., 2010). From the perspective of off-the-job embeddedness, the sacrifice dimension is defined in terms of the important or valuable community-related attributes and benefits that will be lost if the employee quit the job and especially if that will involve a physical relocation from the present community (Mitchell et al., 2001). Examples of such sacrifices, which can moderate turnover intentions, are identified to include perceived loss of community ties/sense of belonging, access to good quality schools and safe neighbourhood (Ghosh and Gurunathan, 2015).

### **3.6.3 Key Job Embeddedness Theories**

This section discusses two key theories that can be used to explain job embeddedness and voluntary employee turnover, the Conservation of Resources Theory and the Social Exchange Theory, which are explained in the following subsections.

### **3.6.3.1 The Conservation of Resources Theory (COR)**

The conservation resource theory (COR) asserts that resources are valuable and that employees will amass, secure and allocate valued resources in response to the job environment (Hobfoll, 2001). Furthermore, the amount of resources that are available to employees and which they can utilise to meet the demands of their work life is finite. Hence, depletion of such resource without replenishment will result in negative consequences such as job dissatisfaction and increase in resources will result in positive organisational outcomes (Harris et al., 2011). Hobfoll (2001) categories these resources into four broad groups: personal resources (e.g. skills), condition resources (e.g. organisational status), energy resources (e.g. time, money) and object resources (e.g. material belongings). The COR theory has been used by several studies to examine the conflict between work and non-work/family domains and to provide a conceptual framework for explaining the link between work and non-work domains and the stress effects of within role and between role and how such conflicts can eventually impact organisational outcomes (McCarthy *et al.*, 2007; Meyer *et al.*, 2002; Meyer and Herscovitch, 2001; Bellavia and Frone, 2005; Hobfoll, 2011). The contribution of COR to this study is, therefore, in explaining that intentions to leave were dependent on the possible gains and losses of resources incurred by possible job switching (Reina et al., 2018; Lin et al., 2018). Nonetheless, with Hobfoll (2001) selecting 4 major resource groups, no other studies have managed to establish the perceived rankings for these factors. One of the most common findings in the current literature was that the employees had their own attitudes toward resources; the priority could be on financial assets or, conversely, energy constraints (Reina et al., 2018; Lin et al., 2018). This thesis addresses this gap, thus allowing the managers of Saudi Arabian enterprises to establish job embeddedness measures focused on what resources were valued the most by their subordinates.

The selection of the COR theory as a theoretical model for this study is justified by the assumptions of the theory, which assert that people are inherently driven to acquire, maintain, foster and protect resources that they value, or which help them to accomplish desired goals (Hobfoll, 2011; 2018). It is also argued that the COR theory provides a model for explaining how job pressures can threaten existing resources (Hobfoll, 2001). Another contributing factor was the fact that the literature on job embeddedness and intentions to leave has so far focused on the managerial perspective of the relationship between these two concepts (Reina et al., 2018).

For instance, providing positive verbal feedback and allowing employees to take additional vacation days were seen as strong predictors of employees wanting to stay with their current organisation (Reina et al., 2018; Lin et al., 2018). The implication was that such organisational measures were a supplier of energy and condition resources, with employees unwilling to lose such assets (Reina et al., 2018; Lin et al., 2018). On the other hand, other scholars have failed to conceptualise how much perceived value was assigned to such resources and whether there existed individual difference in the perception resource loss (Yang et al., 2018). The use of COR not only provides a framework of the relationship between embeddedness and employee attitudes, but also allows for addressing a significant research gap. Managers in Saudi Arabia could benefit from a holistic model of resource conservation relevant for native labourers; this would inform the choice of managerial and leadership practices.

Furthermore, the COR theory also argues two principles. The first COR principle relates to the primacy of resource loss over resource gain. According to the principle, stronger affective/emotional and behavioural reactions are generated by resources loss than by equivalent resource gains. Hence, in the context of employee job embeddedness, when confronted with the decision to remain or leave for another job, employees may have greater fear for what they would have to sacrifice in terms of job benefits in comparison to their feelings of anticipated satisfaction regarding equivalent benefits from the alternative job (Kiazad et al., 2015). The second COR principle relates to resource investments, and it argues that people will invest resources in order to gain resources that will enable them to attain goals, recover lost resources, meet demands or protect themselves from future losses — for example, investing in training to increase the chance of promotion or to minimise the likelihood of being laid off (Hobfoll, 2001). Also, about job embeddedness, it is argued from a COR perspective that since resource loss is painful, people stay on in order to retain resources that have intrinsic value (sacrifice dimension resources) or instrumental value (fit and links resources). Furthermore, on-job embeddedness can promote job performance as a result of instrumental (fit and links) resources, which enable employees to be more effective in their jobs, which in turn enable them to accumulate more resources such as recognition, status or promotion (Kaizad et al., 2015).

Hobfoll (2002) defines instrumental support as the specific attitudes, behaviours and resources that are aimed at supporting the work requirements of employees. Hobfoll (2001) theory presents the concept of instrumental support that is provided through organisational resources in terms of the utility that such resources provide in themselves and in terms of the benefits that they can contribute in providing and maintaining a strong resource reservoir.

Furthermore, these resources, for example, education or training (personal resources), position/status (conditional resources), salary and benefits (material resources), flexible working (energy resources) can aggregate to form resource caravans that can be drawn upon for immediate or future use (Hobfoll (2001). From this perspective, Halbesleben and Wheeler (2008) theorise that job embeddedness in terms of the psychological forces that cause employees to become stuck in the organisation and community is a form of resource caravan that the individual invests into work. Furthermore, Halbesleben (2006) asserts that the COR model has particular relevance for explaining the link between social support and stress-related outcomes and studies. Halbesleben et al. (2009) and Oren and Levin (2017) have used the COR model to explain how family-work role conflict may result in negative emotional/psychological conditions.

To summarise, the main contribution of COR theory to this study was in providing an explanation of how on-the-job embeddedness affected employee attitudes toward their current places of employment; specifically, it was resource losses and resource investments that had the most significant impact on employee perceptions. The most prominent theme in the extant body of literature was that the higher the perceived resource loss, the stronger the intention to remain (Zhou et al., 2018; Carnevale et al., 2018). If there existed factors limiting on-the-job embeddedness (such as narcissistic leadership), the staff also decreased their resource investments into the firms (Ye et al., 2019; Jin et al., 2018). However, there were no other studies that verified the validity of these relationships in Saudi Arabia or in the narrow context of native employees (Zhou et al., 2018; Ye et al., 2019). With the use of the COR model, this research aims to provide managers of Saudi Arabian businesses with a specific list of resources that had the most significance for embeddedness and the employees' intentions to remain.



### **3.6.3.2 Social Exchange Theory (SET)**

From an organisational perspective, the social exchange is used to conceptualise the notion of open-ended, long-term transactions between individuals and their employers that are characterised by "mutual loyalty and socio-emotional investment" rather than economic investment (Shore et al., 2006). Furthermore, through its important attributes of trust, mutual investments and relational longevity, social exchange as a form of employee-organisational relationship can be used to shape employee attitude and behaviour (Hom et al., 2009). For example, it is identified that through provision of extensive training, employers can use the mutual investment aspects of the relationship to trigger higher employee contribution by investing significantly in their development, which in turn obligates the employee to reciprocate by giving more effort or rise to the expected level of performance (Eisenberger et al., 2001). Hence, the social exchange theory is a relational model that has been used to conceptualise and explain the employment relationship and how HRM practices can be used as a mechanism to develop an emotional bond between organisations and their employees and thereby increase psychological contract and less likelihood of employee turnover (Allen and Shanock, 2013).

The justification of using SET in the current research was the fact that this framework allowed for quantifying job embeddedness. One of the main limitations of the extant literature was the difficulty of suggesting a statistically significant relationship between abstract concepts, such as positive verbal feedback, employee training and job embeddedness (Haldorai et al., 2019; Stamolampros et al., 2019). An illustration of this was the finding that work overload and poor work-life balance contributed to intentions to leave; however, scholars did not analyse how these processes were measured by the employees in comparison to positive organisational characteristics, such as career progression (Haldorai et al., 2019). By focusing on the comparison between costs and benefits, SET addressed a significant research gap. Using SET to inform the managers of Saudi Arabian enterprises could lead to measurable improvements in lowering intentions to leave.

Furthermore, based on this ideology, the theory offers the potential of being able to explain how employees are likely to react based on their perception of specific HR practices (Moussa, 2013).

For example, in terms of previous studies, which showed that promotion, fair reward and timely supervisor support have a significant impact on employee behaviour (Chen and Francesco, 2003 in Moussa, 2013). The social exchange theory operates on the assumptions that employers implicitly and explicitly communicate signals that are interpreted by employees and based on which employees derive perceptions about the level of trust and fairness that exist in the employment relationship in terms of the degree to which they are valued and trusted by their employers. Furthermore, where such perceptions are positive, it will cause employees to feel obligated to reciprocate the favour through increased performance (Allen and Shanock, 2013). Hence, the social exchange theory, based on its concept of reciprocity and social relations has the potential to provide a framework for developing a relational perspective to how HR practices can be designed and implemented to deepen job embeddedness and reduce turnover intentions about the research context. According to Bentein *et al.* (2005), the conceptualisation of the social exchange theory, employees will stay on in order to repay the benefits that they have gained from the organisation.

Furthermore, an employer-employee social exchange relationship that is mutually satisfying will create a self-reinforcing system that is sustained by a culture of reciprocity. Hence, from the perspective of the concept of job embeddedness, it is crucial to determine the HR practices that can facilitate this mutual perpetuating relationship and embed employees through the social exchange equilibrium (Tanova and Holtom, 2008). Chen and Francesco (2003) support this notion, arguing that employees become more engaged and embedded in their job when they receive socio-emotional and socio-economic value for their work.

On the contrary, if they do not receive what they perceive to be fair value for their contribution, employees may withdraw from their job roles and disengage from the organisation (Robinson *et al.*, 2004 in Alfes *et al.*, 2013). In other words, the exchange between employees and organisation is weighed against the quality of social, economic exchange (Moussa, 2013; Saks, 2006).

In the context of the current study, the concept of social exchange theory is used as a framework for explaining the mutually reinforcing reciprocal relationship between organisations and their employees and how specific HRM practices can influence employee's perception of the employment relationship and hence their attitude towards the employment relationship/intention to remain (Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005; Halbesleben and Wheeler, 2008; Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005).

Furthermore, it also highlights ambiguities and issues relating to the norms of exchange, the resources being exchanged and social relationships. The results pointed out that high exchange ideology would not only benefit the organisation but also enhance the dedication and efforts of the employees towards the organisational objectives. Hence, social exchange theory can be used to explain why people decide to quit or decide to stay with the organisation from the perspective of how HRM practices are used by organisations to signal a long-term view of the employment relationship and how employees perceive and react to the antecedent HRM practices in terms of their intention to remain.

A question facing the study was how exactly the social exchange theory could be applied to the case of native employees in Saudi Arabia, job embeddedness within this setting and the possible intentions to remain or leave one's current place of employment. A trend in empirical research was that it was the intangible provisions of organisational support that had the strongest positive impact on the results of the social exchange comparisons (Zhang et al., 2019; Zhu et al., 2019). For instance, if the employees regularly communicated with their colleagues using social media, the perceived value of their relationship to a company increased (Stamolampros et al., 2019; Haldorai et al., 2019). The implication was that the staff assigned subjective worth to each factor influencing on-the-job embeddedness; nonetheless, no study so far has presented a holistic framework of the exact mechanism governing this process (Zhang et al., 2019; Stamolampros et al., 2019). The next step is to resolve this issue in the context of Saudi Arabia, with the social exchange theory explaining the relationship between job embeddedness and intentions to leave.

A possible explanation of how exactly the social exchange mechanism functioned was that the employees regularly evaluated the commitment of organisations to the provision of 6 basic resources, namely affection, status, knowledge, finances, assets and services (Wang et al., 2019). This meant that it was organisational support, such as the establishment of financial bonuses or the communication of positive verbal feedback, that was the most significant driver of the social exchange comparison, thus strongly linking social exchange to the concepts of HRM and leadership (Gjerlov-Juel and Guenther, 2019; Ng et al., 2019). A contrasting perspective was that it was organisational justice and fairness had the most impact on social exchanges; one specific example was the commitment of firms to CSR initiatives, in particular waste reduction and the use of ethical marketing (Liu et al., 2018). The social exchange theory, therefore, only proposed a mechanism of how the staff could conceptualise their intentions to leave. The uniqueness of this study is in using the social exchange theory to rank factors in the area of on-the-job embeddedness, which should clarify how exactly the social exchange functioned among a narrowly-defined group of professionals. The following figure summarises the results of Section 3.6.3.

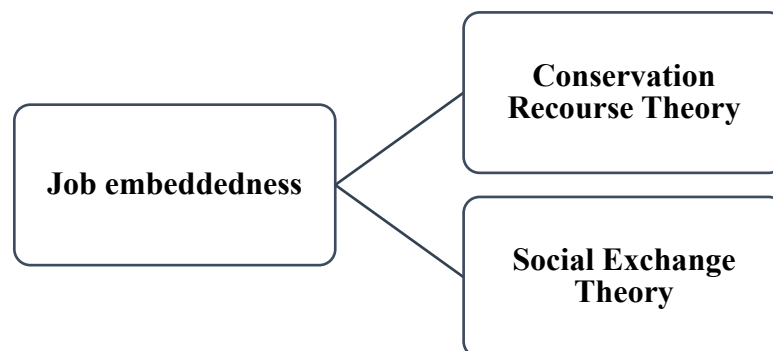


Figure 3. 5: Theoretical Models of HRM and their Relation to Job Embeddedness.

### 3.7 Determinants of Job Embeddedness

From the perspective of HRM, it is argued that even though several studies have tried to establish the predictive power of job embeddedness in relation to voluntary turnover and intent to leave, there is a lack of research that has investigated the mediating power of the construct in relation to individual-level factors that have been known to affect turnover, such as employee perceptions about HRM practices.

It is also argued that employee turnover can be considerably reduced by HRM practices that show consideration for employee welfare and development (Allen et al., 2003; Winterton, 2004), but these were not being tested empirically about job embeddedness. Hence, raising the question about whether employees' job embeddedness and consequently their turnover is influenced by their perception of HRM practices and the need to investigate such angles of research inquiry.

Furthermore, there is a lack of studies that discuss the antecedent of job embeddedness. Hence it is argued that there is a need to investigate what causes people to be embedded in their jobs (Ng and Feldman, 2011; Holtom et al., 2012). Some of the relevant studies that have addressed the impact of HRM practices on job embeddedness are subsequently discussed below (Bambacas and Kulik, 2013; Karatepe, 2013; Harris, Wheeler and Kacmar, 2011; Avey, Wu and Holley, 2015; see Table 3.1).

The study by Bambacas and Kulik (2013) examined the process by which six HRM practices embedded employees and reduced turnover intentions through the creation of organisational attachment. The authors investigated the mediating impact of the fit, links and sacrifice dimensions of organisational job embeddedness on the relationship between the six HRM practices and employee turnover intention. The six HRM practices that were examined were performance appraisal, advancement rewards, compensation rewards, supervisory rewards, professional growth and professional interaction based on data that was collected from 308 Chinese professional staff. Whereas many other studies have treated the three dimensions of job embeddedness as one aggregate variable/measure, when investigating the mediating influence of job embeddedness, the study by Bambacas and Kulik (2013) specifically investigated the degree to which the individual links, fit and sacrifice dimensions of job embeddedness helped to reduce the intention to quit individuals. The study showed that there was a significant negative relationship between performance appraisal, organisational rewards and employee turnover intentions due to the increased level of employee-organisational fit. However, a positive correlation was established between increased employee perception of sacrifice and turnover intentions due to the effect of the links dimension which exposed people to a wider relationship network, and hence indirectly reduced the perception of sacrifice and increased turnover intentions.

One of the limitations that were identified with the study by Bambacas and Kulik (2013) was the fact that it only utilised a single source for data collection that only considered the opinion of subordinate employees, without any input from supervisors or other managerial staff. Hence, from this perspective, the magnitude of the nature of the relationships that existed between the tested variable may have been inadvertently exaggerated due to potentially inherent bias in the use of data from a single source (McCarthy *et al.*, 2007; Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003).

The study by Karatepe (2013) investigated the impact of high-performance work practices (Training, empowerment and reward) and worked social support on the job embeddedness of 174 frontline hotel employees in Iran. Furthermore, it examined the extent to which job embeddedness mediated the impact of high-performance work practices and worked social support on the turnover intentions of these employees.

The study showed a positive correlation between both the HPWPs and WSS. Furthermore, WSS was shown to have a higher impact on JE than HPWPs and job embeddedness fully mediated the relationship between HPWPs, WSS and employee turnover intentions. However, similar to the other studies, the study by Karatepe (2013) also failed to provide insight into how the different types of HRM practices affected job embeddedness and it only focused on the examination of on-the-job embeddedness, failing to take account of the impact that non-work factors may have had on the job embeddedness and turnover intentions. The study conducted by Karatepe (2013a) also explored the HRM practices - Job embeddedness link, approaching it from the perspective of high-performance work practices (HPWPs) and work social support in terms of the mediating effect of job embeddedness on the impact that HPWPs and social support have on turnover intention.

The results obtained by Karatepe (2013) from 174 full-time frontline staff in 4 - and 5 - star hotels, indicated that job embeddedness fully mediated the effect of HPWPs and social support on employee turnover intentions. In particular, the study showed that frontline staff with HPWPs and worked social support (WSS) was more embedded in their jobs and hence were less likely to demonstrate intentions of quitting the organisation. Hence, measuring the indirect impact of HRM practices on turnover intentions.

However, the study was limited in its treatment of the job embeddedness construct, as it treated it as an aggregate variable and did not examine the impact of the different dimensions of on-the-job embeddedness. It also fails to take into consideration the dimension of off-the-job embeddedness.

The study conducted by Bergiel, Nguyen, Clenney and Taylor (2009) examined the mediating effect of job embeddedness in the relationship between training, supervisor support, compensation and internal growth opportunity and the turnover intention based on a survey of 495 staff at a state correctional facility in the U.S. The study showed that there was a strong positive correlation between antecedent HRM practices and job embeddedness, except for training, which showed no significant relationship with job embeddedness. Furthermore, though job embeddedness and the antecedent HRM practices were found to be negatively correlated to turnover intentions, job embeddedness was found to be more strongly correlated to turnover intentions than the HRM practices. However, the study was conducted based on convenient sampling which potentially limits the generalizability of the findings due to insufficient representation of the research sample.

The investigation by Allen (2006) examined the effect of socialisation tactics about newcomer adaptation and turnover by investigating 308 employees from the Chinese steel-manufacturing sector. The study found that collective socialisation tactics, fixed or serial socialisation tactics and investiture socialisation tactics that involved socialisation with more experienced employees helped to generate greater levels of organisational embeddedness. The study also revealed that on-the-job embeddedness partially mediated the relationship between investiture socialisation tactics and turnover. However, it did not mediate the relationship between serial tactics and turnover. However, similar to the study by Bergiel et al. (2009), the Allen (2006) study only investigated job embeddedness as an aggregate measure without providing an understanding of how different HR practices can influence the different dimensions of job embeddedness.

The study by Harris, Wheeler and Kacmar (2011) examined the relationship between LMX and organisational job embeddedness and three organisational outcomes job satisfaction, turnover intentions and actual turnover.

The study by Harris, Wheeler and Kacmar (2011) examined the relationship between LMX and organisational job embeddedness and three organisational outcomes - job satisfaction, turnover intentions and actual turnover, based on a survey of 225 employees from the automotive sector in the U.S. The results showed a strong positive correlation between LMX and organisational job embeddedness and a strong positive correlation between job embeddedness and the three organisational outcomes that were examined. However, the results of this study are highly limited in its generalisability as it only examined evidence from a minuscule segment of the U.S. automotive sector and only one organisation. Furthermore, it only examined the impact of one antecedent variable on job embeddedness.

The study by Ramesh and Gefland (2010) examined the cross-cultural generalisability of job embeddedness by investigating turnover in the U.S and India based cross-cultural data that was obtained from 797 call centre respondents. The study showed that while the on-the-job fit was positively correlated to low turnover for employees in the U.S., this was not the case for the employees in India. Furthermore, while US employees that had high-off-the-job links were associated with higher turnover, Indian employees with high of the job links were associated with lower turnover.

Furthermore, from the perspective of the individualism-collectivism theory, while person-job fit was found to be a strong predictor of lower turnover in the U.S, organisational links, person-organisation fit, and community links were found to be a significant predictor of low turnover in India. Hence, providing evidence for the cross-cultural relevance of the job-embeddedness model, in particular highlighting the influence of off-the-job embeddedness and introducing a new dimension of family embeddedness.

The study by Collins, Burrus and Meyer (2014) investigated LMX relationships as a multidimensional construct in terms of how different socialisation experiences affect the expectations that men and women have in regard to their relationships with supervisors and how job embeddedness mediates the relationship between LMX and job satisfaction. 339 participants were surveyed from the recreational products industry.



Furthermore, the study results showed that the communal dimensions of LMX affected the job embeddedness and satisfaction for only females and not males, while agentic leader behaviour influenced both males and females. Hence, proving the need to treat the LMX construct as a multidimensional rather than a unitary construct. However, similar limitations were identified with this study in terms of the treatment of the job embeddedness construct as no distinction was made between the on-the-job and off-the-job dimensions of job embeddedness.

In turn, Burton, Henagan and Briscoe (2013) investigated the extent to which perceived job embeddedness mediated the relationship between perceived job insecurity and employee withdrawal behaviours. The study showed that job embeddedness significantly mediated the relationship between perceived job insecurity and intention to remain and job embeddedness only partially mediated the relationship between perceived job insecurity and job search behaviour. Furthermore, the study argued that employee perception of job insecurity influenced their perception of job embeddedness, which in turn had significant implications for employee retention, hence highlighting the need to manage perceptions of job insecurity in organisations, particularly during times of economic/employment uncertainties, in order to discourage withdrawal behaviours. However, this study only examined the effect of one antecedent variable (Burton, Henagan and Briscoe, 2013).

Furthermore, the study was not based on a specific organisational context, hence overlooking other the influence that other antecedent variables may have had on the perception of job insecurity and the perception of job embeddedness. The study also failed to recognise the multidimensional character of the job embeddedness construct.

The study by Avey, Wu and Holley (2015) examined the relationship between abusive supervision and job embeddedness and the extent to which job embeddedness moderated the relationship between abusive supervision and withdrawal behaviour. The study examined 603 supervisor-employee relationships in a large U.S aerospace company.

The study results showed that job embeddedness mediated the relationship between abusive supervision and job frustration, showing an even weaker and negative correlation between abusive supervisor and job frustration, the more embedded the individual was. Hence, highlighting the potential for job embeddedness to result in negative organisational outcomes. Similar to the other previous studies discussed, one limitation that was identified with this study was the narrow list of antecedent variables that were investigated as only one variable, supervisor-employee relationship. Furthermore, job embeddedness was treated as an aggregate construct, with no distinction made between the different dimensions of job embeddedness.

The study by Tian, Cordery and Gamble (2015) examined the impact of HRM practices on organisational embeddedness and job performance based on a survey of 197 Chinese employees in a state-owned Chinese company. The study sought to address the gap created by the lack of treatment of "opportunity enhancing" HRM practices in previous studies. The authors approached the study by giving distinctive treatment to the relationship between each bundle of AMO HR practices and job embeddedness, including examination of each dimension of fit, links and sacrifice. Hence, offering more encompassing empirical results that conceptualised job embeddedness as a multi-dimensional construct that can be approached from the perspective of three distinct HR systems – Ability, Motivation and Opportunity. Furthermore, the study findings also presented the fit, links and sacrifice dimension as distinct constructs that affect organisational attachment in different ways. The study found that only Ability-enhancing HR practices had a strong positive correlation to all three embeddedness dimensions of fit, links and sacrifice.

Opportunity enhancing practices were found to correlate well with only the fit and sacrifice embeddedness dimensions. In the case of the motivation-enhancing practices, an only a weak correlation was established with embeddedness in all three dimensions. However, despite the comprehensive approach of the study's research inquiry, it did not take into consideration the off-the-job dimension of job embeddedness.

Table 3. 1: Previous Empirical Studies Investigating the Impact of antecedences and key outcomes of Job Embeddedness

Study	Methodology/Focus	HRM practices	
		affecting Job Embeddedness	Key Outcomes
<b>Bambacas and Kulik (2013)</b>	A questionnaire survey involving 308 employees from a steel manufacturing organisation in China	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performance appraisal</li> <li>• Advancement rewards</li> <li>• Compensation rewards</li> <li>• Supervisory rewards</li> <li>• Professional growth</li> <li>• Professional interaction</li> </ul>	Effective performance appraisal and development plans increased perceptions of fit and reduced intent to leave.
<b>Karatepe (2013)</b>	A questionnaire survey involving 174 full-time frontline employees in four- and five-star hotels, with a time lag of two weeks in Iran.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training</li> <li>• Empowerment</li> <li>• Rewards</li> <li>• Supervisor support</li> <li>• Co-worker support</li> </ul>	job embeddedness fully mediates the effects of high-performance work practices and work social support on turnover intentions. Specifically, frontline employees with high-performance work practices and work social support are more embedded in their jobs and less likely to leave
<b>Bergiel, Nguyen, Clenney, and Taylor (2009)</b>	A questionnaire survey was given to 495 support/staff employees working for a state department of corrections in the Southeastern USA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compensation</li> <li>• Supervisor support</li> <li>• Growth opportunity</li> <li>• Training</li> </ul>	Findings – Job embeddedness fully mediated compensation and growth opportunity, partially mediated supervisor support and did not mediate training in relation to employees’ intention to quit.
<b>Allen (2006)</b>	259 employees (of a large financial services	Socialization tactics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collective-individual</li> </ul>	Proactive socialization approaches support active embedding of new employees. Results also indicate

	organization who had been employed less than 12 months at the time of the initial data collection.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formal-informal</li> <li>• Investiture-divestiture</li> <li>• Sequential-random</li> </ul>	that on-the-job embeddedness is negatively related to turnover
<b>Harris, Wheeler, and Kacmar (2011)</b>	205 employees from an automotive dealership located in the southeastern United States.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leader-member exchange</li> </ul>	Level of job embeddedness is closely aligned to positive evaluations of LMX.
<b>Murphy, Burton, Henagan and Briscoe (2013)</b>	A longitudinal study of 115 working adults	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Job insecurity</li> </ul>	Levels of job insecurity were positively mediated by the extent of job embeddedness
<b>Collins, Burrus, and Meyer (2014)</b>	Total of 339 from two samples (193 and 146) from employees in the recreational products industry.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leader-member exchange (LMX)</li> </ul>	High embeddedness improved respect for LMX but there was a gender variation with female subordinates feeling the effect more strongly
<b>Avey, Wu, and Holley (2015)</b>	603 supervisors–subordinate dyads from a large aerospace company located in the Pacific Northwestern United States.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Abusive supervision</li> </ul>	Higher levels of job embeddedness led to reduced frustration with abusive supervisors and lower intent to leave as a result
<b>Karatepe and Karadas (2014)</b>	110 full-time frontline hotels employees and their managers during the peak winter season Romania.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work overload</li> <li>• Work-family conflict</li> <li>• Family-work conflict</li> </ul>	Empowerment, rewards, and job embeddedness enhance service recovery performance, while training and empowerment increased extra-role customer service.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emotional exhaustion</li> </ul>	
<b>Tian, Cordery, and Gamble (2015)</b>	197 Chinese state-owned firm employees and their supervisors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ability-enhancing HRM</li> <li>• Opportunity-enhancing HRM</li> <li>• Motivation-enhancing HRM</li> </ul>	Results indicated that HRM practices contribute to the creation and development of embeddedness and the improvement of job performance. However, there may also be influences from locational aspects.

The above discussed the link between (HRM) practices and job embeddedness and the empirical studies that have investigated the impact of HRM practices on job embeddedness, including the key objectives of the studies, their findings and limitations. The following sections will now discuss the theoretical aspects of HRM about the current research context.

### 3.8 Theory of HRM

Human Resource Management (HRM) is defined as the organisational unit that is responsible for “designing management systems to ensure that human talent is used effectively and efficiently to accomplish organisational goals” (Mathis and Jackson, 2008, p.4). Furthermore, it is defined as “all activities associated with the management of people in firms” (Boxall and Purcell, 2008 in Marescaux, et al., 2013: p. 5). HRM in organisations is identified as a vital aspect of competing successfully in the marketplace (Judge *et al.*, 2000; Houkes *et al.*, 2001). From the perspective of organisation effectiveness and competitive advantage, HRM is also conceptualised in terms of organisational core-competencies that consist of unique people-related capabilities that create strategic value and differentiate the organisation from market rivals (Kaufman, 2015).

Furthermore, these core-competencies represent specific areas of organisational strength that can be used as a foundation for building a competitive advantage in the marketplace (Hom and Kinichi, 2001).

According to Mathis and Jackson (2008), in order to obtain optimum contribution from the collective value of the knowledge, capabilities, motivation and skills of the organisation's human resources, it is important to match how organisational members are treated to the long-term objectives of the company, including its financial performance. Furthermore, HR activities that are based on best practices and continuous improvement are identified as important components of deriving maximum value from the organisation's human capital (Darwish et al., 2013). Mathis and Jackson (2008) categorise these HRM activities as seven interlinked activities that occur in organisations including strategic human resource management (SHRM), Equal Employment Opportunity, Staffing, Talent management and development, Total Rewards, Risk Management and Workers Protection and Employee and Labour Relations.

### **3.8.1 HRM Approaches**

From a theoretical perspective, regarding how HRM practices impact organisational outcomes, the SHRM literature generally categorises HRM approaches according to two generally accepted models, soft and hard (Marescaux et al., 2013). The soft model of HRM approaches people management from the perspective that employees are valuable organisational assets, whose skills, talents, capabilities and commitment are instrumental in ensuring competitive advantage (Senior and Fleming, 2006). Furthermore, employees are considered to be adaptable, and hence can be manipulated to give commitment and high performance by implementing tactically designed motivational factors that will increase their commitment, productivity and emotional connection to the organisation (Armstrong, 2011). Hence, from this perspective, specific kinds of HRM policies and practices that align with such behavioural objectives are typically associated with the soft HRM approach such as incentive/competitive pay, training and development, employment security, internal career development, and employee empowerment (Senior and Fleming, 2006; Jenkins and Delbridge, 2013).

In contrast, the hard model of HRM approaches people management from the perspective of cost management, whereby employees are treated as any other production resources, whose output need to be maximised at the lowest possible cost (Kaufman, 2015).

Accordingly, specific kinds of HRM policies and practices are associated with the minimum cost-maximum output objectives of the hard HRM approach including temporary staffing, minimum wage, autocratic management/tight control and minimal training, performance-driven reward system (Senior and Fleming, 2006). A third SHRM approach involves a combination strategy, whereby elements of both hard and soft HRM practices are blended to achieve strategic objectives ((Hom and Kinichi, 2001). Hence, for any organisation, there are some approaches that can be adopted in terms of managing and delivering human resource management. Furthermore, there is a continuum of approaches ranging from the pure resource perspective of Hard HRM to the human/behavioural perspective of Soft HRM, which recognises the individual value and input of all employees and how they contribute to the organisation's goals (Marchington, 2015).

### **3.8.1.1 Continuum of HRM Approaches**

At one end of this continuum of approaches is the view that employees are just another resource for the organisation, which means the primary focus is on identifying how much labour the firm needs, how to get it for the best possible cost and how to manage and control human resources as a cost centre (Veloso et al., 2015). The difficulty with this approach is that firms that focus on employees as a resource to be controlled are frequently characterised by high turnover, lack of loyalty and high levels of job insecurity (Edgar and Geare, 2005). Furthermore, there is a low level of employee empowerment, reduced focus on incentives, increased focus on cost and ineffective communication and socialisation amongst employees (Michael, 2017).

This type of approach is common in strongly hierarchical firms or seasonal industries with a tendency to adopt a judgemental approach to appraisals, rather than viewing the process as a developmental opportunity for staff, which can have a consequent negative impact on embeddedness and turnover (Ferreira et al., 2017). The construction industry is characterised by contract work, and seasonal employees, and hence it is anticipated that there will be a high presence of the hard HRM approach.

In contrast, the other end of the continuum is characterised by varying levels of HRM approaches that are focused on treating employees as valuable organisational resources and which recognise the contribution of the workforce to competitive advantage (Cook et al., 2016).

As a result of this recognition, employees' needs are considered, and they are treated as valuable individuals and as significant contributors to organisational performance and competitive advantage.

Furthermore, it is argued that with such HRM approach that employee-oriented, rather than that is solely business driven, it is possible to design roles, rewards and motivational drivers (Jenkins and Delbridge, 2013) that can lead to positive intent to remain, engagement with the organisation and consequently increased productivity (Mathis and Jackson, 2010). The net outcome of this approach is a more strategic long-term focus on workforce planning, which provides an argument for how HRM practices can be potentially be used to facilitate employee retention and minimise intent to leave. The adoption of collaborative communication, encouragement of employee voice and participation combined with a competitive approach to wages, and performance related incentives (Marescaux et al., 2013) are also likely to have an impact on the overall culture and social connections that develop within an organisation.

Karatepe (2014), Saks (2007) and Allen and Shanock (2013) also validate this view by suggesting that high social connections within a firm, led by HRM practices, encourages job embeddedness and reduces turnover. In the construction industry, this could translate into improved attendance and quality of work and positive health and safety records (Wilkinson et al., 2012; Ness and Green, 2013). Given the collaborative, inclusive style of this HRM approaches, firms that adopt this route are less hierarchical and more likely to engage in greater levels of training and development.

### **3.8.1.2 Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM)**

This aspect of HRM is related to the formulation, tactical integration and implementation of HR practices plans and policies that are specifically designed to support the organisation's effectiveness and performance about its business strategy (Armstrong, 2011; Nataraja and Alamri, 2016). Furthermore, according to Jackson (2013), the main objective of SHRM is that of influencing employee attitude and behaviour by designing HRM systems that motivate and sustain the specific employee behaviours that are required for the successful implementation of the organisation's chosen strategy. The SHRM concept is a multidisciplinary construct originating from the field of strategic management that was derived from the theory of the resource-based view (Kaufman, 2015).



The resource-based view adopts an inside-out perspective of strategy that positions firm internal resources as the major source of organisational success and competitive advantage (Griffeth and Hom, 2001). This concept was extended by Goffin and Gellatly (2001) and Wright, Dunford and Snell (2001), who further developed the theory from the perspective of the HRM field, to justify the strategic value of HRM in organisations. Hence, positioning the human element as the source of sustainable competitive advantage when utilised along the resource utilisation dimensions that are valuable, rare, inimitable and non-substitutable (Griffeth *et al.*, 2000). From this perspective, SHRM as a resource-based view concept positions SHRM as a unique configuration of HRM strategies that are aimed at generating strategic firm outcomes such as employee motivation, higher productivity, innovation and superior firm performance and market advantage (Griffeth *et al.*, 2000; Delery and Shaw, 2001).

However, the resource-based view provides a theoretical framework for explaining the strategic value of the HRM function, it is criticised for lack of theoretical rigour, its failure to acknowledge the effect of external environmental factors on firm performance and its inability to explain the specific conditions under which specific firm resources can be utilised to generate competitive advantage (Bowen and Ostroff, 2004). Hence, from this perspective, further theories are required to complement the resource-based view's justification of the relationship between SHRM and organisational performance and these will be discussed below in terms of some selected normative SHRM theories.

### **3.8.1.3 Normative SHRM Theories**

In addition to the resource-based view perspective, three others widely accepted normative theories that provide theoretical frameworks for understanding the strategic value of HRM practices are the universalist, contingency and configuration HRM theories, which explain how the HRM function contributes strategically to organisational performance (Griffeth *et al.*, 2000). These theories are based on the fundamental assumption that the HRM strategy of firms will differ according to their specific business strategy and hence competitive advantage can be created through appropriate alignment of HRM practices to the chosen business strategy (Eisenberger *et al.*, 2001).

#### **3.8.1.4 The Universalist/Best Practice HRM Theory**

The universalist HRM theory is based on the fundamental assumption of the efficacy of best practices, whereby there is an ideal set of HRM best practices that will deliver superior organisational performance when implemented, regardless of the organisational type or context (Collings et al., 2018; Ashton, 2017). In this respect, Pfeffer (1994) identified 16 HRM practices including employment security, incentive pay, selective recruitment, employee participation, internal promotion, information sharing, high wages and training and development, which if consistently implemented will lead to higher performance in all organisations. Furthermore, the concept of high-performance work systems has been derived from the best practice approach, whereby certain configuration or bundling of several HRM practices are implemented to induce and maintain high commitment/high involvement employee behaviours (Guest et al., 2003). For example, the study by Guest et al. (2003) showed a correlation between low employee turnover, higher yield per employee and the implementation of an HR system comprising of HPWPs HRM practices.

Similarly, Deci and Ryan (2000) identified a significant correlation between HRM practices relating to “employee motivation” and “employee skills and organisational structures” and organisational productivity, employee turnover and firm financial performance. Hence, from this perspective, the universalist approach advocates that coherent link can be established between HRM and organisational performance by implementing bundles of HRM practices that reinforce one another to produce the desired organisational outcomes (Guchait and Cho, 2010). Furthermore, the primary aim of the best practice approach is achieved an internal/horizontal fit, whereby HRM policies, strategies and practices are aligned to implement strategic decisions that have long term behavioural and performance implications for the organisation (Deci and Ryan (2000). Hence, from this perspective, rather designing HR activities as separate events, all components of the company’s HR system should be inter-linked or bundled up to be strategically fit and mutually reinforcing in terms of motivating and sustaining employee motivation, commitment and performance (Armstrong, 2011).

However, the weakness of the best practice approach is its simplistic assumption that there is a set of universal practices that will produce superior firm performance in all types of organisations and it fails to consider the moderating effect that organisational context can have on performance. For example, HRM practices that generated superior performance in one organisation may fail in another company due to contextual differences such as culture, business strategy, competency requirements and working practices that cause incompatibility between such HRM practices and parts of the organisation (Johnson et al., 2008; Armstrong and Taylor, 2014).

This limitation is of particular importance in relation to the current research context, in which the business environment and practices are strongly influenced by cultural and religious context, whereas, the HRM best practices have been derived based on the Western values and culture (Reiche et al., 2018). Hence, in this respect, the best practice approach is considered to be potentially limited in its ability to match the performance requirements of specific organisational contexts (Collings et al., 2018).

As substantiated by the universalist or best practice approach to HRM theory, specific workforce management practices demonstrate better results than others. This is explained by their ability to lead to higher profitability and productivity in organisations, which has become evident due to experience (Reiche et al., 2018). In an organisational context, these management practices are referred to as ‘best practices’ (Collings et al., 2018). Even though the effect of best practices has not been empirically tested for all industries and sectors, these practices are generalised and broadly recommended, as they are said to lead to a lasting competitive advantage. The relevance of the universalist or best practice approach is supported by the fact that there is a cause-and-effect relationship between best practices implementation and improved organisational performance (Tonitto et al., 2018; Gálvez-Martos et al., 2018). These specific examples tested the applicability of workforce management practices to the agricultural and construction sectors. Nevertheless, the universality of these findings should be checked in each particular context and at regular intervals. It may be time- and resource-consuming for smaller organisations to experiment with new best practices, and the best choice for small and medium-sized organisations (SMEs) may be to adopt trustworthy and universal best practices without massive pilot tests. Simultaneously, large organisations may afford introducing expensive systems and routines that will further convert into best practices (De Zubieta et al., 2017; Patel et al., 2018).

The construction industry in Saudi Arabia, which is the focus of this study, is predominantly presented by private organisations that tend to be more flexible and innovative in terms of adopting new best practices. At the same time, previous experience in managing national and non-national labour force is still of high value (Blaisi, 2019; Alsuliman, 2019).

### **3.8.1.5 Contingency/Best Fit HRM Theory**

In contrast to the universalist approach, the contingency or best-fit approach advocates that there is no universal method of HRM that is best for all organisations. The best-fit approach argues that the HRM strategy should be determined by the strategic priorities of the organisation. Hence, from this perspective, the primary objective of the best-fit approach is that of external/vertical fit based on the notion that the SHRM-Performance link can only be validated when HRM practices are tightly matched to the business strategy (McCarthy *et al.*, 2007). Furthermore, the external fit is defined in terms of HRM policies and practices that match the internal management of employees to external market demands and the company's business strategy (Wright *et al.*, 2005). It is also argued that the set of HRM practices that are implemented by a company should be determined by its competitive market strategy (Gagné and Deci, 2005). This is further explained using Porter's (1985) generic business strategies of cost leadership, differentiation and focus, whereby it is argued that the HRM strategy should be aligned with the requirements of the specific generic strategy that is chosen by implementing compatible HRM practices that will enhance competitive advantage and other relevant firm outcomes in the chosen strategy. Hence, from this perspective, a company that is pursuing a differentiation strategy will require a different combination of HRM practices than one that is pursuing a cost leadership strategy (Gagné and Deci, 2005). Whereas, HRM practices such as competitive pay, employee empowerment and autonomy and employment security, which support innovation and high employee involvement, will be required to support the company pursuing the differentiation strategy.

In contrast, HRM practices that support low-cost cultures such as minimum wage, temporary staffing, minimal training and autocratic management, will be required to support the objective of maximising employee productivity and organisational performance at minimal costs (Senior and Fleming, 2006).

However, limitations are identified with the best-fit approach of emphasising specific organisational objectives such as cost or quality as the primary determinant of HR strategy as it fails to take account of the non-linear, complex relationship between people management and such variables and the consequent outcomes (Purcell, 2001).

Furthermore, due to the best-fit approach emphasis on external fit, there is the risk of overlooking the employee needs. For example, in intensely competitive market environments, which can result in heavily skewing HR policies and practices to match external market performance to the detriment of employee welfare. Also, from the perspective of resource-based view, due to the lack of internal focus, the best fit approach can also fail to recognise internal organisation contexts, which can also result in failure to benefit from the full range of unique internal resources and capabilities that can provide the firm with competitive advantage (Legge, 2005).

The usefulness of the contingency theory for this research is due to the fact that it focuses on the link between Strategic Management and Human Resource Management, analysing the vertical integration between the business strategy of an organisation and its human resources management policies and practices. Therefore, this vertical integration between the business strategy on the one hand and individual and group behaviour on the other plays a central role, since it can explain the performance of both employees and their organisations. Therefore, this theory can explain that the performance of the organisation depends on individual behaviour and how human resource management practices and policies are mechanisms capable of influencing these behaviours, to make them as coherent as possible with the company's objectives.

### **3.8.1.6 Configuration HRM Approach**

Given the limitations that have been identified with the best practices and best fit HRM approaches, the configuration approach was developed to integrate the two concepts to achieve both internal and external fit. Furthermore, the configuration theory was based on the assumption that there are combinations of HRM practices that can be effectively configured to deliver superior market performance and at the same time achieve alignment with both internal and external organisational contexts (Boxall and Purcell, 2015).

In this respect, the relationship is established between HR Systems and organizational strategy theories such as Miles and Snow (1984) strategy framework, which categorizes business strategies into four typologies – “Prospector”, “Defender” “Analyzer” and “Reactor”. Based on these typologies, corresponding HRM practices can be configured in terms of employment systems that are either “internal system” or market-type system” and which comprises of 7 employment practices according to the requirements of the chosen strategy typology (Deci and Ryan, 2000). In terms of the market-type system, the employment system is similar to the performance-driven philosophy of the contingency/best-fit approach, whereby positions are filled through hiring of external candidates, training is minimal, there is low employment security, employees have little or no voice, performance appraisal is based on results measures rather than on developmental measures and compensation is based on output measures and individual performance (Deci and Ryan, 2000). On the other hand, in the internal system, the employment system is similar to the people-oriented values of the universal/best practice approach, whereby positions are filled through an internal labour system/internal promotion, employees are treated as valuable resources and are given voice to participate, performance appraisal is developmental and there are extensive training and socialization and employment security (Deci and Ryan, 2000;See Table 3. 2).

Table 3. 2: Delery and Doty Configuration HRM Employment Systems Delery and Doty, 1996, p. 809)

<b>Characteristics of Employment Systems</b>		
<b>HR Practices</b>	<b>Market-Type System</b>	<b>Internal System</b>
Internal career opportunities	Hiring almost exclusively from outside the organization Very little use of internal career ladders	Hiring mainly from within the organization Extensive use of well-defined career ladders
Training	No formal training provided Little if any socialization taking place within the organization	Extensive formal training provided Great amount of socialization within the organization
Results-oriented appraisals	Performance measured by quantifiable output or results-oriented measures Feedback in the form of numbers and evaluative	Performance measured by behavior-oriented measures Feedback more for developmental purposes
Profit sharing	Profit sharing used extensively	Few incentive systems used Very little use of profit sharing
Employment security	Very little employment security given	Great deal of employment security among those who make it through the initial trial period Extensive benefits to those "outplaced" Formal dismissal policies
Participation	Employees given little voice in the organization	Employees likely have access to grievance systems Employees more likely to participate in decision making
Job descriptions	Jobs are not clearly defined Job definitions are loose	Jobs very tightly defined

Furthermore, the configuration approach operates on the notion that in order to facilitate superior firm performance, a firm's employment system must be configured to provide maximum support for performance in the job areas that are critical to its performance/competitiveness. Hence, based on Gagné and Deci (2005) strategy typology, when pursuing the Prospector strategy, which is essentially a growth strategy, it is very important to hire managers that will challenge the status quo and who can adopt a firm strategy to the market conditions. Hence, market-type employment system will be a more appropriate hiring strategy than trying to fill the position through internal candidates who may not possess the speed and market acuity that are required due to the inertia of being in the system too long (Gagné and Deci, 2005). From this perspective, the configuration approach also carries important strategic implications for HRM in terms of the being able to analyse and implement the different behavioural characteristics that will be required in the different business areas of the firm.

Furthermore, weaknesses are also identified with the configuration approach in terms of its assumption that it is possible to pursue both internal and external fit simultaneously. It is argued that such objective is impractical, as the ability to achieve internal fit will always be limited due to the pressures from external market demands that skew the configuration of HRM practices (Legge, 2005). Hence, there are continuing challenges identified with determining the optimum approach to incorporating internal factors in a way that will also ensure alignment of HRM practices with external market demands. In respect to Boxall and Purcell (2015) suggestion that both approaches have validity and should be incorporated into the HRM structure of a firm, basic principles of training and development, employee participation and high reward practices are considered to be universally effective. However, the challenge with this view as expressed by Boselie (2017) is that the actual implementation and management of these practices will be influenced by organisational contexts. Hence, when applying this approach in practice, the internal context may lead to restrictions on how HRM practices are implemented. For example, in the construction industry, teamwork may be difficult when contracted labour or specialists can only be used for one particular aspect of a project. However, this does not mean that elements of the team working practice or development cannot still be applied (Banks et al., 2015).

Furthermore, consideration also needs to be given to variation in external factors such as union influence, regulations on health and safety and other factors, which will also influence the way, that HRM practices are implemented within the industry.

Furthermore, the implication of assessing the best fit vs best practice HRM approaches in the context of the current study is that both may be relevant in terms of job embeddedness and intent to remain, due to influences from internal and external factors. In this regard, Wood (1999) suggests that there are four different types of “fit”: internal, organisational, strategic and environmental. Additionally, Afsar and Badir (2017) and Mostafa and Gould-Williams (2014) express the view that the level of compatibility between employees and employers in terms of values, beliefs and understanding of what is required is crucial to managing turnover. The challenge with this, however, is that HR approaches are not the only factors that can influence how well an employee or group of employees fit with an organisation.



There are also other factors such as influence from supervisors and work colleagues and one of the consequent implication of this, is that if new employees do not feel that they fit, and there are no processes in place to encourage assimilation with existing teams, turnover may increase (Karatepe, 2014; Hernandez et al., 2014; Lam and Chen 2012). In a similar vein, Khilji and Wang (2006) and Piening *et al.* (2014) highlight the additional role of HRM in ensuring that interpretation of policies by supervisors is accurate. In effect, the policy is the intended aim, but practice is the functional implementation of these policies, which may deviate from the planned aims of a particular policy (Piening, 2014). The significance of such variation is that it may lead to a lack of the required socialisation for new entrants, reduced the potential for job embeddedness and increased turnover (Sekiguchi *et al.*, 2008; Holtom *et al.*, 2013). Hence, this aspect of the HRM approach will also be considered in relation to job embeddedness in the current thesis since the management of human resources capable of supporting the performance of the organisation must not only adapt to the context by guaranteeing a vertical fit, but must also maintain internal consistency or horizontal fit. In fact, to support the defence strategy, the management of human resources must recognise the value of employees who possess specific knowledge and skills (related to the company and its products). These specific skills must be developed through training programs, which need to be clearly linked to career paths and evaluation systems that favour employee growth rather than short-term results. The human resources management system must therefore support the creation of an environment with low turnover, to reduce the costs related to the training and development of new employees. To this end, it is essential that employees are listened to and given the security of a stable employment relationship. In addition, the usefulness of this theory for this study is shown by the fact of how different configurations of multiple independent variables (in this case: use of buffers, work systems and human resource management policies) are related to some dependent variables (in this case: productivity and quality of the outputs), rather than on how single independent variables relate to dependent variables. The attention, therefore, shifts from a particular vision to a system of human resources management, seen from the perspective of internal consistency and integration with the other company functions.

### **3.8.1.7 SHRM - Organisational Performance Link**

From the perspective of organisational performance, varying arguments are presented in the SHRM and strategic management literature regarding the nature of the relationship between HRM practices and performance (Kaufman, 2015).

Whereas one stream of research argues that there is a direct relationship between SHRM and organisational performance, the other stream argues that the relationship is an indirect one (Darwish et al., 2013). Scholars that support the notion of a direct link between SHRM and organisational performance argue that consistent application of established HRM practices that are classified as best practices will result in higher productivity, profitability and competitive advantage (Darwish et al., 2013). Examples of such HRM best practices, which consist of high performance work characteristics include “selective hiring”, “employment security”, “extensive training”, “comparatively high compensation contingent on organizational performance”, “self-managed teams and decentralised decision-making”, “reduced status distinctions and barriers”, and “extensive sharing of financial and performance information” (Pfeffer, 1998).

Furthermore, within this research stream, there are also conflicting views regarding whether individual HRM practices can impact organisational performance in isolation, or whether organisational performance is enhanced by the reinforcing effect of a bundle of HR practices that operate in synergy to produce benefits that are greater than the sum of its parts. Hence, from this perspective, it is argued that individual HRM practices can only have a limited impact on performance/competitive advantage (Delery and Gupta, 2016). For example, though beneficial, selective hiring of high-quality employees will not yield many benefits without appropriate training and development, and highly trained employees will not yield many benefits without the autonomy to make decisions and take action. However, integrating these three practices will result in higher output and performance (Darwish et al., 2013). While there is general agreement that HRM best practices can universally lead to better performance, regardless of the organisation, there is a lack of consensus regarding what these best practices should be, the number of practices that will lead to higher performance and how they should be measured (Darwish et al., 2015). However, from a strategic perspective, it is commonly agreed that in practice, HR practices tend to be configured incoherent bundles that align towards either a soft or hard HRM approach (Darwish et al., 2015). The second research stream regarding the SHRM-performance link debate argues that HRM practices have no direct bearing on organisational performance and that at best, HRM practices can only impact mediator variables such as commitment, job satisfaction and turnover, which in turn affects organisational performance (Monk et al., 2013; Marescaux and Winne, 2013).

Furthermore, a key rationale in support of the indirect relationship argument is that the direct impact of HRM practices is on behavioural outcomes, which can eventually result in higher employee retention or low turnover and which in turn has the potential to significantly increase financial performance and other productive organisational outcomes (Darwish et al., 2013). The importance of examining strategic HRM and the associated HR practices in the context of the current thesis is justified by the fact that as strategic contributor to organisational success and financial performance, the HRM role is responsible for devising effective employee retention strategies and hence are in control of managing employee turnover and the real cost of the organisation's human capital (Dormann and Zapf, 2001). Furthermore, successful management of turnover can save the organisation a substantial amount of money, which contributes to its bottom-line and financial performance (Dormann and Zapf, 2001).

### **3.9 HRM Practices**

HRM practices are defined as consisting of a set of people management policies and activities that are used for attracting, developing, motivating and retaining employees for organisational growth and survival (Gagné and Deci, 2005). HRM practices are also conceptualised as a set of internally consistent policies and practices that align organisational human capital with the achievement of business objectives (Tan and Nasurdin, 2011). Based on the previous studies that have investigated the relationship between HRM practices, turnover and employee retention (Ramsay, Scholarios and Harley, 2000; Macky and Boxall, 2007), the following six antecedent HRM practices have been selected for this study: (i) employee selection, (ii) extensive training, (iii) compensation, (iv) employee participation, (v) employment security and (iv) supervisor support. The main reason lies in the fact that the previous academic research (Pare and Tremblay, 2007; Haines et al., 2010; Kwon et al., 2010; Bambacas and Kulik, 2013; Juhdi et al., 2013; Bhatnagar, 2014) stated that these HRM practices positively correlate to employees' performances and retention. At the same time, none of the mentioned researchers used an identical set of HRM practices. For example, Bambacas and Kulik (2013) prioritised the role of reward-based practices, while Karatepe (2013) highlighted the effects of performance-related practices.

The current research has proposed this joint classification of the antecedent variables because it combines work organisational factors (i.e. selective staffing, extensive training, and employee compensation) and environmental factors (i.e. employee participation, job security, and supervisor support). This set of HRM practices can be used as a powerful tool not only for enhancing employee performance, but also for better socialisation and adaptation of construction employees (Sekiguchi et al., 2008; Holtom et al., 2013).

Agarwala (2003) and Sun et al. (2007) also argued that these practices could positively affect employee retention and performance. More specifically, employee selection and compensation are considered as the major factors that can enhance retention, since they are at the foundation of the professional development of individuals who aim to have a professional career in the labour market. Also, since the Saudi construction industry is one of the most relevant contributor sectors of the national economy (Adihakary et al., 2017), it is crucial for HRM that all the issues related to these practices deserve particular attention by private and public organisations. These antecedent variables have been associated with positive employee behaviours and attitudes and have been shown to exhibit a negative relationship with employee turnover (Mitchell et al., 2001; Bergiel et al., 2009; Bambacas and Kulik, 2013). In addition, it is argued that such performance-oriented HRM practices as employee compensation and supervisor support can be used to influence strategic organisational outcomes and improve employee retention (Dormann and Zapf, 2001; Wright, Dunford and Snell, 2001; Elliot, *et al.*, 2002; Becker and Huselid, 1998; Jiang et al., 2012; Karatepe, 2013a; Kehoe and Wright, 2013) by forming congruence between organisational and employee goals and providing instrumental support that enable employees to cope with work demands, which consequently enhances organisational attachment and employee embeddedness (Alfes et al., 2013; Karatepe, 2013).

As indicated above, this study will examine the effect of the following six HRM practices on employee turnover intention through on-the-job embeddedness: employee selection, extensive training, compensation and incentives, employee participation, employment security and supervisor support. There are at least three main reasons for selecting these six antecedent HRM practices.

The first one is that these HRM practices have been identified as best practices and the most effective HRM practices for generating positive organisational outcomes regardless of the organisational or cultural context (Boselie et al., 2005; Elliot *et al.*, 2002; Budhwar and Sparrow, 2002; Pudelko and Harzing, 2007).

Secondly, from the perspective of best practice HRM, these six practices are also identified as having high potential to facilitate effective change in employee attitudes and behaviour. Thirdly, it is argued that HRM practices such as extensive training, employee participation, job security, employee selection, competitive compensation and supervisor support signal the employers' view of long-term employment relationship, which can in turn induce employees to reciprocate matching long-term employment behaviour (Samuel and Chipunza, 2009; Allen and Shanock, 2013). Furthermore, the current study will examine the extent to which on-the-job embeddedness mediates the relationship between antecedent HRM practices and turnover intention.

The context selected for this practical investigation also rationalises the choice of the six human resource practices. For example, it was mentioned before that there is no well-thought system of recruitment and selection that is promoted by the Saudisation programme in the private sector (Al-Dosary and Rahman, 2009; Fadaak and Roberts, 2018). As a result, it is challenging for private organisations in Saudi Arabia to apply standardised criteria for choosing the most suitable candidates. In addition, Saudi nationals lack essential skills and competences for the employment in the construction industry (Torrington et al., 2014). These factors emphasise the urgent need for advanced and tailored best practices aimed at selective staffing. In turn, the availability of such practices may significantly contribute to managing employee turnover in the Saudi private sector. The lack or partial lack of strategic recruitment practices may explain why national employees are inclined to switch from construction jobs to other jobs (Jadwa Investment, 2019).

The importance of training in Saudi private construction companies is substantiated by the existing skills shortages (Ramady, 2013). The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has been traditionally dependent on expatriate labour force with a sufficient level of qualification. These conditions in the labour market prevented local employees from constant development and professional growth (Azhar et al., 2016).

Hence, specialised training is what can potentially bridge the existing skills gap and increase the perceived attractiveness of construction companies as a prospective employer for Saudi nationals (SAMA, 2017/16). It would be reasonable to forecast that the voluntary turnover intentions among construction employees in Saudi Arabia will moderate in return.

The existing trend towards the localisation or Saudisation policy does not only imply increasing the share of national employees in numerous economy sectors (Alsharif, 2018), but also suggests activating employees' roles and their higher involvement in the labour relations. This perspective also explains why the employee participation variable has been selected as a potential predictor of employee commitment and on-job embeddedness. Employee voice is said to determine individual willingness to continue employer-employee relationships (Kornelakis, 2018), while incentives and monetary bonuses do not produce a visible effect on long-term employee commitment. The empirical study conducted by Kornelakis (2018) focused on HRM best practices and emphasised the necessity of employee participation for a sustainable working environment. Simultaneously, the employee compensation variable cannot be excluded from the set of the job embeddedness determinants used in the current research. Given the arguable nature of organisational reward (William et al., 2008; Malhorta et al., 2007) and its effect on employee retention, it is essential to test the applicability of this factor to the context of the Saudi construction industry.

Taking into account that the concept of 'wasta' (Ramady, 2016) is closely associated with the Saudi cultural and traditional environment, the remaining HRM variables selected for this project (i.e. employment security and supervisor support) also seem justified and rational. Top managers' and employees' characteristics of personal power and authority can be extended to a broader working environment, thus demonstrating an interesting cultural phenomenon, which can serve as a factor preventing individual turnover intentions (Ramady, 2016). The same effect cannot be observed in the case of non-nationals because 'wasta' is typical to the Middle Eastern context only (Ramady, 2016).

The research outcome that job security has a positive impact on long-term working relationships, which was obtained by Pfeffer (1994; 1998), seems outdated and should be tested in the conditions of the Saudi construction sector. Similarly, the assumption that supervisor support and turnover are negatively correlated (Mobley et al., 1979) should be subjected to a practical test, which makes the perceived supervisor support variable suitable for the current study.

### **3.9.1 Perceived HRM Practices**

In the context of the organisational embeddedness - turnover intentions link, it is argued that in order for HRM practices to achieve the desired impact of shaping employee attitude and behaviour in the desired direction, the psychological process through which HRM practices achieve such impact must also be considered (Mitchell et al., 2001; Zhang and Agarwal, 2009; Sun et al., 2012). The literature review showed that even though there is evidence of significant differences between intended, implemented and perceived HRM practices; only a few studies have investigated measures of perceived HRM practices from the perspective of the employee (Conway and Monks, 2008; Gratton and Truss, 2003; Snape and Redman, 2010). However, previous studies have identified employee perception to be an important factor in the effectiveness of HRM practices in achieving organisation objectives (Deci *et al.*, 2001). It is also argued that HRM systems should ideally reflect the organisational strategy and context and should accurately communicate information about this context too (potential) employees. Additionally, the experiences of individual employees are shaped by HRM practices according to personal interpretations and social constructions (Deci *et al.*, 2001).

Furthermore, as noted by Wright and Nishii (2007), it is how employees experience and interpret the HRM practices, rather than HR practices as intended in policy documents, that affects and determines employees' perception of their relationship with the organisation. Hence, the employee's perception of HRM practices may affect job embeddedness and outcomes. Relatedly, it is also suggested that differences exist in the attitudes that result from employee perception of the HRM practices. Hence, it is important to give attention to how employees perceive HRM systems and practices (Yamamoto 2008, p. 187).

Furthermore, previous studies have identified the perception of HRM practices as a factor that affects employee retention (Batt and Valcour 2003). However, only a few studies such as Yamamoto (2009) and SamGnanakkan (2010), have investigated the impact of perceived HRM practices on retention. Accordingly, based on the above-outlined reasons, the current study will examine the antecedent HRM practices from the perspective of employee perception. Robbins and Judge (2014) define employee perception as the process by which employees organise and interpret their impressions to identify with or gain meaning of their environment. Furthermore, though such employee perception of the HRM practices may be different from the actual reality, it provides important insights into how employees view their relationship with the organisation (Robbins and Judge, 2014). Hence, from this perspective, such feedback can be used to examine or understand specific employee behaviour, which in the context of the current research relates to employee turnover behaviour.

### **3.9.1.1 Perceived Employees Selection**

The topic of employee selection comes under the staffing and recruitment function of HRM (Fried and Gates, 2008; Mathis and Jackson, 2008). Staffing in the context of this research refers to the hiring of full, part-time and contract-based employees, as well as the management of employee contracts, and potential dealings with sub-contractors and similar, which are very common in the construction industry (Torrington et al., 2014). As a HR function, staffing is a HRM activity that involves both strategic and operational aspects in terms of HR planning, which includes the process of analysing and identifying HR needs and availability to ensure that the organisation has the required HR capability to meet its objectives in the right quantity and at the right place and time (Mathis and Jackson, 2008). The staffing construct is differentiated from recruitment, which is a specialist area of staffing management. Specific activities and functions related to staffing typically include the identification and fulfilment of talent requirements. While this function may be predominantly focused on recruitment; it can also incorporate identification of training needs to fill a gap in skills, particularly when HR is operating with a strategic approach (Torrington et al., 2014). As a subset of the recruitment process, employee selection is differentiated from the recruitment function.



While recruitment is defined as encompassing the entire process of attracting suitable candidates to apply for a job opening, from which the most suitable candidate may then be selected, employee selection is defined as concerning choosing of the most suitable person for the job opening (Macbeath et al., 2006 in Hussain and Rehman, 2013). Furthermore, Juhdi et al. (2013) define employee selection as the process of attracting, identifying and hiring suitable candidates whose skills, attitude and behaviour fit with the requirements of the job and the organisation that they are being hired for. In the context of the current study, the focus is on employee selection, and Juhdi et al. (2013) definition of employee selection is adopted for the purpose of the current study. Employee selection is important for the study context as the literature identified that careful employee selection has a significant positive correlation with employee loyalty and retention (Fried and Gates, 2008; Hussain and Rehman, 2013). Organisations use employee selection as a selective staffing strategy to improve the quality of new hires. Furthermore, through this procedure, sophisticated selection methods are used to screen and shortlist the best candidates for the job (Deci *et al.*, 2001). Hence, through employee selection, organisations can identify and match the right candidate to specific positions and job requirements (Chiang et al., 2011). Furthermore, based on this approach of matching the right person to the right job/position, it is expected that employees will experience a greater sense of purpose and accomplishment rather than if they were wrongly matched to jobs that they are not suited to (Bentein *et al.*, 2002). Furthermore, employees that are rightly matched are more likely to be competent and feel a sense of belonging in the job role, which in turn will result in lower turnover intentions (Bentein *et al.*, 2002; Chiang et al., 2011). As a key aspect of the recruitment function, employee selection relates to the HR activities that are involved in attracting and creating a pool of job applicants that are potentially suited to the job requirements and from which the most appropriate person for the job will be chosen through a selection process that eliminates all unsuitable candidates (Mathis and Jackson, 2008). Hence, the objective of employee selection is to hire the best available employees to meet the organisation's goals. It is also suggested that as a recruitment practice, employee selection can also have a subsequent impact on employee job embeddedness and ultimately turnover (Holtom and O'Neill, 2004).

For example, it is argued that robust recruitment practices that require the job candidates to undergo a competitive selection process can cause successful applicants to have a long-term attitude towards the organisation because of the hurdles they had to surmount and the amount of effort that they have invested into getting the job (Mathis et al., 2016). Furthermore, the recruitment process can be deliberately designed to select the right candidates that fit the job, hence reducing the likelihood of employee turnover arising from job mismatch (Mathis and Jackson 2008). Hence, in the construction industry, employee selection is affected by the Nitaqat quota and its stipulations (Ramady, 2013). However, it is argued in the SHRM literature review that there is a positive correlation between strict/highly selective recruitment processes and employee retention (Mathis et al., 2016). Hence, it is also important to examine the effect of perceived employee selection in this context.

### **3.9.1.2 Perceived Extensive Training**

Armstrong and Taylor (2014, p.284) defines training as “the systematic application of formal processes to impart knowledge and help people to acquire the skills necessary for them to perform their jobs satisfactorily.” Furthermore, the author highlights that training is aimed at providing specific and identifiable skills and knowledge that are required in current jobs. Different types of training are also identified for the achievement of different organisational objectives. Mathis and Jackson (2008) identify these to include: regular and mandatory training such as induction that is required for all new hires and health and safety and equal employment training which are legally required; technical/job related training which encompasses training than enhance specific job skills and competence in relation to technical process, customer relationship management and product knowledge; problem solving and interpersonal training, which enhances working relationships and equips employees with supervisory/managerial skills and ability to deal with operational and interpersonal problems and career training and development, which encompasses training with longer-term objectives of developing individual and organisational competence in areas such as leadership, business practices, executive development and organisational change. Huselid (1995) also distinguishes between formal training (such as basic skills training, on-the-job work experience and management training) and informal training such as mentoring and coaching.

Furthermore, distinction is made between training and development, whereby training is focused on the immediate or short-term skills and capabilities that are needed for job performance, while development has a broader scope that is focused on helping employees to develop/acquire capabilities that are necessary for the future, for example as it relates to developing leadership or managerial capability (Mathis and Jackson, 2008). Employee training and development is identified in the literature as an important HR practice that influences employee behaviour. For example, Si and Li (2012) found that comprehensive training had a significant impact on employee exit. As HRM function, the objective of training and development is focused on helping the organisation develop requisite capabilities and competencies by equipping employees with the knowledge and skills that are required for the successful delivery of their job areas and the overall business strategy (Mathis and Jackson, 2008). The training function is especially important in organisations as it provides employees with the knowledge and skills that are required for them to be effective in their day-to-day job performance and can include training on hard/technical skills, soft skills and safety skills (Mathis and Jackson, 2008). For example, safety training is crucial in the construction industry where health and safety risks are of paramount importance. However, steps are being taken to ensure there is greater consideration given to these areas (Alasmari et al., 2012; Albogamy et al., 2013). Hence, based on the reasons discussed above, perceived extensive training was selected as an important HRM antecedent that will be investigated in the current research context.

### **3.9.1.3 Perceived Compensation & Incentives**

Previous research indicates that how employees are compensated, that is, how the organisation's reward system is implemented, significantly affects employees' attitudes and behaviours (Caza et al., 2015; Chiu and Tsai, 2007; Peltokorpi, 2011). In essence, the organisation's reward system serves as a tool for aligning the interests of employers and employees and in this way should reinforce the kinds of behaviours that the organisation desires (Lynn et al., 2011). Malhorta et al. (2007) define organisational rewards as the total of all the financial and non-financial employee benefits that are received during the employment relationship. From this perspective, employee compensation, which includes components of reward such as pay, cash bonuses and stock options, is defined as a subset of organisational reward (Malhorta et al., 2007; William et al., 2008).

Various types of employee compensation are identified in the literature as either having a negative correlation with the turnover intention or positive correlation with employee retention. For example, Williams et al. (2008) found that how pay rises were determined and implemented affected employee perception of organisational support, whereby perceived organisational support was positively correlated with satisfaction with pay procedure and lower turnover intentions.

Similarly, the study by Dunford et al. (2008) showed a negative correlation between stock options and executive turnover and positive correlation was identified between retirement benefits and employee retention (Zopiatis and Constanti 2010). Using expectancy theory, Lin et al. (2011) hypothesised that the kind of reward plan used could affect labour turnover, as some compensation plans would increase employees' perceived value of working for the organisation. Allowing employees to choose in terms of their compensation, for example, may increase perceptions of fairness (Caza et al., 2015) and in turn may increase the likelihood of employees staying with their existing employer (Lin et al., 2011). However, contrary to the relationship they hypothesised, empirical research by Si and Li (2012) found that equitable compensation was not significantly related to employee exit. However, from the perspective of HPWPs HRM, it is also extensively argued in the SHRM literature that a key objective of compensation and benefits is to increase employee motivation and loyalty (Holtom et al., 2008).

Furthermore, several empirical and meta-studies have shown a negative correlation between pay satisfaction or high relative pay and employee turnover (Hom et al., 2009). For example, studies have demonstrated a significant relationship between high salary increases and a reduction in the turnover of high performing employees (Salamin and Hom, 2005; Nyberg, 2010). Furthermore, empirical evidence has shown a lower likelihood of turnover among well paid high performing employees than with less paid lower performing employees in organisations that operate performance-based reward systems (Holtom et al., 2008). Hence, while there may be no link between equitable compensation and employee turnover, a significant correlation has been identified between the high relative salary of high performance and their likelihood to quit and between highly paid high performing employees and their turnover likelihood in organisations that use a performance-based reward system. Additionally, other studies have demonstrated a positive correlation between benefits and employee turnover (Fairris, 2004; Yamamoto, 2011).

Furthermore, higher levels of individual employee turnover have been reported in organisations that are characterised by pay dispersion or inequality, whereas lower turnover is identified with organisations with the more compressed or lesser disparity in the pay system (Holtom et al., 2008). Hence, in the context of the current research, compensation and incentives are considered to be very important antecedents in relation to turnover intentions.

#### **3.9.1.4 Perceived Employee Participation**

Various forms of employee participation are identified in the literature. For example, Ladau, (2009), Kwon et al. (2016), Bashur and Burak (2014) and Batt et al. (2002) have linked employee voice, (a form of employee participation that conceptualises the extent to which employees can voice their opinions or provide feedback to influence their welfare or decisions in the organisation) to turnover intention and employee retention. Another form of employee participation is identified as enriched job design, whereby employees are given some discretion to be involved in the design of their job in line with their qualifications, competency or motivation (Wood and Menzes, 2008; Holtbrugge et al., 2010; Wood et al., 2012). From a definitional perspective, employee participation has also been conceptualised from different dimensions, including participation as a group process that involves a group of subordinates and their supervisor/manager and participation that occurs in the form of delegation, whereby employees are entrusted with greater freedom to make decisions (Budd et al., 2010). Also, some authors conceptualise participation in the context of formal organisational frameworks such as works councils/joint consultative committee/ employees s union, involving a group of elected employee representatives that represent employees and negotiate employee relations/working conditions at the firm level (Wilkinson et al., 2009), while other authors have approached participation in the context of informal participation arrangements that arise in the day to day interactions between subordinates and supervisors, whereby subordinates are given freedom to make substantial contribution to work decisions (Rees et al., 2013). Additionally, some authors are more concerned with participation as “a result”, others are more concerned with participation as “a process” (Budd et al., 2010).

Based on the above characterisations, participation can be categorised into representative participation, upward problem solving and direct communication (Marchington and Wilkinson, 2005). Furthermore, according to Cox et al. (2010, p. 2050), employee participation is often used loosely to refer to many different types of “managerially determined and initiated practices intended variously to provide employees with information, enable a two-way exchange of views and/or opportunities to influence decision-making in the workplace.” In line with this, for the purpose of the current research, employee participation is defined as “direct and indirect interaction between managers and their teams, which involves information sharing and some degree of employee influence at the section, departmental or establishment level” (Cox et al., 2010, p. 2051). Furthermore, in the context of the current research, the focus is on both formal and informal direct or individually focussed employee participation and the extent to which employees are given participation by their supervisors through direct communication or upward problem-solving. According to the social exchange theory, the relationship between organisations and their employees is one of reciprocal benefit exchange and from this perspective, it is argued that the more organisations allow employees to participate in decision making and give them a voice, employees will reciprocate this gesture of trust and consideration with greater loyalty (Allen and Meyer, 2009; Ineson et al., 2013; Lohndorf and Diamantopoulos, 2014). Furthermore, due to being involved in decision making, employees become more invested in achieving organisational objectives, and person-organisational fit is increased due to greater compatibility/identification with organisational goals, which in turn increases organisational attachment and job embeddedness (Zopiatis and Constanti 2010; Ineson et al., 2013; Lohndorf and Diamantopoulos, 2014). Also, according to Eisenberg et al. (2004), organisations and their employees are engaged in relationship equilibrium whereby employees are more likely to be motivated to stay on with the organisation the more that they perceive that they are receiving something that they perceive to be valuable or commensurate in relation to their input into the organisation (Morgeson and Campion, 2003). Hence, based on these arguments and from the perspective of the AMO HRM theory (Bambacas and Kulik, 2013), it can be deduced that when organisations adopt HRM practices that equip employees with valuable skills and increase their capacity to contribute (Ability) reward them for higher performance (Motivation) and give them autonomy for action (opportunity to participate), extra effort will be expended by the employee.

It is also argued from the perspective of employee relations, which encompasses the management of employee rights and engagement with the firm that employee participation is a crucial tactic for inducing employee engagement and loyalty, which in turn reduces their turnover intentions (Blyton and Turnbull, 2004). This also means ensuring fair treatment of all employees and giving them a voice to raise any concerns or input to work, and that there is an ongoing dialogue, which in turn will create better on-the-job fulfilment, increase motivation and ultimately increase intent to remain (Randaree and Ghaffar Choudry, 2012).

### **3.9.1.5 Perceived Employment Security**

Joarder et al. (2011) define employment security as the degree to which an organisation provides its employees with a stable job/employment. Furthermore, Cohen (2006) defines employment security in terms of the extent to which the employees can confidently expect to remain in employment with a particular employer for an extended time period. Various definitions of perceived job security are presented in the literature (Kraimer et al., 2005), however they all share a common idea, which is that it connotes a psychological state that describes the varying expectations that employees have regarding the future continuity of their employment in their present organisation (Kraimer et al., 2005; Freund, 2005) suggest that individual differences in the perception that employees have about their employment security may be as a result of organisational practices that have shaped the on-going employee-employer relationship.

Furthermore, it is also argued that organisational practices and policies play a significant role in defining how “secure” or “not secure” employees feel about their jobs/employment (Freund, 2005). Perceived employment security is very important in the context of the current research, as previous studies have shown a negative correlation between employees’ perception of job insecurity and organisational attachment (Osterman, 2000). Furthermore, studies have shown significant implications for job embeddedness such as the study by Hussain and Rehman (2013), which examined the impact of HRM practices on stay intentions of 400 employees in the textile industry, showed that along with other HRM practices, employment security was a significant factor in employee turnover intentions. Research also shows that individuals that perceive job insecurity are more likely to engage in voluntary turnover due to the feeling of uncertainty and negative emotional and psychological states such as anxiety, depression and stress that are associated with the feeling of job insecurity (De Witte, 2005).

Interestingly, Ramady (2016) highlighted the role of 'wasta' in many societies in the Middle East, including Saudi Arabia. The researcher gathered primary quantitative data to observe how 'wasta' determined workplace perceptions of Saudi employees. It was concluded that the perceived 'wasta' of an organisational leader extends to the overall workplace security perceptions. In other words, powerful managers are able to guarantee a safe working environment and protect the personnel's rights (Ramady, 2016). On the other hand, female employees have been traditionally assigned a 'weak wasta' in the Saudi society. Therefore, the recruitment and selection processes in Saudi organisations are also determined by 'wasta', and women are still perceived as inferior employees (Ramady, 2016). The findings of Ramady (2016) demonstrate that researchers should take into account broader cultural factors and traditions going far beyond Hofstede's (2002) cultural dimensions (Baskerville, 2003; 2005)

#### **3.9.1.6 Perceived Supervisor Support**

Perceived Supervisor Support is defined as a degree to which employees believe that their supervisor values their efforts, provides assistance, and cares about their welfare (Eisenberger et al., 2002; Cole, Bruch and Vogel, 2006). Perceived supervisor support is also defined in the literature in terms of supervisors that employees perceive as being supportive based on their embodiment of certain qualities or behaviour that demonstrates consideration for employee welfare (Alfes et al., 2013). For example, supervisors that will go the extra mile to change work schedules in order to accommodate the needs of employees, a supervisor that listens or a supervisor that is mindful of taking account of the family responsibilities of employees when allocating duties and tasks (Meyer *et al.*, 2001; Freund, 2005). Furthermore, it is argued that employee turnover intention and actual turnover are connected to the degree of supervisor support and that even where there are other organisational variables that can cause employee turnover intentions, supervisor support plays a significant role in determining whether that turns to actual turnover (Bergiel et al., 2009).

Furthermore, it is also argued that the impact of perceived supervisor support on employee turnover is mediated by the employee favourable opinion of their supervisors (Eisenberger et al., 2002).



Another dimension to the supervisor - turnover intention link is identified by Bambacas and Kulik (2013) based on the reinforcing attributes of organisational reward mechanisms such as pay and internal advancement opportunities. According to the authors, organisational reward mechanisms have the potential to reinforce links between employees and their supervisors by facilitating mutual dependence, whereby, supervisors administer reward systems and create opportunities for employees to earn those rewards. Hence, the key role of supervisors as a key reward agent, causes employees to feel positive connections with their supervisors, which in turn can reduce the likelihood of turnover intentions. Hence, there will be a need for training and on-going support from the perspective of cultural re-orientation, performance management and general workplace effectiveness. More so, given the project-based environment of the construction sector that requires discipline, keeping to deadlines and working with people from different backgrounds.

### **3.9.2 The Rationale for Focusing on the Intention to Remain in the Current Research**

Given that the job embeddedness model is an employee retention model based on the premises that employees that are embedded will have less intention of leaving (Mitchell et al., 2001; Sun et al., 2012), In the context of the current research, the subject of investigating the impact of HRM practices on turnover intentions is approached from the perspective of what causes employees to stay with the organisation rather than what causes employees to leave. This in line with the principles of the job embeddedness theory, which provides a construct for understanding and enhancing employee retention from the perspective of the factors that cause employees to become embedded/stuck in their jobs (Mitchell et al., 2001; Yao et al., 2004). Furthermore, from a practical perspective by focusing on intention to remain, rather than intention to leave, the job embeddedness model can be used to identify tangible predictors that can will not only provide insights into why people stay but also into how organisations can devise strategies to create the right conditions that will increase employee embeddedness and hence increase their intention to stay, which invariably reduces turnover intention (Mitchell et al., 2001; Ramesh and Gefland, 2010).

Furthermore, it is argued that positive correlation exists between HRM practices that are perceived by employees to be fair, favourable and based on honest decisions and employee embeddedness and it is also argued that good HRM practices will enhance employee retention (Meyer *et al.*, 2001; Mitchell *et al.*, 2001; Kwenin *et al.*, 2013). However, studies have also shown a weak correlation between HRM practices and employee retention (Eisenberger *et al.*, 2001; Fairris, 2004). From this perspective, it is expected that that job embeddedness will be a mediator to strengthen the relationship between HRM practices and employee retention (Mitchell *et al.*, 2001). However, this study is conducted based on a cross-sectional timeframe, and it is not possible to measure actual retention. Hence, in the context of the current research, “intention to remain” is used as a proxy for actual retention, which also acts as a retention predictor and it is expected that job embeddedness will be a mediator variable for explaining the relationship between the antecedent HRM practices and intention to remain.

### **3.9.3 Job Embeddedness and Employee Retention**

The relationship between HRM practices and voluntary employee turnover is approached from the perspective of the theory of employee retention, also referred to as job embeddedness. As mentioned previously the core proposition of the job embeddedness theory is that employees are embedded or attached to the organisation to the extent that their job is compatible with different aspects of their lives, to the extent that they have ties to activities, other people and their surrounding environment and to the extent of the value of what they would have to forfeit if they leave the organisation (Mitchell *et al.*, 2001; Lee *et al.*, 2004; Rameshand Gelfand, 2010; Jiang *et al.*, 2012; Lee *et al.*, 2014; Kiazad *et al.*, 2015).

Hence, based on the above perspectives, the relationship between job embeddedness and employee retention is examined from the perspective of both on-the-job and off-the-job factors, which reflect the disruption, loss and personal costs in terms of the disconnection of social networks, transition adjustments and uncertainties that will be experienced by employees if they decide to leave the organisation (Holtom *et al.*, 2006).

In terms of the on-the-job influences on employee retention, factors that correspond with fit (in terms of fit between employee skills and job requirements), links (such as the social bonds with colleagues and mentoring and advice networks) and sacrifice (benefits that will be forfeited e.g. competitive compensation and elite status) dimensions of job embeddedness are identified as crucial reasons why people stay (Mitchell et al., 2001; Lee et al., 2014; Kiazad et al., 2015).

Conversely, in terms of the off-the-job influences on employee retention, it is argued that off-the-job embeddedness derived from non-work factors will tie employees to a specific location/community and make it difficult for them to leave their present employment, if it means that they would have to relocate or lose valued location/community-specific benefits (Zhang et al., 2012). These non-work factors have been identified to include fit elements that match the individual's lifestyle with the community (such as the suitability of the area for specific sport interests, membership/tolerance of specific religious or sexual orientation and cultural preferences, Halvorsen et al., 2015; Ghosh and Gurunathan, 2015), links elements that consist of important personal ties to the community (such as close proximity to family members, membership in community associations or social networks and spousal ties/connections, Mitchell et al., 2001; Kiazad et al., 2015; ) and sacrifice elements in terms of perceived costs or loss that is associated with leaving (such as loss of access to good schools in the area, health care, family benefits, safe neighbourhood or community status, Ramesh and Gelfand, 2010; Ghosh and Gurunathan, 2015; Halvorsen et al., 2015).

From the above perspectives, it is argued that individuals that have more work and non-work-related relationships, roles and responsibilities in connection to their present job/organisation would have a more complex web than those with fewer of such ties. Hence, there will be greater job embeddedness due to the greater level of disruption that will occur from breaking those ties and the multiple levels/dimensions of adjustments that will be required as a result of the lost ties and benefits (Mitchel et al. 2001; Holtom et al., 2006).

Furthermore, based on Hobfoll (1989) COR theory, it is also argued that the greater the value of what the employee will have to forfeit when they leave, the more difficult it will be for them to terminate their employment with the organisation as they will seek to protect/maintain what they value.

About off-the-job embeddedness, the literature review yielded very limited examples of how organisations can tactically increase embeddedness in this area. However, Holtom et al. (2006) have cited very useful empirical examples of organisational tactics for improving both on-the-job and off-the-job embeddedness. These include tactics for enhancing person-organisation fit such as rigorous employee selection system and career planning support; tactics for increasing links by building trust and employee integration in the social web of the organisation, such as mentoring and knowledge sharing opportunities; and tactics that increase sacrifice through ties that employees have in the local community, such as providing them with assistance to purchase a house and providing career advancement without need for relocation (Holtom et al., 2006).

### **3.10 Research Gap**

The current research aims to fill in the existing gap in analysing individual turnover intentions within a homogeneous sample of Saudi national employees working for the local construction industry. The literature review has revealed that most researchers in the field (Morgeson and Campion, 2003; Holtom *et al.*, 2008) sought to select heterogeneous samples and failed to control diversity in the demographic variables of their target population (Karatepe, 2010; Mitchell et al., 2001). As a result, the pursued analysis of individual turnover intentions turned out to be fragmented and disorganised.

Furthermore, there is a lack of empirical research focused on job embeddedness in the Saudi construction industry. Most previous studies concentrated on other predictors of turnover intentions, including leadership, job satisfaction and member exchange (Allen et al., 2003; Pare and Tremblay, 2007; Wayne et al., 2002; Eiserberger et al., 2002; Mitchell et al., 2001; Ng and Feldman, 2010), while this research focuses on best practices from the HRM context that specifically address the needs existing in the Saudi labour market (Kornelakis, 2018; Ramady, 2016), and views them as potential predictors of a sustainable working environment with moderate turnover intentions (Pare and Tremblay, 2007; Haines et al., 2010). It could be observed that there is also a lack of contemporary research of the Saudi construction industry where the number of issued labour visas has declined by the year 2018 due to the Saudisation policy (Jadwa Investment, 2019).

This research project addresses the existing gap in analysing perceived HRM practices, as only a limited number of researchers approached perceived practices instead of intended or implemented (Conway and Monks, 2008; Gratton and Truss, 2003; Snape and Redman, 2010). Indeed, the way in which HRM best practices from the construction industry are perceived by Saudi nationals matters more than plans and expectations of construction companies' management. Employee perceptions are a key to linking organisational practices and individual responses to the working environment (Burton et al., 2013).

Unfortunately, the six identified HRM practices were not classified into intended, implemented and perceived ones by the previous researchers (i.e. employee selection, extensive training, compensation, employee participation, employment security, and supervisor support) (Bambacas and Kulik, 2013; Juhdi et al., 2013; Bhatnagar, 2014). Even though these HRM practices have been conceptualised by the literature review as specific research variables, they may be missing in the context of the Saudi private construction sector. This is another gap that can be faced by the current project. Potential problems to identify and analyse these variables may stem from underdeveloped recruitment and selection practices in the Saudi private sector, as well as from the existing skills shortages among Saudi nationals (Ramady, 2013; Azhar et al., 2016). In the worst-case scenario, the project will examine how the lack of these practices has influenced individual turnover intentions and job embeddedness in the KSA.

Finally, a critical research gap can be identified in the previous attempts to assign cultural meanings to Saudi HRM issues in the private sector (Holden et al., 2015; Signorini et al., 2009; Fang and Bird, 2009). Even though this thesis has touched upon mainstream cultural paradigms (i.e. Hofstede's cultural dimensions), cultural underpinning was used only as background theory. As argued by Kirkman et al. (2006), researchers should go beyond simplified cultural explanations and see a broader context, which will be done by this study.

### **3.11 Summary**

The literature review chapter provided analyses of the turnover, retention, job embeddedness and HRM practices literature. First, the chapter introduced the concept of the turnover construct about the research context and objectives. This was followed by a discussion about the importance of the turnover construct from research and organisational perspectives. Furthermore, important traditional turnover models were discussed, including March and Simon (1958) ease of movement and desirability model; Porter and Steers (1973) met expectations model, Mobley (1977) intermediate linkage model, Price (2001) causal model, Sheridan - Abelson (1983) Cusp Catastrophe Model and Mitchell and Lee (2001) job embeddedness model. Analysis of these models showed that the traditional turnover models relied on similar lines of reasoning in the attempt to explain turnover, which did not provide sufficient explanation for the variance in actual turnover. The subsequent emergence of the job embeddedness theory provided alternative lines of research enquiry by shifting focus from turnover (why people leave) to retention (why people stay). The job embeddedness model provided a much broader and comprehensive framework for understanding turnover and employee retention, by taking into consideration on-the-job and off-the-job factors and the cost implications of the social, emotional/psychological and material aspects that affect turnover intentions and decisions. The literature review subsequently discussed the job embeddedness construct to establish its relevance in the current research context including analysis of the on-the-job and off-the-job links, fit and sacrifice dimensions. This was followed by a discussion of the Conservation of Resources Theory and Social Exchange Theory as key job embeddedness theories that provided a theoretical foundation for the current research.

Furthermore, analysis of empirical studies that investigated the relationship between HRM practices and job embeddedness was provided including studies by Bambacas and Kulik (2013), Karatepe (2013), Karatepe (2013a), Bergiel, Nguyen, Clenney and Taylor (2009), Allen (2006), Harris, Wheeler and Kacmar (2011), Ramesh and Gefland (2010), Collins, Burrus and Meyer (2014), Burton, Henagan and Briscoe (2013), Avey, Wu and Holley (2015) and Tian, Cordery and Gamble (2015). The next section of the literature review provided a theoretical discussion of the HRM function and the different HRM approaches including the soft and hard models of HRM.

Furthermore, the SHRM construct, important normative SHRM theories and the SHRM-Organisational Performance Link were discussed in relation, and their relevance in the current research context was highlighted. This was followed by identification and discussion of the six antecedent HRM variables of perceived employee selection, perceived extensive training, perceived compensation and incentives, employee participation, perceived employment security and perceived supervisor support that were utilised as independent variables in the current research. Following which the identified research gaps in the literature were then outlined.

# **Chapter Four: Research Framework and Development of Hypotheses**

## **4.1 Introduction**

In current research models (see Appendix C) are presented the conceptual research framework and reported the dependent, mediating and independent factors related to the concept of job embeddedness and employee voluntary turnover intentions. This conceptual framework is used to analyse the relations of selected HR practices concerning on-job embeddedness and outline how it can affect the employee's intention to remain. Also, it is unique to the research study, and it has been being developed according to the underlying theory of job embeddedness. In the following sections are reported and evaluated the suggested research framework and proposition. The proposed research framework, as shown in the next paragraph, has been divided into nine different constructs.

## **4.2 Relationship between the Research Variables**

### **4.2.1 Relationship between perceived employee's selection and intention to remain**

Several studies have shown a consistent correlation between person-organisational fit and the length of time that new employees stay in an organisation before leaving (Holtom and O'Neill, 2004). For example, it was discovered that new employees that were poorly selected, whose values or goals did not match those of the organisation, quitted the organisation earlier than those whose attributes fitted that of the organisation (O'Reilly et al., 1994) and Chatman (1991). Kehoe and Wright (2013) identify employee selection as an important ability in enhancing HRM practice that is required to ensure the achievement of organisational goals.

Furthermore Mathis et al. (2016) suggest that the rigorous tests that are involved in the employee selection process and the effort that the candidate has to put into getting the job will cause them to have a long-term view of the employment relationship, which is linked to intent to remain (Shaw, Gupta and Delery, 2005; Mathis et al., 2016).



Additionally, the lack of compatibility with a job is a significant predictor of turnover (Villanova et al., 1994). Relatedly, Mitchell et al (2001) also indicate that one of the important factors that persuade employees not to leave is a good fit between the employee and the job (in terms of good fit with the job characteristics, skills, competencies and abilities required for the job and between the employee and the organisation). Also, studies such as Huselid (1995), Huselid and Becker (1999), Cho, Woods, Jang and Erdem (2006) and Yalabik, Chen, Lawler and Kim (2008) have shown a strong positive correlation between rigorous or effective employee selection and employee retention. Hence, from this perspective, it is formulated that perceived employee selection will have a positive correlation with the intention to remain.

*H1: Perceived employee's selection is positively related to the intention to remain.*

#### **4.2.2 Relationship between perceived employee's selection and on-job embeddedness**

Holtom et al. (2006) identify employee selection as the initial first stage in the process of establishing person-organisation fit, which in turn enhances attachment to the organisation and Arthur et al. (2006) suggest that job embeddedness derived from person-organisation fit reduces quit intentions. The concept of job embeddedness is incorporated in this organisational notion, and it highlights that person-job fit is an important factor that influences employees to remain on the job (Lee et al., 2004). Furthermore, based on the primacy of loss principle of the COR theory (Hobfoll, 2001), individuals will be reluctant to leave the present job where they have person-job fit and feel a sense of belonging, even if there is the expectation that a new job could provide the same personal resources. This further strengthens the sacrifice element of on-the-job embeddedness, which is expected to lower withdrawal behaviour and increase intention to remain. Hence, the examination of this antecedent is considered to be important for the current study, due to the effect of Saudisation policy on how Saudi nationals are recruited and selected, as the overriding selection criteria are driven by the need to meet the mandatory Nitaqat quota rather than the goal of recruiting the best person for the job requirements or achieving person-organisation fit (Al-dosary and Rahman, 2009; Randeree, 2009; Alsheikh, 2015).

Additionally, it has been identified that there is high turnover of Saudi nationals in the private sector due to contradiction in the expectations of Saudi national employees with limited competence, who are looking for well paying, status-enhancing positions and private sector companies who are looking for hardworking, competent workers that are willing to accept minimum employment benefits (Mellahi, 2007; Al-dosary and Rahman, 2009; Moussa, 2013). Furthermore, studies show that there is a lack of competent national employees in the Saudi private sector (Azhar et al., 2016) and Saudi construction (Assaf and Al-Hejii, 2006;). Hence, from this perspective, it is formulated that perceived employee selection will have a positive correlation with on-the-job embeddedness.

*H1A: Perceived employee's selection is positively related to on-job embeddedness.*

#### **4.2.3 Relationship between perceived extensive training and intention to remain**

Training increases fit between individuals and the jobs they have been hired to perform, hence deepening the sense of attachment to the organisation from a "fit" perspective (Bergiel et al., 2009). Furthermore, training represents a valuable resource due to the intrinsic benefit that it offers in terms of the professional and personal development of the individuals. Hence, from this perspective, extensive training represents a valuable benefit that the employee will have to sacrifice if they leave the organisation (Mitchell et al., 2001), hence, it is expected to have a negative correlation with turnover intention and hence improve employee retention. Also, from the perspective of the COR theory, people seek to accumulate, protect and retain valuable resources, furthermore, (Hobfoll, 1989; Halbesleben, Neveu, Paustian-Underdahl and Westman, 2014), from this perspective, training is a valuable resource that will enhance employee career prospects and performance and potentially position them for higher positions. Hence, where there is perceived extensive training, employees are more likely to stay as they would be unwilling to risk losing the current benefit by trading the valuable resource in the present organisation for another job where it is not certain that they will benefit from the same level/quality of training (Kiazad et al., 2015).

Additionally, it is argued that when training employees form such mutual investment employment relationships for higher performance/promotion within the organisation, such HRM practices can improve employee retention (Zatzick and Iverson, 2006) due to the enhanced links, fit and sacrifice elements (Hom et al., 2009). Empirical studies such as Huselid (1995) have shown that there is a strong positive correlation between extensive training and reduction in employee's turnover.

Furthermore, through training, employees cannot only acquire new knowledge and skills but also access the opportunity for professional growth, which is negatively correlated with employee's turnover (Kim, 2015). Hence, leading to unsolicited employment offers (Mitchell et al., 2001) or active seeking of alternative employment on the part of the employee if they feel they can access better job offers externally than what their current employer can offer, which can eventually result in them leaving their current job (Benson et al., 2004; Donnelly, 2009; Kraimer et al., 2011). It is also argued that by investing in the training and development of employees, organisations are sending a signal of their intention to establish a long-term relationship with their employees, which in turn increases employee retention and lowers intention to quit (Samuel and Chipunza, 2009). However, other controversial studies have shown that extensive training could lead to employee turnover due to the enhancement of skills and competence, which make them more attractive to other employers (Haines et al., 2010). Furthermore, some other studies did not find any significant relationship between training and employee turnover (Batt, Alexander, Colvin and Keefe, 2002; Fairris, 2004). Hence, based on these inconsistent results, the current research seeks to examine the relationship between extensive training and employee turnover intention as further investigation is required to understand the relationship between employee training and intention to remain.

*H2: Perceived extensive training is positively related to the intention to remain.*

#### **4.2.4 Relationship between perceived extensive training and on-job embeddedness**

Additionally, according to Bergiel et al. (2009), investing in extensive employee training contributes favourably to the psychological contract between the organisation and its employees. Furthermore, from the perspective of the social exchange theory, investment in extensive training is classified as an inducement and investment HRM practice (Heavey et al., 2013) that can be used by organisations to shape employee behaviour by creating mutual investment employment relationship with employees whereby it is expected that deep investment in employee development/welfare will be reciprocated with higher levels of employee loyalty (Hom et al., 2009). However, Researches have shown mixed results about the relationship between training and employee embeddedness. On the one hand, studies such as Bambacas and Bordia (2009) suggest that there is a positive correlation between employee training and their embeddedness. However, on the other hand, studies have also shown a negative correlation between employee training and development and job embeddedness due to employees becoming more career mobile and attractive to other employers, the more skilled and professionally developed they become (Baruch 2001; Benson, 2006). The nature of the relationship between training and on-the-job embeddedness remains ambiguous. Hence, the current research seeks to investigate this relationship further based on the hypothesis that a positive relationship exists between perceived extensive training and on-the-job embeddedness.

***H2A: Perceived that extensive training is positively related to On-job embeddedness.***

#### **4.2.5 Relationship between perceived employees' compensation and intention to remain**

It is argued that the organisational compensation system provides an effective mechanism that can be used to align employee behaviours with organisational goals and interests. Furthermore, a well-designed compensation system will take account of the unique needs of employees and also provide a reference system that employee can use to identify areas of alignment between their goals and those of the organisation (Chiang and Birtch, 2010). Hence, from this perspective, a well-designed compensation system can facilitate the closing movement of employee values and behaviours to match organisational values and objectives. It is also argued that even though offering competitive compensation can provide short-term benefits, and employees will eventually still quit for better-paying jobs if there are no other factors to persuade them otherwise.

Furthermore, a compensations system that is perceived as valuable or highly desirable by the employee will also constitute a costly sacrifice that would have to be forfeited if the employee decides to leave (Chiang and Birtch, 2010; Kiazad et al., 2015). Empirical evidence shows that compensation is one of the major factors that is positively correlated with employee retention or intention to stay (Miller and Wheeler, 1992; Chiu, Luk and Tang, 2002; Phillips and Fox, 2003; Bergiel et al., 2009). Furthermore, dissatisfaction with compensation has also been identified as a strong factor in employee leaving the organisation (Chan and Kuok, 2011). However, whereas studies such as Ovadje (2009) and Batt et al. (2002) found strong negative correlation between compensation, turnover intention and turnover respectively, some other studies such as Griffeth et al (2000) and Allen, Bryant and Vardaman (2010) found only moderate correlation between compensation and actual turnover and others such as Khatri et al. (2001), Chew and Chan (2008) and Kim (2005) found no significant relationship between compensation and employee retention. Given these inconsistent results, further research is still required in order to increase understanding of the relationship between compensation and employee retention.

***H3:** Perceived employee compensation is positively related to the intention to remain.*

#### **4.2.6 Relationship between perceived employees' compensation and on-job embeddedness**

From the perspective of the social exchange theory, it is argued that employee perceived compensation represents employees' perception about whether they are receiving a fair or reciprocal reward for their contribution (Bhatnagar, 2014). Furthermore, according to the social exchange theory, if employees perceive the organisation as failing to provide a fair or reciprocal reward for the value they contribute to the organisation, this can result in a breach of psychological contract due to the perceived breach in the anticipated exchange relationship. This, in turn, can lead to negative or withdrawal behaviour, such as job search or employees become unwilling to fulfil their obligations to the organisation (Bhatnagar, 2014). Hence, the notion of job embeddedness is considered to play an important role in moderating employee turnover behaviour from the perspective of creating organisational attachment (Kiazad et al., 2015). Hence, it is formulated based on the sacrifice dimension of on-the-job embeddedness that perceived compensation would be positively related to on-the-job embeddedness. Furthermore, given the general importance of pay in the employment decision process of Saudi workers and higher salary structure of the public sector in comparison to the private sector, examining the impact of perceived employee compensation is important for the research context.

*H3A: Perceived compensation is positively related to On-job embeddedness.*

#### **4.2.7 Relationship between perceived employees' participation and intention to remain**

Various studies have reported a positive correlation between employee participation/engagement and increased organisational attachment, whereby there is lower intention to leave (Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004; Rothmann and Jordaan, 2006; Bakker, Schaufeli, Leiter and Taris, 2008). Furthermore, due to the greater level of responsibility and enhanced know-how that is associated with high employee involvement practices, employees are more likely to stay with the organisation because they are empowered and allowed to attain their career aspirations within the organisation (Kraimer et al., 2011).

Price (1997) defines employee participation as the autonomy for employees to design and have some degree of control over their work schedule, procedures and task variety. Furthermore, such employee participation is likened to employee engagement (Maslach, Schaufeli and Leiter, 2001) and it is argued that when employees are engaged they experience various positive psychological states such as sense of pride, achievement, mastery (Carlson, Kacmar, Wayne and Grzywacz, 2006), motivation, empowerment, individual accomplishment and fulfilment (Ryan and Deci 2001; Laschinger and Finegan, 2005), which prevent them from seeking employment elsewhere, increasing intent to remain and reducing turnover intention (Price, 2001). Hence, it is formulated and expected that high employee participation will increase employee intention to remain.

*H4: Perceived employee participation is positively related to the intention to remain.*

#### **4.2.8 Relationship between perceived employees' participation and on-job embeddedness**

Based on the HPWP AMO theory, Employee participation/involvement is identified as an opportunity enhancing HRM practice that integrates individuals into the wider social web of the organisation due to greater role involvement and working with colleagues in teams and across organisational boundaries, hence deepening their organisational links (Jiang et al., 2012; Kehoe and Wright, 2013).

From the perspective of the social exchange theory, employee involvement helps to build trust between the organisation and its employees, as employees perceive the organisation's effort to empower them and provide an opportunity to participate as a signal of trust and how much the organisation values their contribution. Hence, deepening the sense of belonging and fit element of on-the-job embeddedness and the feeling of obligation to reciprocate the trust and confidence that have been placed in them (Hom et al., 2009; Tian et al., 2016).

Also, from the perspective of COR theory, due to the organisation-specific nature of the ties and the empowerment to contribute and fulfil career aspirations, employees will be reluctant to forfeit such non-transferrable valuable organisational ties and resources (Jiang et al., 2012a). Hence, it is formulated and expected that high employee participation will increase on-job embeddedness

*H4A: Perceived employee's participation is positively related to on-job embeddedness.*

#### **4.2.9 Relationship between perceived job security and intention to remain**

Pfeffer (1994; 1998) identifies job security as one of the most important HRM best practices that signal the type of employee-organisation relationship that employers want to establish with their employees. Furthermore, based on the social exchange theory, it is argued that organisations can improve employee retention by offering employment security that signals a willingness on the part of the organisation to establish a long-term relationship with the employee, which in turn is expected to trigger reciprocal behaviour from the employee (Chang, 2005). Studies such as Shaw, Delery, Jenkins and Gupta (1998) and Samuel and Chipunza (2009) have found job security to be a strong significant factor that is positively correlated with employee retention in private organisations and hence it is also argued that there is strong evidence that employee job security can significantly lower employee voluntary turnover. From this perspective, it is formulated in the current study that perceived job security is positively related to the intention to remain.

*H5: Perceived job security is positively related to the intention to remain.*

#### **4.2.10 Relationship between perceived job security and on-job**

##### **embeddedness**

Few studies have investigated the link between job security and employee feeling of attachment to the organisation (Conklin et al., 2007; Samuel and Chipunza, 2009; Murphy et al., 2013). However, job security is identified as an important antecedent in the study of job embeddedness (Conklin et al., 2007; Samuel and Chipunza, 2009).



It is argued that particularly in times of economic uncertainty, perceived job security is a strong factor that motivates job embeddedness since a secure job is their only source of a stable income when there is an economic recession. Conversely, where employees perceive job insecurity, they are more likely to experience reduced job embeddedness or weakening of their bond with the organisation and hence cause them to engage in search behaviour, which in turn hurts their intention to remain (Murphy et al., 2013). In explaining the relationship between perceived job security and on-the-job job embeddedness, Lawrence and Kacmar (2017) identify the negative affective behavioural reaction associated with job insecurity as key threats to employee embeddedness or the feeling of organisational attachment. It is argued that the threat of losing present employment will also hurt employee sense of belonging and employee perception of fit in the organisation (Lawrence and Kacmar, 2017). Furthermore, based on Hobfoll (2001) COR theory which posit that people feel threatened by the potential loss of valued resources, it is further argued that when employees experience job insecurity due to the threat of loss of employment/income, it is likely to cause negative emotions such as uncertainties, feeling betrayed and disengagement, which in turn will diminish their emotional and psychological attachment to the organisation (Mitchell et al., 2001). Hence, such an individual will be more inclined to seek alternative employment elsewhere due to the lack of fit or feeling of belonging (Lawrence and Kacmar, 2017). Based on this perspective, it is formulated in the current study that perceived employee security is positively related to on-the-job embeddedness.

*H5A: Perceived job security is positively related to On-job embeddedness.*

#### **4.2.11 Relationship between perceived supervisor support and intention to remain**

Supervisors are the key organisational agents that provide direct validation of employee work contribution and performance through praise, recognition and other forms of reward (Gess et al., 2008). Hence, supervisors have a significant influence in determining whether employees feel valued or appreciated by the organisation and therefore can affect employee attitude and general feelings towards the organisation, which in turn can affect their turnover intentions (Bambacas and Kulik, 2013).

Also, based on the social exchange theory, it is argued that supportive treatment from supervisors can enhance employee perceived organisational support, which in turn can enhance employee intention to remain with the organisation (Eisenberger et al., 2002; Aquino, Griffeth, Allen and Hom, 1997). However, whereas studies such as Eisenberger (2002) found a significant relationship between supervisor support and employee intention to stay when it was mediated by perceived organisational support, other studies such as Mobley et al. (1979) only found moderate support for a negative correlation between supervisor support and turnover. As mentioned above, a motivational theory also in the organisational field concerning studies on turnover intentions and voluntary behaviour in organisations is Self-Determination Theory (SDT) (Deci and Ryan, 1985;1991). They stated that the higher-level goal of human behaviour is growth and development, but some aspects of the individual's social environment, such as the degree of environmental support, can influence behaviour and retention. Nevertheless, 'environmental support' is a very broad factor to consider within the scope of the current study, and is limited to favourable vertical relationships between a construction employee and their direct supervisor.

It is assumed that supervisor support has a lasting effect on construction employees' intention to remain in the private sector in general and in their organisation of employment in particular. Interestingly, the degree of supervisor support in an organisation will determine whether employees will only have passive turnover intentions or will turn to actual turnover (Bergiel et al., 2009). Hence, supervisor support should be viewed in combination with other factors, which is accomplished by the conceptual framework of the current study, but not in isolation, as this factor often intensifies or moderates the influence of other factors (Eisenberger et al., 2002).

It is important to emphasise that Hypothesis 6 focuses on perceived supervisor support, which is measured against individual employee appraisals and perceptions, rather than against an objective and commonly agreed level of supervisor support in a certain construction organisation. Perceived supervisor support has a crucial meaning for employee retention, because the decision to quit is taken individually, and other employees' opinions have a minor effect on how every employee feels about managerial empathy (Alfes et al., 2013).

The below provided hypothesis is relevant to the context of Saudi Arabia because it is included in the perceptions of 'wasta' (Ramady, 2016). As explained before, organisational leaders' authority and power are spread to the overall perceptions about workplace security and safety. Therefore, a strong 'wasta' stemming from a supportive and attentive leader would be demanded by Saudi national employees from the construction industry (Ramady, 2016).

*H6: Perceived supervisor support is positively related to intentions to remain.*

#### **4.2.12 Relationship between perceived supervisor support and on-job embeddedness**

Consistent with the social exchange theory, which is based on the mutual exchange of socio-emotional benefits, close personal attachments and open-ended/long-term obligations (Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005; Shore et al., 2006), perceived supervisor support is positioned as a workplace instrumental support that can enhance employee organisational attachment and hence their on-the-job embeddedness. Hence, it is formulated in the context of this research that perceived supervisor support would be positively related to on-the-job embeddedness.

Supervisor support is identified as playing a significant role in shaping the working environment and experience of employees and in reducing their stress (Batt and Valcour, 2003). According to the above mentioned SDT, when a social environment satisfies a person's basic psychological needs, providing support, it will choose to engage in positive activities for its improvement. The SDT declares that this support will favour personal growth, while a lack of support could be counterproductive for the person and the environment. The concept of environmental support and interaction between the individual and the environment of which the SDT states can be traced back to the concept of perceived supervisor support (PSS) (Eisenberger *et al.*, 1986), which concerns the degree to which individuals perceive how their organisations and supervisors are worried about their well-being and evaluate their contributions to it.

The theory behind the concept of PSS is the theory of social exchange (Blau, 1964), which together with the rules of reciprocity (Gouldner, 1960) has recently been applied in organizational research to describe the motivational bases that guide attitudes and workers behaviour towards their supervisors in an organisation (Wayne, Shore, Bommer and Tetrick, 2002). The theory of organisational support (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Eisenberger, Armeli, Rexwinkel, Lynch, and Rhoades, 2001; Rhoades and Eisenberger, 2002), therefore, suggests that the organisation's implementation of management strategies of human resources that demonstrate support to workers is of fundamental importance to them.

At the level of empirical evidence, Bergiel et al. (2009) confirmed that there was a statistically significant link between perceived supervisor support and job embeddedness, and this relationship could be classified as mediating. This allows for testing the following hypothesis in a practical setting, especially taking into account that Bergiel et al. (2009) did not establish the mediating role of training, which was covered by the second hypothesis.

This attempt to approach on-the-job embeddedness as a consequence of supervisor support is relevant to the working environment of Saudi Arabia. In accordance with Meuer et al. (2019), employer-employee relationships and job embeddedness are powerful enough to determine expatriation as well as repatriation intentions. Hence, not only Saudi national employees but also migrant workers will be affected by supervisor support as a potential predictor of job embeddedness. These outcomes of Meuer et al. (2019) do not imply that Saudi construction managers should apply a selective approach and support only national staff in order to stimulate national employment, while at the same time motivating foreign employees to quit. After being hired, all employees should be treated equally and given the same amount of support (Budhwar and Sparrow, 2002). Nonetheless, construction managers can be more selective at the recruitment stage and accept more national employees.

As in the previous hypothesis, perceived supervisor support is emphasised because individual employees' perceptions are more important than collective opinions regarding managerial empathy (Allen and Shanock, 2013).

***H6A:** Perceived supervisor support is positively related to on-job embeddedness.*

#### **4.2.13 Relationship between on-job embeddedness and intention to remain**

One key development in the turnover literature relates to the research stream which suggests that even though HRM practices can have an impact on voluntary employee turnover intentions, the relationship was more likely to be an indirect one (Meyer and Smith, 2000; Agarwala, 2003; Herrbach *et al.*, 2009;). Various studies such as Lee *et al.*, 2004; Crossley *et al.*, 2007; Trevor and Nyberg, 2008 and Felps *et al.*, 2009 have confirmed the presence of a mediating relation between employee perception of HR practices and their turnover intentions. Furthermore, the studies have identified job embeddedness to be a valid predictor of employee intention to remain. Job embeddedness is conceptualised as the collective effect of financial, social and psychological factors that increase employee intention to remain or which influence employee retention (Zheng, Fried and Griffeth, 2012).

Furthermore, different HR practices have been found to have different effects on job embeddedness, and as a result, a knock-on mediating effect on turnover intention is considered to be a possibility (Mitchell *et al.*, 2001; Lee *et al.*, 2004; Holtom *et al.*, 2006). From the perspective of COR theory, job embeddedness is identified as mediating turnover intentions due to its instrumental role as a buffer against stress or resource loss (Hobfoll *et al.*, 2018). Hence, on-the-job embeddedness is an important mediation variable in the context of this study that will be examined in terms of its effect on employee intention to remain. For example, job embeddedness has been found to reduce turnover intention in abusive supervisor-subordinate relationships (Avey *et al.*, 2015; Hobfoll *et al.*, 2018) (see Figure 4. 1).

*H7: On-job embeddedness is positively related to the intention to remain.*

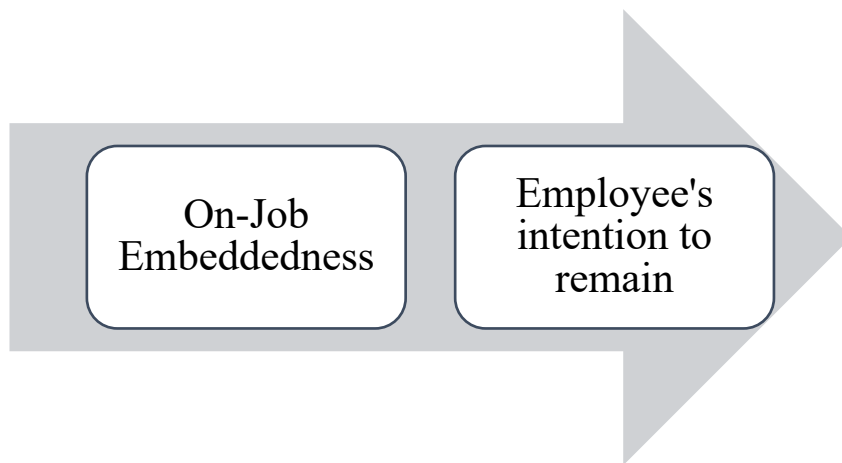


Figure 4. 1: The direct relation between on-job embeddedness and employees' intention to remain.

#### **4.2.14 Relationship between off-job embeddedness and intention to remain**

Allen (2006) also showed that through collective socialisation tactics, organisations could enhance employee embeddedness, which can, in turn, lower turnover intentions. Similarly, Hobfoll et al. (2018) identify job embeddedness as an instrumental resource for social networking that provides a buffer against resource loss and turnover intentions. Off-the-job embeddedness, which constitute the informal ties that the individual has in the community and potential costs associated with losing those ties, have also been identified as having significant predictive ability for employee withdrawal behaviours that lead to turnover such as absenteeism (Lee et al., 2004) and is considered as also mediating the link between employee work and personal lives (Brown et al., 2010). Furthermore, according to Lee et al. (2004), employees that embedded off-the-job are more unlikely to quit because their jobs support their community lifestyle both financially and socially. Various studies have also indicated the influence of community relations, traditions and values in Saudi Arabia due to the strong collectivist culture, whereby people tend to define themselves by their family relationships, traditions and community (Adel and Syed, 2005; Leat and El-kot, 2007; Mahdi and Barrientos, 2003; Al-Emadi and Marquardt, 2007).

Hence, Saudi people value strong relationships and show a strong sense of belonging, and it is expected that this will be reflected in their organisational attachment based on the job embeddedness theory which asserts that the community dimension reflects the extent to which individuals feel embedded within their community, and it shows significant influence on the employees' intentions to stay in the organisation (Mitchell et al., 2001; Ng and Feldman, 2010).

Hence, given the strong collectivist nature of the Saudi culture, it is formulated that off-the-job embeddedness will have a positive relationship with employee intention to remain (see Figure 4. 2).

***H8: Off-job embeddedness is positively related to the intention to remain.***

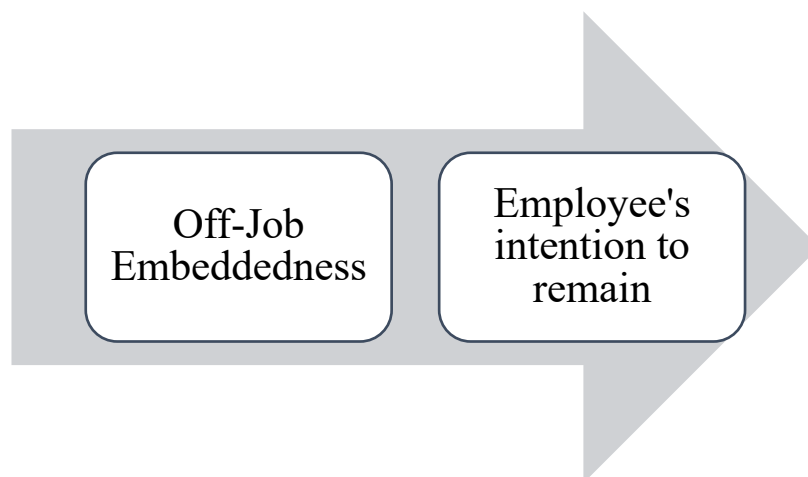


Figure 4. 2: The direct relation between Off-job embeddedness and employees' intention to remain.

### **4.3 The mediational role of on-job embeddedness in the relation between selected HR practices and employee's intention to remain**

Based on Mitchell et al. (2001) job embeddedness theory, it is argued that long-term retention of employees can be achieved by ensuring the fit dimension of on-the-job embeddedness in terms of the person-job fit. Furthermore, it is argued that person-job fit can be achieved through employee selection processes that ensure that individuals with the right skills, knowledge and abilities that are required for the job as well as the required organisational values are hired (O'Reilly et al., 1991; Holtom and O'Neill, 2008). It is also argued, when employees have good fit on-the-job fit, in terms of having the right match between their skills, abilities, knowledge and values and what is required by the job, they are more likely to feel a sense of belonging in that job, which in turn will motivate them to want to stay in that job (Lee et al., 2004; Yalabik, 2008). Furthermore, various studies have shown positive correlation between poor employee selection and feelings of incompatibility with the job or organisation, which then lead to such employees leaving the organisation earlier than other employees whose attributes match those of job due to the lack of compatibility and the consequent lack of connection between the employee and the job (Chatman, 1991; Villanova et al., 1994; Chan, 1996; Ingersoll et al., 2002). The mediation impact of on-the-job embeddedness between perceived employee selection and intention to remain is important for the current research due to current Saudisation policy, which makes it relatively easy for Saudi employees to gain employment in the private sector but may not necessarily take account of their suitability for the job as it is not based on a rigorous selection process. Hence, it is formulated that the perceived employee selection of Saudi nationals' and their intent to remain on the job will be mediated by on-the-job embeddedness.

***H1B:** On-job embeddedness mediates the relationship between perceived employee's selection and intention to remain.*

Based on the Hobfoll (2001) COR model, it is argued that individuals seek to accumulate valuable personal resources such as training. Furthermore, based on the on-the-job sacrifice dimension of Mitchell et al. (2001) job embeddedness model, it is argued that employees are less likely to want to leave organisation due to the professional



development benefits and opportunities that they would have to forfeit (Bambacas and Bordia (2009; Bambacas and Kulik, 2013). Furthermore in context of the current research, training and competence development has been identified as an important factor that motivates Saudi nationals to work and stay on in specific organisation (Al-Ahamadi, 2002; Ramady and Rahman, 2009; Jehanzeb et al., 2013) and based on the social exchange theory it is argued that by investing in the professional development of employees, organisations demonstrate investment in long-term relationship with the employee, which in turn will be reciprocated by the employee (Tanova and Holtom, 2008; Allen and Shanock, 2013). Hence, from this perspective, it is formulated that on-the-job embeddedness will mediate the relationship between perceived extensive training and intention to remain.

***H2B:** On-job embeddedness mediates the relationship between perceived extensive training and intention to remain.*

From the perspective of on-the-job sacrifice dimension of the Mitchell et al (2001) job embeddedness model and the conservation of resources principle, it is argued that employees will be more embedded in well-paying jobs, as forfeiting such valued compensation will be viewed as a costly sacrifice (Chiang and Birtch, 2010; Kiazad et al., 2015). Furthermore, because resource loss is painful, employees are more likely to stay in a well-compensated in order to retain valued resources that have intrinsic value (Kiazad et al., 2015). Hence, based on this perspective, it is formulated that on-the-job embeddedness will mediate the relationship between perceived compensation and intention to remain.

***H3B:** On-job embeddedness mediates the relationship between perceived compensation of and intention to remain.*

Perceived employee participation is conceptualised as the extent to which employees feel that they are involved or valuably engaged in the affairs of the organisation (Price, 2001; Batt and Valcour, 2003; Jackson et al., 2014). Furthermore, based on the fit and links dimensions of on-the-job embeddedness, it is argued that employees are more embedded and hence more likely to stay due to being involved/engaged as this increases their sense of belonging (Fit) and hence, their organisational attachment (Tian et al., 2016).

Furthermore, due to their enriched job content and their involvement with different people in the organisation, the links dimension is also increased (Senior and Fleming, 2006; Jiang et al., 2012). Additionally, in the context of the current research, richer job content has been identified as an important factor in improving the retention of Saudi employees (Iqbal, 2010). Hence, it is formulated that on-the-job embeddedness will mediate the relationship between perceived participation and intention to remain.

***H4B:*** *On-the-job embeddedness mediates the relationship between perceived participation and intention to remain.*

Job embeddedness is identified as an important mediator between job security and intention to remain, particularly during periods of economic uncertainties. It is argued that during economic recession for example when there is a high risk of redundancy/unemployment, the perception of job security with a present employer will lower search behaviour and increase job embeddedness and intention to stay (Murphy et al., 2013) This argument is supported from the perspective of on-the-job embeddedness sacrifice dimension and COR primacy of resource loss theory (Hobfoll, 2001), which says that employees will stay on because resource loss is painful and hence, they are unwilling to sacrifice current valuable resource (stable employment) by leaving (Kiazad et al., 2015). Furthermore, from the perspective of on-the-job fit dimension (Mitchell et al., 2001), it is also argued that employees are more likely feel organisational attachment and sense of belonging if they perceive that they have job security (Lawrence and Kacmar, 2017). In the context of the current research, the mediating role of on-the-job embeddedness is considered to be important in the relationship between perceived job security and intention to remain due to the lack of job security in the Saudi private sector (Al-Dosary and Rahman, 2009). Also, based on Hobfoll (2001) theory, it is anticipated that the presence of job embeddedness as an instrumental resource that enable employees to cope with the realities of their job and the availability of various conditional, personal, material and energy resources, which combine to form resource caravan that the employee can draw upon will enhance on-the-job embeddedness (Halbesleben and Wheeler, 2008), which in turn will mediate the relationship between perceived job security and intention to remain.

***H5B:*** *On-job embeddedness mediates the relationship between perceived job security and intention to remain.*

Based on the links and sacrifice dimensions of on-the-job embeddedness (Mitchell et al., 2001), it is argued that perceived supervisor support would enhance the employee work experience and organisational attachment, which causes them to be more likely to stay on (Bambacas and Kulik, 2013). Furthermore, according to the COR theory's conceptualisation of instrumental support, which include work social support such as supervisor support, it is argued that employees will be unwilling to sacrifice present supervisor support by leaving for another job where there is no guarantee of receiving the same kind of support (Hobfoll, 2001; 2002; Alfes et al., 2013; Kaizad et al., 2015).

***H6B:** On-job embeddedness mediates the relationship between perceived supervisor support and intention to remain.*

#### **4.4 Summary**

The research framework and development of hypotheses chapter provided a discussion of the conceptual framework and the research hypotheses, which serve as the foundation for the discussion of the findings from the empirical study that will be discussed in the subsequent chapters. Throughout the literature, in reports on research hypotheses, we found that few studies such have confirmed the presence of a mediating relation between employee perception of HR practices and their turnover intentions. Furthermore, the studies have identified job embeddedness to be a valid predictor of employee intention to remain. Job embeddedness is conceptualised as the collective effect of financial, social and psychological factors that increase employee intention to remain or which influence employee retention. Furthermore, different HR practices have been found to have different effects on job embeddedness, and as a result, a knock-on mediating effect on turnover intention is considered to be a possibility.

## **Chapter Five: Research Methodology**

### **5.1 Introduction**

As previously stated, the main aim of this study is to investigate how specific HR practices influence the on-job embeddedness of Saudi nationals and their attitudes of the organisation (intention to remain). This chapter explains the research methodology implemented for this study based on its philosophical underpinnings and highlights the research methods employed with particular focus on the sampling strategy. Additionally, this study examines the mediation effect of the on-job embeddedness on the relationships between Saudi nationals' selected HR practices and their attitudes to their organisations in the Saudi construction industry. Also, this research seeks to examine the associations between off-the-job embeddedness and the intentions of Saudi construction national employees to remain in their jobs. Based on these aims, the overall research approach adopted for this study is rooted in a positivist perspective, employing deductive, quantitative research methods. Accordingly, this chapter first addresses the philosophical underpinnings of this study whereby the researcher provides an overview of the four main research philosophies, with an in-depth discussion of the positivist and interpretivist philosophies and the rationale for adopting the positivist paradigm. Also, this chapter presents the research by providing an analysis of the deductive and inductive research approaches concerning the positivist and interpretivist paradigms and how the deductive approach fits with the research objectives of the current study.

Moreover, the research methods employed in this research are presented and alternative research methods, including the quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods research, are discussed. Also, this chapter justifies the use of quantitative research methods in this study. This chapter also discusses the research strategy followed focusing on the use of the survey in comparison to the alternative research strategies. The rationale for adopting the survey strategy for the collection of primary data is also argued.

Furthermore, the research design and the research instrument are explained in detail, in addition to the time frame for the study. The questionnaire instrument and the measurement scales employed for collecting the primary data are discussed, including the questionnaire design and the variables that were investigated. Also, the sampling strategy

is addressed by providing a detailed account of the target population, the sampling frame and the sampling technique applied to determine the sample size. Following this, the procedures of data collection are highlighted, with a particular focus on the processes of accessing and collecting data from the surveyed companies. Finally, ethical issues are dealt with, focusing on the steps that were undertaken to follow strict ethical guidelines and ensure data confidentiality and general respect of respondents' rights.

## **5.2 Philosophical Underpinnings**

Saunders et al. (2009) assert that the research philosophy consists of the assumptions that define the researcher's worldview. Bryman (1988) expands on this notion by defining the research philosophy as a paradigm or cluster of beliefs that determine how researchers in specific disciplines decide what to study, how research should be conducted and how research results should be interpreted.

Hence, four broad philosophical approaches can be identified in Saunders et al. (2009) including positivism, interpretivism, realism and pragmatism based on assumptions made about truth and reality in the process of developing knowledge. Given the current research objectives, the positivist and interpretivist paradigms are mainly discussed as these represent the major research paradigms that are widely used and have more relevance to the study context than realism and pragmatism. The latter two paradigms are briefly discussed below.

The positivist worldview is rooted in objectivity whereby the researcher is considered as an objective spectator and conveyor of the research data following systematic procedures in terms of sample selection, statistical analysis and measurement of variables. Hence, from this perspective, truth and reality are believed to exist outside of the observer's mind (Easterby-Smith et al., 2002). In contrast, the interpretivist paradigm adopts a worldview where truth and reality are subjective and dependent on the experiences and views of the social actors (Creswell, 2003).

In the interpretivist paradigm, qualitative data are usually gathered, and research concepts and data are expanded upon and developed into theoretical constructs while positivist researchers tend to reduce theoretical concepts into small chunks of variables that are analysed using rational, deductive processes in order to test their validity against already established hypotheses (Creswell, 2003). Furthermore, while the positivist researchers often seek to investigate or establish independent causal relationships that are

generalisable based on the pattern of identified behaviour and empirical testing, the interpretivist approach seeks to interpret data from the perspective of the social actors and provide insights that can then be developed into theories based on the analysis of research evidence (Saunders et al., 2009). Nonetheless, the interpretive research findings are considered to be non-generalisable to a wider population due to the subjective nature of the collected data and the limited number of participants involved (Bryman and Bell, 2004). On the other hand, the objective, scientific methods of positivist research allows generalisation to large populations due to the use of value-free, non-subjective constructs that enable the researcher to research large numbers of respondents and investigate larger sets of variables using standardised research instruments (Bryman and Bell, 2004).

In this respect, positivism is rooted in a realist worldview, which conceives reality as objective and advocates for the use of observable, credible data (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011). However, unlike the positivist view, interpretivism emphasises on the importance of contextualising data interpretations based on its value-laden constructs and researcher subjectivity (Saunders et al., 2009). From this perspective, the interpretive, relativist paradigm is suitable to the context and the objectives of this study as it seeks observable and objective quantifiable data to be able to conduct an inferential analysis of the research phenomena.

The fourth research paradigm, pragmatism, does not subscribe to the supremacy of any particular philosophical worldview, rather this position assumes that the research approach and methods should be determined by the research questions (Creswell, 2003). Furthermore, from an ontological and epistemological perspective, pragmatic researchers should be able to combine elements from different paradigms to achieve the research objectives without being restricted by theoretical constraints, hence advocating for an eclectic philosophical approach that permits the researcher to implement a mixed methods research approach (Saunders et al., 2009). However, Creswell (2003) cautions that the pragmatic paradigm should only be adopted where the nature of the research justifies. Thus, considering the current context, adopting a pragmatic approach does not appear to be necessary, as the research objectives do not require the use of mixed methods.

Therefore, the current research is based on a positivist paradigmatic approach which requires the use of value-free, scientific research methods to collect quantitative data analysed using statistical modelling techniques that yield generalisable results (Remenyi, 1998). This philosophical approach is in line with the research aims and objectives,

namely, to test the theory by establishing the relationship between selected human resource management (HRM) practices, on-job embeddedness and voluntary turnover intention of national workers. In doing so, the current research seeks to test the relationship between the dependent and independent variables concerning the concepts of job embeddedness and employee voluntary turnover intention. In this regard, Orlikowski and Baroudi (1991) associate the positivist paradigm with studies that are based on the investigation of hypotheses, quantitatively measured variables and already established relationships that can be analysed using quantitative or value-free methods. Furthermore, according to the authors, positivistic studies are often based on the occurrence of a priori established relationships within the research phenomena and seek to test the theory in order to enhance the predictive significance of a phenomenon. This perspective seems applicable to the current study given its objective to investigate the antecedents of on-job embeddedness as predictors of employee voluntary turnover intention based on the impact of the selected HRM practices on employee attitude to the job. Concerning the issues of validity, reliability and generalisability, it is important to be able to make comparisons between the findings of this study and those from previous studies. Hence, it is important to collect sample data that is objective, quantifiable, reliable and large enough to be representative of the wider population. This cannot be achieved within an interpretive framework, which is based on value-laden constructs and subjective data usually collected from small samples and hence not generalisable to the larger population (Bryman, 2008).

Additionally, as this research seeks to investigate the relationship between research variables, rather than behavioural constructs, the positivist paradigm provides the most appropriate research tools and methods for this study (Collis and Hussey, 2009). Furthermore, in line with Chua's (1986) recommendations, this study's objective to establish the observable influence of HRM practices on the on-job embeddedness to determine employee voluntary turnover intention provides a sound justification for testing hypotheses against already established HRM theories rather developing new theories. Hence, from an ontological point of view, that is, the reality being investigated, positivism seems to be an appropriate approach for the current study; from a practical perspective, as well, given the time and budget constraints of this project, an interpretive approach would be impractical and inappropriate due to the considerable time and financial resources required to conduct qualitative research (Saunders et al., 2009).

## **5.3 Research Approach**

The research approach provides an understanding of the rationale behind the approach adopted by the researcher to make sense of the data (Walliman, 2011). In this respect, the deductive and inductive approaches (Figure 5. 1 and Figure 5. 2) are the two main approaches in terms of how theory is developed and used in research (Saunders et al., 2009).

### **5.3.1 Deductive and Inductive Approach**

From a philosophical positioning, the deductive approach is typically associated with positivism, while the inductive approach is associated with interpretivism (Saunders et al., 2009). Similarly, from a methodological perspective, the deductive approach is often associated with quantitative research, while the inductive approach generally relates to qualitative research. However, there are maybe exceptions to these categorisations (Charmaz, 2006). Deductive inquiry usually starts with universal laws that explain the phenomenon under investigation to establish hypotheses that connect this phenomenon to the universal law in a way this hypothesis can be used to predict the research phenomenon. Valid and reliable data are then collected to test the hypotheses in order to establish their veracity about a predicted theory (Saunders et al., 2009). Thus, in this approach, the theoretical position is established before carrying out the research to test theoretical assumptions and hypotheses against the empirical evidence collected from research and eventually adjust the theory to reflect the nature of the gathered data (Creswell et al., 2003; Walliman, 2011).

In contrast, the starting point of the inductive approach is the collection of data about the research phenomenon, which are used to develop ideas that can explain or build theory (Hughes, 1990). Hence, this approach does not seek to test theory or form prior theoretical assumptions before the data gathering process; rather, the evidence collected from research is used as the basis for theoretical development (Creswell, 2003). Though the inductive inquiry is not dependent on theory, it does have some preconceived ideas about the phenomenon under investigation and may eventually lead to the development of theory.



This closely relates to the idea of probabilistic inductive logic to suggest plausible explanations about relationships in the research phenomena. However, unlike the positivist, deductive approach, it is not concerned with establishing causal relationships and, therefore, does not explain the theory in the same way (Hughes, 1990). Hence, whereas the deductive approach starts by formulating hypotheses with the objective of investigating the extent to which research data support an existing or preconceived theory, inductive research begins with research questions that provide a reference point for shaping the primary research and subsequently develop theory based on the analysis of the data collected (Saunders et al., 2009; Altinay and Paraskevas, 2008). Also, limitations are identified with inductive reasoning, as it is difficult to determine the volume of empirical observations that is sufficient to make generalisations given that its research position begins from the specific experiences of the research actors. Hence, though this conceptual approach to developing knowledge and theory can generate in-depth and multiple perspectives regarding the research problem, the results may not be reliable for generalisation (Walliman, 2011). In contrast, the deductive approach is based on generally observable premises or universal principles that are then narrowed down to make specific conclusions through the application of logical arguments (Creswell, 2014). Likewise, since it mainly seeks to test preconceived hypotheses, deductive reasoning has certain limitations. For instance, there is a risk that a false theory can be conceived to reject it by collecting observations that conflict with the stated hypothesis. Furthermore, as the accuracy of the conclusions obtained from deduction strictly depends on the accuracy of the formulated hypothesis, there may be a risk of drawing inaccurate conclusions based on the application of false hypotheses (Walliman, 2011). As far as this study is concerned, it adopts a deductive approach as it aims to test existing theories about job embeddedness and employee voluntary turnover intention. The main reasons are that the deductive approach is based on the definition of true premises or however conventionally accepted as valid, identifies hypotheses of explanation of the phenomena or problem solving, reaches logically coherent and non-contradictory conclusions in the comparison between premises and hypotheses. It is a process with an analytical and rationalising use, adequate for problems of significant importance, coherent in the absence of reference experiences and where the experimentation is risky.

Indeed, as explained earlier, this study investigates the relationship between dependent variables, independent variables and a mediating factor; a conceptual framework is used to analyse the effect of HRM practices on the on-job embeddedness as a mediating factor that influences employee intention to remain. Specifically, the theoretical assumptions and empirical observations of Bambacas and Kulik (2013), Karatepe (2013), Bergiel et al. (2009), Harris et al. (2011) and others were taken to identify the most probable HRM practices that could serve as predictors of job embeddedness. Moreover, the researcher has kept in mind that a large sample of quantitative evidence would be needed to achieve the main research aim. Given that the philosophy of positivism is highly compatible with quantitative data, and Charmaz (2006) categorised most positivist studies as deductive, this has also substantiated the choice of the research approach. The researcher was not driven by the intention to develop radically new theory on job embeddedness, but rather that existing theory needs to be checked in the context of the Saudi construction industry. Finally, if the researcher had chosen induction, it would have been impossible to arrive at generalisable conclusions that could be transferred to the majority of construction and other private-sector companies in the KSA (Saunders et al., 2009).

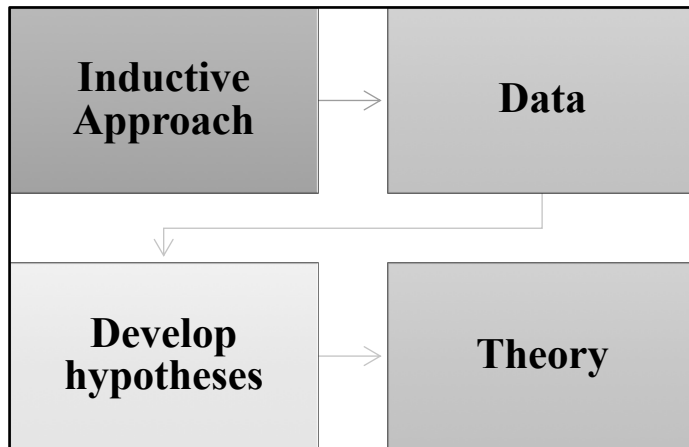


Figure 5. 1: Inductive approach.

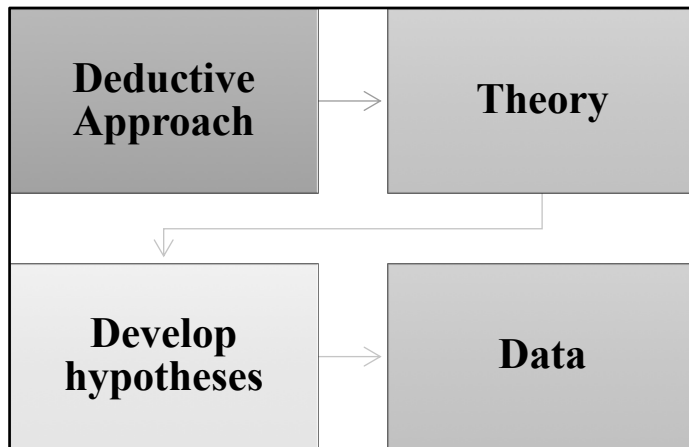


Figure 5. 2: Deductive approach.

### 5.3.2 Quantitative, Qualitative and Mixed-Methods Design

Three main types of research designs have been identified in the literature: quantitative, qualitative and mixed-methods research. Quantitative research is typically associated with the positivist research paradigm, while qualitative research is typically associated with interpretivism (Saunders et al., 2009). The mixed-methods design combines elements from both designs to draw from their strengths, provide more holistic insights and to strengthen the reliability and validity of the research findings (Creswell et al., 2003; Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2003). Though the mixed methods design may be ideal for gaining a complete understanding of the research phenomenon, it is usually difficult to implement it because of budget and time constraints (Vanderstoep and Johnston, 2009), as was the case in the current study.

Hence, for the current study, quantitative and qualitative research designs are mainly discussed in terms of the extent to which these methods are suitable for the current research objectives. Qualitative research is defined as a research approach for exploring and understanding the meaning that people ascribe to a human/social problem (Creswell 2014). To collect qualitative data, researchers commonly use techniques such as focus groups, case studies and interviews that allow them to probe and collect in-depth answers to research questions in order to determine how people define and make sense of experiences (Vanderstoep and Johnston, 2009).

In contrast, the focus of quantitative research is to generate quantifiable, reliable data through statistical analysis and factual measurement of objective data that are typically obtained from relatively large sample size (Walliman, 2011; Table 5. 1). According to Creswell (2014), quantitative research aims to examine objective theories by testing the relationship between the research variables through the use of measurement instruments such as the statistical analysis of numbered data.

About data collection, the quantitative approach favours the use of experiments and surveys to collect numerical and objective empirical data that can be used to analyse the relationship between research variables and test theory.

Furthermore, using statistical analysis, research data are meaningfully interpreted based with particular focus on the reliability of the results and the validity of the research instrument that was used (Creswell, 2014). However, this can also represent a disadvantage for research quality, as not all information can be articulated numerically. For example, value-laden constructs such as emotions, feelings or can only be articulated through words (Walliman, 2011). According to Vanderstoep and Johnston (2009), qualitative research is most suitable in research cases that require a significant narrative understanding, as it helps the researcher to uncover a richer and more in-depth understanding of the research population. However, this approach is limited by its tendency to focus on small sample sizes and on the use of non-random sampling, which means that the research sample may not be representative of the larger population, hence, making it impossible to generalise the research results.

Furthermore, the purpose of qualitative research is descriptive as it seeks to gain an in-depth understanding of the opinions of individual research participants whereas the current research seeks to make predictions and generalise results to a wider population (Vanderstoep and Johnston, 2009).

Hence, in line Creswell's (2014) suggestions, the survey design is deemed as an appropriate method to provide quantitative descriptions of attitudes and trends.

The main reason that has led to the choice of a quantitative approach, rather than qualitative, is the fact that, concerning the specific psychological interaction with the individual subjects studied, the quantitative researcher takes a point of view external to the subject studied, in a neutral and detached way. Also, this approach leads the researcher to study only what it is considered important and relevant for the research purpose. Vice versa, the qualitative researcher is immersed as completely as possible in the reality of the subject, and therefore tends to develop a relationship of empathy with the subjects (Lodico *et al.*, 2006). But in this way, the problem of the objectivity of the research arises, and there is a considerable risk of obtaining biased research findings and results. The subject studied is therefore passive in quantitative research, while playing an active role in qualitative research. Also, while the qualitative research almost always represents a starting point, with the aim of identifying new problem areas and opportunities and allowing to define where to direct further research, a quantitative research offers more specific measures that identify the degree of accuracy and implications of a problem or opportunity (Leedy and Ormrod, 2001).

Law-like conclusions and generalisations would have been impossible to arrive at if the researcher had selected the qualitative research design (Saunders *et al.*, 2009). Alternatively, quantitative studies rely their observations on large samples, which are considered more credible and trustworthy. Taking into account that the Saudi context is still under-explored, it would be irrelevant to rely on a small number of qualitative interviews or focus groups in the current investigation (Walliman, 2011). The relationship between particular variables is easier to analyse on the basis of quantitative data and test it with statistical estimations (Creswell, 2014).

Table 5. 1: Comparison of Quantitative and Qualitative Research.

<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Quantitative Research</b>	<b>Qualitative Research</b>
<b>Type of data</b>	Phenomena are described numerically	Phenomena are described in a narrative fashion
<b>Analysis</b>	Descriptive and inferential statistics	Identification of major themes
<b>Scope of inquiry</b>	Specific questions or hypothesis	Broad thematic concerns
<b>Primary advantage</b>	Large sample, statistical validity, accurately reflects the population	Rich, in-depth, narrative, Description of sample
<b>Primary disadvantage</b>	A superficial understanding of participants' thoughts and feelings	Small sample, not generalizable to the population at large

(Source: Vanderstoep and Johnston, 2009).

## 5.4 Research Methods

This section provides an overview of the research techniques that were implemented for the collection of the data required for testing the research hypotheses and answering the research questions. Several strategies have been identified in the literature, including surveys, experiments, ethnography, grounded theory, case studies or action research (Saunders et al., 2009). However, due to the great variety of techniques, this section will mainly focus on discussing the survey, which is associated with quantitative research, and why it has been deemed appropriate to this study.

### 5.4.1 Survey Design

The Survey appears to be the most suitable strategy for this research as it is particularly suited for deductive research, for carrying out explanatory research and for answering “what” types of questions (Saunders et al., 2009). Additionally, as suggested by Yin (1994), three aspects determine the choice of this type of research: (1) The nature of the

research question, (2) the extent to which the research is on contemporary events instead of historical events and (3) the degree to which there is a need to control behavioural events (See Table 5. 2).

Table 5. 2: Criteria used for selecting a research strategy.

<b>Research strategy</b>	<b>Form of the research question</b>	<b>Requires control over behavioural events</b>	<b>Focuses on contemporary events</b>
<b>Experiment</b>	How, why	Yes	yes
<b>Survey</b>	Who, what, where, how many, how much	No	yes
<b>Archival analysis</b>	Who, what, where, how many, how much	No	Yes/no
<b>History</b>	How, why	No	no
<b>Case study</b>	How, why, what	No	yes

(Source: Yin, 1994)

Hence, also, following the above criteria, the survey was selected based on the fact that the research questions are all “what” questions. Also, this study does not require control over behaviour, which rules out the relevance of the experimental design. Furthermore, the focus of this research is on contemporary issues as it seeks to test the theory about current workplace issues relating to the voluntary turnover intention of employees. Additionally, the survey design has been employed by several previous studies that investigated the topic area of employee attitude concerning job embeddedness and employee voluntary turnover intention (See Table 5. 3).

Table 5. 3: Previous studies that utilised survey strategy in a similar topic area.

	<b>Title</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Sample size</b>	<b>Research Instrument</b>
<b>1</b>	Organisational embeddedness, turnover intentions, and voluntary turnover: The moderating effects of employee demographic characteristics and value orientations	Peltokorpi et al., 2015	800, 755, 643	Survey Questionnaire
<b>2</b>	Gender differences in the impact of leadership styles on subordinate embeddedness and job satisfaction	Brian et al., 2014	193.146	Survey Questionnaire
<b>3</b>	Employee Reactions to Job Insecurity in a Declining Economy: A Longitudinal Study of the Mediating Role of Job Embeddedness	Marcinkus et al., 2013	115	Survey Questionnaire
<b>4</b>	Community embeddedness and work outcomes: The mediating role of organisational embeddedness	Thomas and Feldman., 2013	338	Survey Questionnaire
<b>5</b>	Job embeddedness in China: how HR practices impact turnover intentions	Bambacas and Kulik, 2013	308	Survey Questionnaire
<b>6</b>	The effects of work overload and work-family conflict on job embeddedness and job performance	Karatepe, 2013	110	Survey Questionnaire
<b>8</b>	Perceived organisational support and embeddedness as key mechanisms connecting socialisation tactics to commitment and turnover among new employees	Allen and Shanock, 2013	506	Survey Questionnaire
<b>9</b>	High-performance work practices, work social support and their effects on job embeddedness and turnover intentions	Karatepe, 2012	174	Survey Questionnaire



10	The mediating role of organisational job embeddedness in the LMX–outcomes relationships	Harris et al., 2011	205	Survey Questionnaire
11	Examining the Job Search–Turnover Relationship:  The Role of Embeddedness, Job Satisfaction, and Available Alternatives	Swider et al., 2011	895	Survey Questionnaire
12	Will They Stay or Will They Go? The Role of Job Embeddedness in Predicting Turnover in Individualistic and Collectivistic Cultures	Ramesh and Gelfand, 2010	797	Survey Questionnaire
13	The impact of job embeddedness on innovation-related Behaviours	Ng and Feldman, 2010	850, 329	Survey Questionnaire
14	Human resource practices, job embeddedness and intention to quit	Erich et al., 2009	495	Survey Questionnaire
15	the role of job embeddedness on employee performance: the interactive effects with the leader-member exchange and organisation-based self-esteem	Sekiguchi et al., 2008	139, 269	survey questionnaire
16	Development of a global measure of job embeddedness and integration into a traditional model of voluntary turnover	Crossley et al., 2007	318	Survey Questionnaire
17	Do Organisational Socialization Tactics Influence Newcomer Embeddedness and Turnover?	Allen, 2006	259 employees	Survey Questionnaire
18	Job Embeddedness: A Theoretical Foundation for Developing a Comprehensive Nurse Retention Plan	Holtom and O’Neill, 2004	232	Survey Questionnaire

19	The effects of job embeddedness on organisational citizenship, job performance, volitional absences, and voluntary turnover	Lee et al., 2004	829	Survey Questionnaire
20	Why people stay: Using job embeddedness to predict voluntary turnover	Mitchell et al., 2001	232	Survey Questionnaire

## 5.4.2 Questionnaire Instrument and Measurement Scale

The search survey instrument used in conducting the primary research was an online questionnaire administered through the web-based Survey Monkey tool, an IRB (Institutional Review Board) approved online assessment instrument. This method was selected because it provided the research respondents with easy and convenient access to the questionnaire with no need for the researcher's presence. Furthermore, it supported the researcher's limited budget as it helped to eliminate travel, paper and printing costs.

The online questionnaire was designed to reflect the information that was required in order to answer the research questions and test the hypotheses (see Table 5.4). More specifically, the questionnaire was designed to measure the perceptions, knowledge and attitudes of the respondents. In order to determine the participants' demographics and their experiences with HRM practices, the participants were required to answer fifty-four closed-ended questions. The variables measured in the questionnaire are commonly utilised in the HRM literature (Huselid, 1995). Furthermore, according to Jones and Wright (1992), when properly implemented, these HRM practice areas can improve employee motivation, skills, knowledge and capabilities, minimise shirking and increase the retention rate of high performing employees while facilitating the exit of poor performers. Hence, as explained below, the questionnaire was divided into ten sections as following (see Appendix D).

### 5.4.2.1 Section One: Personal Characteristics

This section of the questionnaire contained seven demographics and work profile questions, dichotomous and multichotomies questions, including nationality, gender, age, marital status, years of experience, job title and educational level. The demographic data were used as control variables for correlation between the dependent and the independent variables (Bernerth and Aguinis, 2016).

#### **5.4.2.2 Section Two: On-Job Embeddedness**

This measurement scale was specifically included to measure the retention construct of Saudi construction workers and the factors that influence them to remain in their current job (Mitchell et al., 2001). Furthermore, it has been widely identified as having a significant effect on work-related constructs such as employee turnover, absenteeism, performance and citizenship behaviour (Ng and Feldman, 2009). Thus, to measure the on-job embeddedness, an eleven-item measure was adapted from Holtom and Inderrieden (2006) and Mitchell et al. (2001) based on a shorter version developed and verified by Holtom et al. (2006). A five-point Likert scale ranging from 5 (strongly agree) to 1 (strongly disagree) was used as a measurement tool. Furthermore, reliability was verified by setting the satisfactory level of Cronbach's alpha at  $\geq 0.70$  as in other studies using the same truncated version of the questionnaire (Holtom et al., 2006).

#### **5.4.3 Section Three: Off-job Embeddedness**

This measurement factor was included to measure how links in the community or the external environment, such as nearby family members, membership of professional communities and access to public amenities, have on voluntary employee turnover (Kiyazad et al., 2015). To measure off-job embeddedness, a ten-item measure was adapted from Holtom and Inderrieden (2006) and Mitchell et al. (2001) based on a shorter version developed and verified by Holtom et al. (2006). A five-point Likert scale ranging from 5 (strongly agree) to 1 (strongly disagree) was also used as a measurement tool. Furthermore, reliability was verified by setting the satisfactory level of Cronbach's alpha at  $\geq 0.70$  as this is the case in other studies that have used the same truncated version of the questionnaire (Holtom et al., 2006). Similarly, to the previous key point, the use of job embeddedness as an aggregate factor lies in the fact that it can affect not only the behaviour and attitude of people when they are in their work environment but even the decisions taken out of it that in turn will enhance or reduce employee retention.

#### **5.4.4 Section Four: Perceived Employees Selection**

As a construct of individual-organisation fit (Ghosh and Gurunathan, 2015), this measurement factor was selected as a construct of ability-enhancing HRM practices, and it seeks to measure the extent to which the employee's selection practices affect the fit element of on-job embeddedness of Saudi construction workers and how this mediates the intention to leave. In terms of employee's selection practices, a five-point Likert scale ranging from 5 (strongly agree) to 1 (strongly disagree) was used to measure subjective

norms with four items that were modified from Sun et al.'s (2007) high-performance HRM practices questionnaire. As with previous sections, reliability was verified by setting the satisfactory level of Cronbach's alpha at  $\geq 0.70$  (Sun et al., 2007).

#### **5.4.5 Section Five: Perceived Extensive Training**

This measurement factor measures the extent to which perceived training opportunities affect the on-job embeddedness of Saudi construction workers. Furthermore, it was selected as a construct of high-performance work practices (HPWPs), which has been empirically linked to job embeddedness (Sun et al., 2007; Karatepe, 2013). Originally developed by Delery and Doty (1996). A four-item section based on Sun et al.'s (2007) high-performance HRM questionnaire was used to measure the respondent's perception of extensive training. Likewise, a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 5 (strongly agree) to 1 (strongly disagree), was used as the measurement criteria. Reliability was also verified by setting the satisfactory level of Cronbach's alpha at  $\geq 0.70$  (Sun et al., 2007).

#### **5.4.6 Section Six: Perceived Compensations and Incentives**

As a construct of inducement and motivation-enhancing HRM practices, perceived compensations and incentives was selected to measure the extent to which the on-job embeddedness and intention to remain of Saudi construction workers are affected by perceived compensations and incentives (Ghosh and Gurunathan, 2015). Originally developed by Doty and Delery (1996), this four-item section was based on Lee, Lee and Wu's (2010) HRM practices questionnaire to measure the perceived compensation factor. Furthermore, this factor was related to the intention of the respondents to set up their enterprise. A five-point Likert scale ranging from 5 (strongly agree) to 1 (strongly disagree) was also used, and reliability was verified by setting the satisfactory level of Cronbach's alpha at  $\geq 0.70$  (Delery and Doty, 1996).

#### **5.4.7 Section Seven: Perceived Employee Participation**

As a construct of employee engagement HPWPs that is empirically linked to job embeddedness (Sun et al., 2007), this measurement factor was selected to test the extent to which employee engagement practices affect the on-job embeddedness of Saudi construction workers and how this mediates their intention to remain. Originally developed by Delery and Doty (1996), these four items, modified from Sun et al.'s (2007) high-performance HRM questionnaire, were used to measure the employees' participation and engagement.

Likewise, a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 5 (strongly agree) to 1 (strongly disagree), was used as a measuring tool and reliability was verified by setting the satisfactory level of Cronbach's alpha at  $\geq 0.70$  (Sun et al., 2007).

#### **5.4.8 Section Eight: perceived job security**

As a construct of HPWPs HRM practices that are empirically linked to job embeddedness (Ghosh and Gurunathan, 2015), this measurement factor was selected to examine the extent to which such HRM practices affect the on-job embeddedness of Saudi construction workers and how this mediates their intention to remain. Originally developed by Delery and Doty (1996), three items adapted from Lee, Lee and Wu (2010) HRM practices questionnaire were used to measure the respondents' perception of job security. Also, a five-point Likert scale was used as the measurement criteria ranging from 5 (strongly agree) to 1 (strongly disagree) and reliability was verified using Cronbach's alpha at  $\geq 0.70$  as the satisfactory level (Delery and Doty, 1996).

#### **5.4.9 Section nine: perceived supervisor support**

This measurement scale was included to measure the extent to which the Saudi construction workers perceived support from their employers and how this affects their intention to remain in the organisation. Perceived supervisor support is considered to be important in this context, as previous empirical studies have shown a positive correlation between the perceived supervisor support and employees' intention to remain, which also been linked to job retention (Eisenberger et al., 2002). In the current study, perceived supervisor support was measured using four items of Eisenberger et al.'s (2006), perceived supervisor support scale. A five-point Likert scale was used as the measurement criteria ranging from 5 (strongly agree) to 1 (strongly disagree) and reliability was verified using Cronbach's alpha at  $\geq 0.70$  as the satisfactory level (Kuvaas and Dysvik, 2010).

#### **5.4.10 Section ten: intention to remain**

In the context of the current research, intention to remain rather than turnover intention is selected as the dependent variable, as traditional turnover models and other studies that focus on turnover intentions do not offer practical relevance for organisations and managers regarding how to improve employee retention. Furthermore, given the focus of the current study on how to retain Saudi national workers in the construction sector and the fact that job embeddedness is a retention model that is aimed at explaining why people stay, investigating intention to remain is considered to be a more appropriate variable than

turnover intention. Furthermore, empirical evidence from previous studies has established the intention to remain as a major construct of job embeddedness (Mitchell et al., 2001). For this purpose, three items were adapted from Armstrong-Stassen and Ursel's (2009) intention to remain measures to examine the extent to which on-job embeddedness mediates the relationship between perceived HRM practices and the voluntary turnover intentions of Saudi Construction workers. A five-point Likert scale, ranging from 5 (strongly agree) to 1 (strongly disagree), was used as the measurement criteria and reliability was verified by setting the satisfactory level of Cronbach's alpha at  $\geq 0.70$  (Eisenberger et al. (1986).

Table 5. 4: Summary of survey items

Hypothesis	Variables	Relevant Questionnaire Items
Profile Information	Demographic Characteristics	1-7
<b>H<sub>1</sub></b> : Perceived employee's selection is positively related to the intention to remain.		
<b>H<sub>1A</sub></b> : perceived employee's selection is positively related to On-job embeddedness.	perceived employee's selection	29-32
<b>H<sub>1B</sub></b> : On-job embeddedness mediates the relationship between perceived employee's selection and intention to remain.		
<b>H<sub>2</sub></b> : Perceived extensive training is positively related to the intention to remain.		
<b>H<sub>2A</sub></b> : perceived extensive training is positively related to On-job embeddedness.	Perceived extensive training	33-36
<b>H<sub>2B</sub></b> : On-job embeddedness mediates the relationship between perceived extensive training and intention to remain.		

<b>H<sub>3</sub>:</b> Perceived employee compensation is positively related to the intention to remain.		
<b>H<sub>3-A</sub>:</b> perceived compensation is positively related to On-job embeddedness.	Perceived compensation and incentives	37-40
<b>H<sub>3-B</sub>:</b> On-job embeddedness mediates the relationship between perceived compensation of and intention to remain.		
<b>H<sub>4</sub>:</b> Perceived employee participation is positively related to the intention to remain.		
<b>H<sub>4-A</sub>:</b> perceived employee's participation is positively related to On-job embeddedness.	Employee participation	41-44
<b>H<sub>4-B</sub>:</b> On-job embeddedness mediates the relationship between perceived participation of an intention to remain.		
<b>H<sub>5</sub>:</b> Perceived job security is positively related to the intention to remain.		
<b>H<sub>5-A</sub>:</b> perceived job security is positively related to On-job embeddedness.	Perceived employment security	45-47
<b>H<sub>5-B</sub>:</b> On-job embeddedness mediates the relationship between perceived job security of an intention to remain.		
<b>H<sub>6</sub>:</b> Perceived supervisor support is positively related to intentions to remain.		
<b>H<sub>6A</sub>:</b> perceived supervisor support is positively related to On-job embeddedness.	Perceived supervisor support	48-51
<b>H<sub>6-B</sub>:</b> On-job embeddedness mediates the relationship between perceived supervisor support and intention to remain.		
<b>H<sub>7</sub>:</b> On-job embeddedness is positively related to the intention to remain.	On-Job embeddedness	8-18

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<b>H<sub>8</sub>:</b> Off-job embeddedness is positively related to the intention to remain.	Off-job embeddedness	19-28
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### 5.5 Justification for using a five-point scale

The Likert scale is used in social research to measure attitudes and opinions through the use of statements. It is a widely used scale because it is easy to build and easy to understand by the respondent. The Likert scale adopts subjectively equal intervals, so it would be correct to define them as equal. It is usually used for batteries of items useful for detecting attitudes. The number of items is based on the logical principle that the number of items should be large enough to give stability to the scale, but not enough to tire the responding subjects (Joshi *et al.*, 2015). The measurement scale would have been less relevant if the researcher had used a seven-point Likert scale. Indeed, the differences between seven scales would have been less obvious and observable for the participants. Alternatively, a three-point Likert scale would not have provided a sufficient number of response options for the target population. Regardless of the fact that the Likert scales often lead to the collection of subjective attitudes and estimations (Joshi *et al.*, 2015), this is overall acceptable because the present research is interested in studying employees' perceptions of the HRM practices implemented in the Saudi construction industry. Hence, this project may rely on self-appraisals and self-assessment during the data collection process.

The Likert scale, in fact, requires that a list of affirmations (items), semantically linked to the attitudes on which one wants to investigate, is subjected to a group of individuals with five (or seldom with seven) possible alternatives to answer: (i) strongly agree, (ii) agree, (iii) uncertain, (iv) disagree and (v) strongly disagree) (Carifio and Perla, 2007)

Regarding this research, the procedure used for the construction of the Likert scale was based on the identification of the dimensions of the object of analysis. In fact, the author made some technical choices, breaking down the original concept into various dimensions with the formulation of a specific number of items containing both favourable and unfavourable statements about the dimension that must be translated to scale. Also, this scale was used because the statements, possibly expressed in conditional terms, express value judgments, and they were equally divided between in favour and against (Pearse, 2011).



One of the problems that could potentially threaten the validity and reliability of the quantitative research is the respondents' intention to choose the 'uncertain' response option (i.e. the third answer of a five-point Likert scale). Certain survey participants who are inclined to skip questions might unconsciously choose this response, which does not bear any value to the research findings (Holtom et al., 2006). On the other hand, the availability of this option provides the respondents with additional freedom to express uncertainty or unwillingness to give a direct answer.

## **5.6 Justification for using job embeddedness as an aggregate factor**

As stated by Mitchell *et al.* (2001), job embeddedness is a fundamental mediating process intended to link on-the-job and off-the-job factors with employee retention. Merely, it represents the set of affective and non-reasons that lead an employee to stay in a specific workplace. The three dimensions, fit, links and sacrifice, have a component related to the employees' community and workplace. All these factors obviously have a different impact on employees according to their social status, age, length of service, role, position and relevance of the organisation. The relevance of job embeddedness as an aggregate factor lies in the fact that it can help to understand and explain not only the forces and reasons that keep workers to stay in their organisations but also the adverse factors that lead them to leave. Also, job embeddedness generates two main hypotheses:

1. Job embeddedness is negatively linked to employee willingness to leave.
2. Job embeddedness enhances the opportunity of forecasting turnover.

Even though many empirical studies identified the predictors and consequences of on-the-job embeddedness, they still failed to approach the concept of off-the-job embeddedness in detail (Tian et al., 2015; Collins et al., 2015). Alternatively, the current research realises the dual nature of job embeddedness and admits that on-the-job and off-the-job embeddedness create what is implied under work-life conflict or imbalance (Holtom and O'Neill, 2004). At the same time, on-the-job and off-the-job embeddedness have identical dimensions as outlined by Mitchell's et al. (2001) model. However, the current research does not attempt to approach the effects of off-the-job embeddedness in a straightforward manner, claiming that off-the-job embeddedness inevitably leads to high turnover intentions. On the contrary, Lee et al. (2004) argued that employees with a high degree of off-the-job embeddedness are unlikely to quit their organisation of employment because they have to support an adequate level of social life and remain

financially secure. Job embeddedness should be viewed as an aggregate factor because it is a combined response to a group of predictors (i.e. selective staffing, extensive training, employee compensation, etc.). It was noted before that such HRM-related predictor as supervisor support cannot be viewed in isolation from other factors, since they are complementary (Eisenberger et al., 2002). Despite the relevance of job embeddedness is represented by its aggregation force, this factor represents a relevant factor in the overall retention phenomenon in the organisations under analysis. As stated by Afsar and Badir (2016), an eventual relocation of workers, even if paid, from their community will generate in the long period some hidden costs due to high turnover. Vice versa, helping workers to be more involved in their community generates several benefits for them and competitive advantages for their organisations, due to higher commitment and lower turnover.

## **5.7 Questionnaire Translation**

According to Hines (1993), implementing research measures developed in a different societal context can create challenges for researchers. Thus, given that the survey questionnaire was developed in English and designed for Western respondents, it was necessary to translate the questionnaire and the measurement scale into Arabic to facilitate the participants' comprehension. Hence, several methods were used to translate the measurements to minimise the risk of potential mistakes (Brislin, 1970; Harkness, Van de Vijver, and Mohler, 2003; Su and Parham, 2002). In order to eliminate translation errors in the questionnaire, the researcher hired specialised bi-directional Arabic-English translators using Brislin's (1970) back-translation method. This method is based on an operation that consists of taking a translated text and "going back" to the source language without consulting the original text in order to guarantee the quality of the translation. The use of this procedure is extremely important to verify that the meaning of the original text has been transmitted in the translation in a coherent and adequate way. Furthermore, performing a back-translation can be very useful for recovering historical documents that may have been lost, and only the translation remains. At this juncture, with the creation of a back-translation, researcher can have an idea of what the text would have been in its original language. Similarly, if a document is suspected of being a translation, and not an original, the use of back-translation can be made to check, for example, that puns and idioms, among other things, have more sense in the hypothetical original language (Tyupa, 2011). Therefore, for this specific research, the procedure required that after the

translation there was a back translation, that is a translation of the "inverse" questionnaire, from the target language to the source language, to verify that the final "product" was effectively comparable to the source text, and that no errors or ambiguities in terms of meaning have occurred in the translation process. When the back translation is shown incongruity, the process started from the beginning with a new translation of the original text towards the target language and repeated until it was reached a flawless translation. In fact, to ensure that the Arabic translation of the constructs accurately reflected the original scale, further backchecking was done to ensure the reliability and validity of the questionnaire by sending both original and translated versions to three English language lecturers at the King Abdul-Aziz University who translated them from English to Arabic and from Arabic to English and made any necessary adjustments. All three lecturers were fluent in both Arabic and English. Both versions of the questionnaire, the Arabic and the original English version, were provided to the respondents, giving them a choice to respond in either language.

Additionally, the measurements were sent to the translation department at King Abdul-Aziz University, where four academics were asked to translate the questionnaires and make any necessary adjustments. The questionnaires were also given to an academic staff that specialises in the Arabic language to make further amendments and ensure a perfect match between the Arabic and English versions. As it may be seen from the back-translation process described above, professional expertise was used to make the questionnaire forms available for both English and Arabic speakers. The researcher intentionally did not use any machine methods of translation (e.g. Google Translate or other electronic translation tools). Changing the translation methodology would mean decreasing the quality of the output. Since the questionnaires were public, no internal or personal information was delivered to the translators. Furthermore, checking the quality of translation by different specialists allowed for implementing the 'triangulation' technique and eliminating all possible mistakes at the early stage (Saunders et al., 2009).

Finally, the validity of the questionnaires was also ensured through a pilot study involving pre-test procedures. Copies of the survey were sent to 200 members of staff that were selected from each organisation to complete the questionnaire to make sure the questions were clear and to identify any ambiguity that might affect the respondents' responses. Out of the 200 questionnaires that were sent out, 83 of these were completed and returned to the researcher. The pilot study helped the researcher remove any misunderstanding and

any other lingering problem in the questionnaire. The researcher recognises that professional translation may not have eliminated all concerns related to some concepts. However, it helped to minimise the problem of generating false results as a result of inaccurate translation (Dorfman et al., 1997, p.248).

## **5.8 Pilot Study**

As noted, when discussing validity and reliability, one approach for ensuring these requirements are met is to conduct a pilot study. This term refers to a small-scale initial data collection that is undertaken before the main data collection and detailed analysis. The aim is to evaluate the feasibility of the survey instrument and crucially validity and reliability. The benefits of a pilot study are that they can assist in the prediction and identification of appropriate sample size, and identify any areas of the study design, which may require improvement (Hulley *et al.*, 2013). In essence, they are a means of pre-testing research instruments for objectivity, the accuracy of measures and contribute to the achievement of content and criterion validity, as well as overall reliability in terms of measuring the right variables for the achievement of the objectives (Lancaster et al., 2004).

The focus of the current work on examining the mediating role of on-job embeddedness to the relationship between selected HR practices and intent to remain of Saudi construction employees, through a quantitative questionnaire was therefore subjected to a pilot study to ensure reliability and validity of the questions posed to the respondents. Saunders *et al.* (2009) indicated that any survey instrument should be piloted before the main data collection. The value of this process is that it allows for refinement and clarification of question structure, the flow of questions and overall delivery mechanisms to ensure that the main data collection and subsequent analysis are clear, focused and appropriate to the research objectives and goals. Also, initial analysis can be undertaken to determine if the approaches adopted are appropriate without committing resources to the main work.

Van Teijlingen and Hundley (2001) underline the importance of pilot studies and not that following this route can provide advance indications of where failure may occur in the main research project, whether protocols have been correctly followed and the appropriateness and complexity of research instruments.

Also, the same authors also highlight some key objectives for undertaking a pilot study including as already noted assessment of validity and credibility, the time required for completion of assessments (in this case the questionnaire), methods of delivery and complexity of the questions. Given the importance of clarity and lack of bias in any survey instrument, this is a crucial element of the pilot study process. Pilot studies are also beneficial for assessing the internal consistency of a range of test items, which is particularly important when several constructs are being investigated as in this case where OJE, intention to remain and HR practices formed part of the research study. A further benefit of the pilot study and initial analysis process, as noted by Kim (2011) is that pilot studies may frequently identify practical issues in following a selected research procedure. For example, in the current research, this meant ensuring that the management of construction organisations was aware of the questionnaire distribution, but also ensuring sufficient access to an adequate number of participants could be achieved in the time available. The pilot study was undertaken between October 2015 and December 2015 using construction industry employees, to match the target of the main study. Two hundred copies of the pilot questionnaire were distributed, via email and personal contacts. Eighty-three completed questionnaires were returned, a response rate of 41%, and it was identified that completion time was between 11 and 29 minutes.

Furthermore, the response rate of 52% suggested that there was a potential that a number of the questions or the instructions for completion were not clear. The result of these findings from the pilot showed that it was necessary to send out more questionnaires than had been originally considered to ensure achievement of the required sample size (see Appendix G). It was further identified from the pilot study that there was a need to review the structure of the questions to ensure clarity and remove any ambiguity which could impact on the results. Also, the full data collection incorporated indications to the participants of how long it would take to complete the questionnaire, which had not to be included in the initial pilot instructions. This was one practical benefit of undertaking the pilot study.

Furthermore, the results of the analysis suggested that OJE is a potential mediating variable in the relationship between HR practices and intention to remain, which supported moving forward to the main study and data collection.

Also, in order to comply with ethical considerations and ensure informed consent, a cover letter was sent to the pilot study participants indicating the objectives of the work, that

their participation was voluntary and confirming that no personal information would be requested. Following feedback from the pilot study, the letter was adjusted to confirm these details and include details of how long the questionnaire would take to complete. Having utilised the pilot study to refine and improve the questionnaire, removing ambiguity or potential bias, it was felt that major benefits had been achieved and improvements made to the reliability and validity of the final work. The pilot study results were not included in the final data analysis processes. In order to avoid contamination or exposure issues as highlighted by Van Teijlingen and Hundley (2001), none of the pilot study participants was included in the final sample.

## **5.9 Reliability and Validity**

In order to demonstrate the viability of a study, in other words, that the work is making a strong contribution to the field under investigation, the methodology must consider the constructs of validity and reliability (Golafshani, 2003). The term reliability is a measure of whether the findings of work, such as the current study can be repeated. In effect, whether if the work were to be undertaken again in the future, would the same outcomes be achieved. If the data is reliable, then subsequent works would achieve the same results (Noble and Smith, 2015). As part of the process of assessing reliability, therefore, it is important that those who are collecting data, or observing behaviour are in agreement over what is being recorded if the data is to be seen as reliable. Furthermore, reliability can also be applied to individual measures within a study, for example, if the same questionnaire were given to the respondents at a later date, their responses should be similar if the questionnaire is reliable (Drost, 2011). To ensure the reliability of the work being undertaken into on-job embeddedness a defined and structured pilot study was undertaken to ensure the reliability of the survey instrument and achieve assurances that should be the work be repeated, similar outcomes would result.

The construct of validity refers to how credible or believable the results and methods adopted are considered to be, and crucially how genuine and accurate the findings are (Fellows and Liu, 2015). Validity has two aspects that need to be considered in any research work – internal and external validity, although these can be further defined, into construct, face, discrimination and criterion validity. In a broad sense, validity is a measure of how well the instruments and processes measure what they are intended to measure (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016). The second aspect of validity, external validity

refers to whether or not the results achieved with one population (e.g. Saudi construction workers) can be generalised to other populations (for example, other construction workers in different settings, or other industries). For the work to have external validity, it should be possible to apply the findings to other cultures and other industries (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016). As the current research study is based on a real-world scenario, the observations and outcomes would be anticipated to have high external validity and thus generalizability. The challenge was in achieving high internal validity, and again, the pilot study was instrumental in ensuring that the main data collection was measuring the right factors to achieve the study objectives. It is also pertinent to recognise that a relationship exists between reliability and validity. For example, if a questionnaire regarding job embeddedness results in different outcomes if it is repeated with the same population, there is unlikely to be sufficient reliable information to make predictions and generalisations. At the same time, if a test is reliable (i.e. outcomes are consistent), it does not necessarily follow that it is also valid. In essence, therefore, reliability is a necessary condition for assessing validity but is insufficient by itself to indicate the validity of a study, which needs to be assessed separately (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016). This can be achieved by looking at content, face discrimination and criterion validity.

Face validity refers to how far a measurement method, for example, a questionnaire appears, on the surface (or face) to measure the construct being investigated. In a questionnaire about job embeddedness; therefore, this would mean questions on satisfaction, relationship with peers and other related concepts (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016). The challenge with face validity is that it can only be informally assessed and as such, is weak evidence of validity. Content validity, however, may be more effective as it is an evaluation or measure of how far a questionnaire covers the construct under investigation. In the context of OJE therefore, this would mean that the context should include items relating to workload, peer relationships and working conditions, rather than just one of these (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016). The testing of content validity is generally achieved through checking measurement approaches against conceptual definitions of the construct under investigation.

Similarly, criterion validity measures how far scores that are achieved are correlated with other expected variables (or criteria), as Bryman (2016) highlights. For example, positive scores in terms of peer relationships should be positively correlated with the intent to

remain. If positive correlations were found, this would suggest a low level of criterion validity in the measure.

In contrast, discriminant validity is how far scores on a measurement scale (such as a questionnaire) are not correlated with conceptually distinct variables and criteria (Bryman, 2016). Overall, validity and reliability cannot be definitively established by one study, but by assessing patterns across multiple works. However, ensuring that there is consideration given to the achievement of validity and reliability through assessment of measures and pilot testing ensured that the current work could be considered to have a foundation for both constructs.

As mentioned above, a test is valid if it concerns precisely what it intends to evaluate. Despite the fact that it may seem obvious, but many tests are not valid in the context in which they are used. For instance, it can be argued as below:

Validity = ability of a test to measure precisely what it intends to measure

For instance, this research can be considered valid since it was used an appropriate survey/questionnaire to explore the Influence of human resources management on job embeddedness and voluntary turnover intention in the constructions industry in Saudi Arabia. Also, since this research has confirmed some past studies and models concerning the same topic, it can be argued that it is valid and consistent with research that has been developed in other business fields and geographical area. In fact, validity is nothing more than the degree of correspondence between what the measurement test is and what the researchers wanted to measure at the beginning of the research.

A test is reliable when it accurately measures what it aims to measure. In other words, when it provides constant and repeatable measurements regardless of who measures when it is measured and where it is measured (Taherdoost, 2016). This is fairly trivial for objective type tools (provided that the correction criteria are clear and unambiguous), but it is not for the use of descriptors in the observation of oral production performances (Carmines and Zeller, 1979):

Reliability = constancy with which an instrument measures a variable date

The reliability of this research was due to a low level of subjectivity and variability of the interpretation of its results due to the use of positivism as an approach. Also, incidentally, if an instrument is not valid, it is not even worth checking to see if it is reliable (Carmines



and Zeller, 1979). Reliability was also achieved by controlling the different phases of construction and use and having an agreement between the measurement scales to which they refer. To ensure a high degree of reliability, the instructions have been made extremely clear with the questions formulated in a no ambiguous way and translated in Arabic to avoid lost in translation or misunderstanding (Taherdoost, 2016).

## 5.10 Sampling Strategy

Sampling has been defined as the process of using measurements derived from a percentage of a population to arrive at conclusions. Hence, the sampling frame is a subset that is derived from a larger target population (Scott and Morrison, 2007). According to Zikmund et al. (2010), it is unrealistic and unnecessary to try and examine every element in the target population. In this regard, the six-step approach recommended by Malhorta and Birks (2007) was adopted as a sampling strategy for this study (Figure 5. 3).

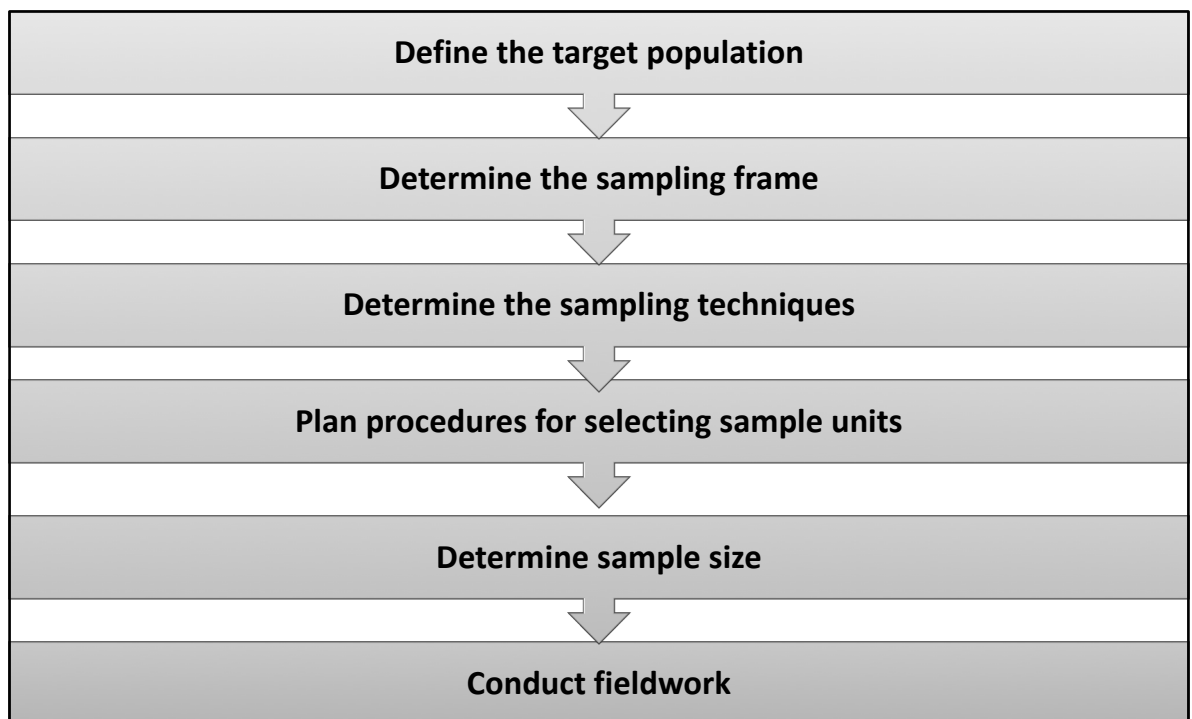


Figure 5. 3: 6-Step Sampling Strategy (Malhorta and Birks, 2007).

### 5.10.1 Step One: Target Population

Also known as the population universe, the target population represents the entire population set that is of interest to the researcher. In the context of the current research, the target population is defined as all Saudi nationals working in the Saudi Arabia

construction industry (Zikmund et al., 2010). According to the 53<sup>rd</sup> Annual Report SAMA (2017) statistics, the total number of Saudis working in the private sector was 1,811,651 in 2017. Furthermore, the total employment rate for the construction sector is estimated at 40.7% of the total employment figures for Saudi Arabia, and the Saudization ratio is placed at 43.1% (Jadwa Investment, 2019). Hence, the target population has been estimated as follows:

- Number of construction employees in Saudi Arabia =  $.407 * 1,811,651 = 737,341$
- Target population/Saudi national construction employees =  $.431 * 737,341 = 317,794$

### **5.10.2 Step Two: Sampling Frame**

Having identified the target population, the next step was to define the sampling frame. The sampling frame is defined as the list of actual cases from which the research sample will be drawn (Saunders et al., 2009; Taherdoost, 2016). This was determined by identifying the regions with the most significant proportion of workers employed by construction organisations. Hence, the areas identified were Dammam and Riyadh because of the large concentration of construction activities in both regions. Dammam, also known as the Eastern province, accounted for 35.8% of the total housing projects in 2015/16 and together with Riyadh, the two regions account for over 50% of the total housing projects in Saudi Arabia (SAMA, 2016). Due to bureaucracy and generally unfavourable dispositions of Saudi private organisations toward granting permission for research, it is almost impossible to gain access to research Saudi private organisations without the help of personal contacts.

Furthermore, due to their legal structure, Saudi private organisations are not legally required to provide public information about their organisation. Hence, it was difficult to ascertain the number of employees in organisations without the cooperation of personal contacts. Furthermore, to ensure the suitability of the organisations that were selected for the collection of the required data, additional criteria for determining the sample frame organisation was that they must have an established HR department that engaged in a variety of HRM practices that included the six antecedent practices that were investigated in this study.

Based on the above criteria and rationale for choosing the surveyed organisations, the researcher based the target population on two large construction organisations in Riyadh and Dammam that both had established HRM departments and were willing to grant researchers access to the research to collect the required data. Sampling units included in the sampling frame were supervisors, managers, regular employees and professionals from the operational/lower levels. For ethical reasons and due to the sensitivity on the survey information, which concerns HR practices and turnover intentions, the two organisations are referred to as “Construction Company A” and “Construction Company B” in this study to protect their confidentiality. Construction Company A (CCA), based in Dammam, had an estimated total of 7000 employees of which 400 were Saudi nationals while Construction Company B (CCB), in Riyadh, had a total of 5000 employees, of which 200 were Saudi nationals. Hence, the sampling frame was composed of 600 individuals (see Table 5. 5 and Table 5. 6).

Another issue facing the study was ensuring the reliability and validity of the sample (Saunders et al., 2009; Taherdoost, 2016). For validity, the sample only included companies that had previously established distinct HRM departments and HRM structures (such as the distribution of internal company guidelines on HRM). This meant that the participants were at least partially familiar with contemporary HRM and HRM practices (SAMA, 2016). One critique was that it was impossible to account for reliability, as the researcher was only able to gather data from organisations that provided access to their staff. To amend this, the data collection process included 6 antecedent HRM practices, with the responses of the participants reflecting their firms’ approach to the implementation of these methods.

### **5.10.3 Step three: Sampling Technique**

The two broad categories of sampling methods are probability and non-probability sampling. Probability sampling refers to a sampling method in which the researcher sets up a random selection procedure to ensure that all elements of the population have an equal chance of being selected for the study (Creswell, 2003). In contrast, non-probability sampling, also known as purposeful or non-random sampling, relates to a sampling method in which the sample is deliberately chosen based on the researcher’s judgment or in line with specific qualifying criteria, which means that it is only suitable for research that does not intend to generalise results beyond the study sample (Patton 2002).

In the case of this study, probability sampling was selected as it provided great validity, less risk of bias and greater scope for generalisation in comparison to non-random sampling approaches (Saunders et al., 2009). This sampling is called probabilistic since, for each case, the probability of being extracted is known and is different from zero. It allows the inference or the generalization of the results to the whole population (Di Paola *et al.*, 2018). The main features are that the average of the population is equal to the average of the sample. In this sampling, the knowledge of the universe is fundamental. In fact, in order to be able to extract cases from the population in a probabilistic way it is necessary to have data on the theoretical universe, that is, it is necessary to have information about the characteristics of the population (Agresti and Finlay, 2009):

$N$  = corresponds to the number of subjects in the population under investigation

$n$  = corresponds to the number of subjects in the sample

$K = n / N$  = sampling ratio

This method has been selected since it is the simplest sample selection technique; the procedure is substantially similar to the scheme of extraction from  $s$ . A simple random sample is a sample in which every individual of the population has the same probability of being chosen. If  $n$  indicates the size of the sample (number of sample elements) and with  $N$  the size of the population, (number of population elements), in the simple random sampling the probability that each individual of the population has to be chosen at the first extraction (probability ratio) is  $1 / N$  (Ross, 2008).

More specifically, concerning the guarantee of the randomness of the extractions, sampling by simple randomisation (or simple random sampling) has been carried out by extracting a certain amount of units from the statistical population. Randomness is obtained by extracting numbers from a list (called sampling list) in which all the individuals of the population to be studied are present (Di Paola *et al.*, 2018). The method must guarantee the randomness of the extraction, and for this specific purpose it was used the software MS Excel to generate random numbers that were allocated to each member of staff within the sampling frame. Simple randomisation (like other case-based methods) is a valid method for sampling because it has the following characteristics (Agresti and Finlay, 2009):

- Responds to the characteristics of a good sampling: each individual on the sampling list has the same probability of joining the sample

- Is a method based on randomness, and therefore allows the estimate of the reliability of the results obtained.

Specifically, the researcher used the ‘=RAND()’ function in MS Excel to generate a column of random numbers ranging from 0 to 1. The number of rows in this column was equal to the number of the individuals in the sampling frame. The author then used the ‘=RANK()’ function to attain the relative ranks of each number. Using the function ‘=INDEX()’, MS Excel was able to match the ranks to the names of the possible participants. In other words, the sample only included individuals the rank of the random numbers for which was higher than their colleagues. One caveat was the possibility of ‘=RAND()’ generating equal random numbers for different employees. To address this, the author manually checked the final sample list for duplicates.

It should be noted that there are situations in which this method is impractical or even inapplicable. The main disadvantage is to request the prior numbering of all individuals of the statistical population; then, once the numbers have been extracted, the corresponding subjects must be identified in the population. However, sampling by simple randomization is easily applied when there is an already numbered population, preferably composed of a small number of units (Ross, 2008). Another typical application of simple randomization concerns the extraction of units already numbered and recorded on cards or in a computer database.

#### **5.10.4 Step Four: Plan procedure for selecting sampling units**

According to Daniel and Cross (1999), a scientific sample is required in order to make valid deductions about a population. Several sampling techniques are associated with probability sampling, including simple random, stratified, cluster, systematic and multistage sampling. In the case of the current study, simple random sampling was implemented, which is a sample selection method in which all of the population members have an equal chance of being selected as part of the sample (Cooper and Schindler, 2008). Given the different categories of employees in the surveyed organisations, random sampling was applied to select an appropriate number of respondents and ensure proportionate representation of each category of employees. According to Saunders et al. (2009), random sampling requires can be done by selecting numbers randomly from the sampling frame or by utilising random tables or a computer random number generator. For this research, simple random sampling without replacement was implemented to

ensure that each sample unit was sampled only once (Daniel and Cross, 1999). Sampling has been defined as follows: “If a sample of size n is drawn from a population of size N in such a way that every possible sample of size n has the same chance of being selected, the sample is called a simple random sample” (Daniel and Cross, 1999, p.7). One method of simple random sampling that was implemented was to randomly allocate a number to every unit in the population (Collis and Hussey, 2009). Hence, a unique number was allocated to each member of staff within the sampling frame; then, numbers were randomly selected until the desired sample size was achieved.

Table 5. 5: CCA Random Sampling Size by Worker Category

<b>Worker type strata</b>	<b>Number of Staff</b>	<b>Sample Size</b>
<b>Supervisors</b>	84	71
<b>Line/Project Managers</b>	67	54
<b>Professionals</b>	84	72
<b>Middle and low-level management employee</b>	165	102
<b>Total</b>	400	299

Table 5. 6: CCB Random Sampling Size by Worker Category.

<b>Worker type strata</b>	<b>Number of Staff</b>	<b>Sample Size</b>
<b>Supervisors</b>	41	35
<b>Line/Project Managers</b>	33	26
<b>Professionals</b>	43	35
<b>Middle and low-level management employee</b>	83	50
<b>Total</b>	200	146

According to Zikmund et al. (2010), a reliable measure of the entire population can be achieved through appropriate probability sampling of a small portion of the total population, and larger samples sizes are considered to be more representative than smaller samples. From this perspective, the researcher made use of relatively large samples that are comparable to the average sample size utilised by previous similar studies (Allen and Shannock, 2013; Juhdi et al., 2013).

### **5.10.5 Step Five: Determine Sample Size**

In terms of the sample size, according to Sekaran and Bougie (2009), for multivariate statistical analysis that involve regression analysis, it is important that the sample size is at least ten times the number of the research variables. For the current research, there were nine research variables in total. Hence, this requirement was met and exceeded, given the total sample size of 374 respondents. Furthermore, in order to generate a defensible sample size, the widely used Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) table for generating sample size of known population (Table 5. 8) and Saunders et al.'s (2009) minimum sample size generator table for 95% confidence interval were also used to further validate sample size adequacy. This also ensured the accuracy of the sample based on computing percentages that provide a given level of accuracy for a given percentage of the time.

Based on the established population size of 600, any sample size above the minimum of

234 can be considered as statistically representative (Table 5. 7). Hence, the current study sample size of 374 provides adequate representation. Furthermore, as can be seen from the statistically generated minimum samples sizes for the different population sizes presented in (Table 5.8). 95% confidence level is also ascertained for the current study's sample size, which is within the acceptable standard margin of error used by most researchers (Niles, 2006; Saunders et al., 2009).

Moreover, in order to determine the minimum sample size for the study, the researcher followed the recommended method of using the response rate obtained from the pilot study to predict an appropriate minimum sample size that can then be adjusted for the study (Saunders et al., 2009). Out of the 200 questionnaires that were distributed for the pilot study, 83 completed questionnaires were returned. Based on the proportion of respondents that completed the pilot survey (41.5%), the following formula was used to calculate the minimum sample size (Saunders et al., 2009):

$$n = p\% \times q\% \times \left[ \frac{z}{e\%} \right]^2$$

Where:

n is the minimum sample size required;

p% is the proportion that completed the pilot study; (41.5%)

q% is the proportion that did not complete pilot study; (58.5 %)

z is the z value corresponding to the level of confidence required (1.96);

e% is the margin of error required (.05).

$$n = (41.5) * (58.5) * (1.96/5) (1.96/5) = 2427.75 * 0.154 = \mathbf{373.87}$$

Hence, the figure of 374 respondents corresponds to the minimum sample size based on the pilot survey response rate. Furthermore, to calculate the adjusted minimum sample size (n') for the current study, the following formula was used (Saunders et al., 2009):

$$n' = \frac{n}{1 + \left( \frac{n}{N} \right)}$$

Where:



$n'$  = adjusted minimum sample size;

$n = 373.87$  (minimum samples size as calculated above);

$N = 600$  (total population).

Hence, the adjusted minimum sample size equals 230, calculated as:

$$n' = 373.87/1+(373.87/600) = 373.87/1+0.623 = 373.87/1.623 = \mathbf{230.23}$$

Table 5. 7: Table for Determining Sample Size from a given Population.

$N$	$S$	$N$	$S$	$N$	$S$
10	10	220	140	1200	291
15	14	230	144	1300	297
20	19	240	148	1400	302
25	24	250	152	1500	306
30	28	260	155	1600	310
35	32	270	159	1700	313
40	36	280	162	1800	317
45	40	290	165	1900	320
50	44	300	169	2000	322
55	48	320	175	2200	327
60	52	340	181	2400	331
65	56	360	186	2600	335
70	59	380	191	2800	338
75	63	400	196	3000	341
80	66	420	201	3500	346
85	70	440	205	4000	351
90	73	460	210	4500	354
95	76	480	214	5000	357
100	80	500	217	6000	361
110	86	550	226	7000	364
120	92	600	234	8000	367
130	97	650	242	9000	368
140	103	700	248	10000	370
150	108	750	254	15000	375
160	113	800	260	20000	377
170	118	850	265	30000	379
180	123	900	269	40000	380
190	127	950	274	50000	381
200	132	1000	278	75000	382
210	136	1100	285	100000	384

Note.— $N$  is population size.  
 $S$  is sample size.

(Krejcie and Morgan, 1970, p. 608)

Table 5. 8: Minimum sample sizes for different population sizes at .95 confidence level.

Population	Margin of error			
	5%	3%	2%	1%
50	44	48	49	50
100	79	91	96	99
150	108	132	141	148
200	132	168	185	196
250	151	203	226	244
300	168	234	267	291
400	196	291	343	384
500	217	340	414	475
750	254	440	571	696
1 000	278	516	706	906
2 000	322	696	1091	1655
5 000	357	879	1622	3288
10 000	370	964	1936	4899
100 000	383	1056	2345	8762
1 000 000	384	1066	2395	9513
10 000 000	384	1067	2400	9595

Source: Saunders et al. (2009)

## 5.10.6 Step Six: Fieldwork

### 5.10.6.1 Time Frame

In terms of the research timeframe, a cross-sectional timeframe was employed for the measurement of the selected units on all the research variables as this allowed the researcher to research a specific point in time, hence providing cost advantages and time efficiency (Abdulai and Owusu-Ansah, 2014). This is in contrast to the alternative longitudinal timeframe which would have required the use of a survey over an extended period, thereby incurring extra costs.

Furthermore, the longitudinal timeframe was not compatible with the timeframe of the current study, and it would have been impossible to gain access to the respondents over an extended period. In order to collect the primary research data, the questionnaires were distributed to the two surveyed organisations in Riyadh and Dammam, both of which are the two largest cities in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The survey was implemented from

the 20<sup>th</sup> of January to the 5<sup>th</sup> of April 2016.

#### **5.10.6.2 Procedures of Data Collection**

In both organisations, the researcher's contacts were used to make initial contact with the HR Manager and seek permission to distribute the questionnaires to the employees, specifying Saudi nationals were the population of interest. Following this initial contact, the researcher obtained permission to conduct the survey, and it was agreed that the researcher would provide the HR Departments with copies of the questionnaire, the research information sheet, the participant consent form and any other relevant documentation before access could be granted. In order to gain the support of the HR managers, the researcher took time to explain the benefits of this research, emphasising that it could generate useful insights that could help improve the relationships between the organisation and its employees. Additionally, the researcher promised to provide the organisation with a copy of the research findings.

The data collection process was initiated by sending an internal email to all Saudi employees in the organisations via the organisation group email system introducing the survey and explaining the research objectives. To seek the participation of the employees and help the potential respondents filling in the survey, a cover letter was included to explain that their participation was voluntary, and that individual responses and personal information would remain strictly confidential. The purpose of the research was also explained, and they were assured that they could opt out and withdraw from the study at any point without explanation. The letter also insisted that their participation would be used only for this research. Also, the researcher's contact details were provided, and the participants were encouraged to contact participant if they had any questions or comments.

The questionnaires were distributed using the online data collection method. The HR manager in each organisation played a crucial role in facilitating the web-questionnaire, as the researcher was not able to access employees' emails. Both HR Departments emailed the employees the link to the survey via the internal email network. This ensured the anonymity of participants' identity, as it was not possible for the researcher to track their email or contact details. One problem with online links is that respondents may ignore them. Hence after two weeks, a phone call was made to the HR manager to send a reminder to the employees to encourage them to participate in this study by completing the online survey.

The Survey Monkey link for the online questionnaire was emailed to a sample of 445 Saudi construction employees. The link also included a consent form, research information sheet and instructions for completing the questionnaire. The data collection process took place over two and a half months, and several gentle reminders were sent via the HR admin contacts until enough responses were received above the recommended minimum sample size. In total, 379 questionnaires were returned, including five invalid responses. Overall, a total of 374 employees validly completed the questionnaire across the two surveyed companies, representing a response rate of approximately 86%.

However, during the data collection, one of the most common challenges that researchers can face, regardless if they are conducting a face-to-face/group interview or a survey/questionnaire by email, is the presence of biased answers from the respondents. More specifically, is it not very rare that in survey sampling, respondents who have been selected for a specific social investigation cannot, for several reasons such as unwillingness or inability, take part on it. Consequently, nonresponse bias can be defined as the bias resulting from a wide gap existing between the percentage of respondents and non-respondents. Non-response is an issue that is very often faced when the researcher uses as the main data collection tool a survey/questionnaire by email that presents a considerably low response rate. Also, the non-response phenomenon is relatively recent. In fact, for many decades the face-to-face interview was the norm, and only in the 1990s researchers opted for the telephone interview, which at the time provided adequate coverage and a substantial reduction in data collection costs. However, new technologies such as mobile phones made traditional telephone interviews less convenient due to high rejection rates and lack of response, creating new concerns about coverage. These innovations have led to a methodological change from a research environment dominated by a personal interaction between the interviewer and the respondent to a method that is highly impersonal and guided by the interviewee (Dillman, 2000). Therefore, recently, many researchers adopted mixed-mode surveys that use multiple methods to contact or receive information from respondents. One of the main reasons for the growing interest in this type of surveys is the concern that coverage in any detection mode may be problematic and that therefore the use of multiple modes may compensate the problems affecting the use of a single one. Common method bias (CMB) occurs when, during an investigation, the researcher faces a considerable amount of variations in responses that are due more to the data collection tool used for the research than the attitude, behaviour and biases of the respondents (Podsakoff et al., 2012).

Also, there is the need to take into account that this phenomenon generates several criticisms for research, since the tool or mean used to collect data is usually designed and adopted by a researcher to precisely reduce the biases of the respondents and provide valid and reliable results, rather than misleading or incorrect research findings. Consequently, the used tool or mean generate some biases and variations in responses that have to be analysed by the researcher and maybe “cleaned up” to achieve the initial prefixed goals (Fuller *et al.*, 2016). To summarise, the research findings will be negatively affected by these wrong biased tools. However, despite that it is often considerably difficult to assess whether research provided results that are biased or not, in terms of response rate, according to what was reported above, this investigation did not face any no response issue, since 86% of responses is considered high and more than satisfactory.

The presence of both common method bias and non-response bias meant that the possible theoretical and practical contribution that could be made by this thesis was limited (Fuller *et al.*, 2016). To avoid non-response bias from the individuals within the sample frame, the researcher sent 2 e-mail reminders to the participants. The message included the link to the questionnaire survey as well as a brief review of confidentiality and anonymity. This was meant to alleviate any possible ethical concerns facing the sample. As was implied by Fuller *et al.* (2016) and Saunders *et al.* (2009), the inclusion of a time delay could refresh the short-term memory of the participants. The questionnaire form included an explicit message (‘Please, take a short break if you feel like it’) to encourage this. However, it was unknown whether the respondents followed this recommendation.

### **5.11 Control variables (Demographic variables)**

Demographic data are personal information, including age, gender, tenure, income, level of education or professional position. According to studies on organisational job embeddedness, such variables can be considered as “nuisance variables” (Becker, 1992). Several variables, such as age, job tenure, seniority, education level, marital status or gendered, are measured and used as control variables in regression analysis. The role of personal characteristics has been removed from this analysis given that research also suggests that such variables may confound the effects of other independent variables on the intention to remain (Becker, 1992; Becker *et al.*, 1996; Ng *et al.*, 2006; Clugston *et al.*, 2000). Hence, this type of information has been used in this study merely for descriptive purposes. To provide explanations, this relationship is investigated with the three components of interest in this study.

## 5.12 Data Analysis Techniques

The current study adopts a multiple regression to determine the extent of the coherence and direction of the relationship existing among the dependent variables and the independent variables examined through this research (Bentler, 2007). Multiple regression is the obvious generalisation of simple regression when we have more than one explanatory variable (Pallant, 2011). One of the most useful aspects of multiple regression is its ability to statistically represent a conditioned action that would otherwise be impossible to describe (Hayes, 2009). In experimental situations, it is common practice to modify the values of an experimental condition while keeping the others fixed, so as to isolate its effects and be able to estimate them, but such an approach cannot be performed in observational studies. Multiple regression provides a statistical version of this approach (Cohen 1988). This is, in fact, the reasoning that underlies the use of control variables in the multiple regression of variables that are not necessarily of direct interest, but variables with which the researcher wants to correct the analyses. Also, since in this research there is the need to test moderation, in a multiple regression it is sufficient to insert a new variable calculated as the product among the two variables and calculate the standard multiple regression. In this way, it is possible to evaluate how the effect of an independent variable varies with the values of the other variable. In moderate regression, in addition to the effects associated with single variables, we have the effect of interaction. This determines a change in the meaning of the parameters. The effects of the single variables are called linear or of “I” order, while the interaction effect is called “II” order. In the presence of interaction, linear effects express the specific effect of each independent variable on the employee calculated keeping the other 0 constants on the value variable.

The approach taken for analysis of the data was to first code and evaluate the data from the quantitative questionnaires via input into SPSS software. Once the data had been coded, reliability and normality tests were run, combined with a Cronbach’s Alpha test for internal consistency of the data (Treiman, 2014), after which, Spearman correlation and regression analyses were conducted. The value of following this process for the data analysis, which follows a step by step logical process shown below and which is covered in full in Chapter 6, along with definitions, explanations and rationales is that it allows for the processes followed to be replicated in future studies along with enhancing

reliability and validity of the work as noted by Treiman (2014), Nardi (2018), and Cheung and Lau (2008) (see Table 5. 9).

- A) Data screening: Running of basic descriptive and frequencies to identify out of range or incorrectly coded items.
- B) Reliability Testing and examination of internal consistency through the application of the Cronbach's Alpha Test.
- C) Demographics of respondents including age, gender, job title, marital status, years of experience and education level as these were considered to be a control variable.
- D) Correlation analysis and significance testing to identify any linear relationships between variables in work in order to establish any positive relationships between the predictor (or the independent variable, i.e. Selected HR practices, and the outcome, (or dependent variable (i.e. The employee's intention to remain), should be positively related. At the same time, to identify any relationship between the predictor and the mediator (OJE). Once the existence of relationships is established, mediation analysis can be conducted to identify the strength of the mediation effect.
- E) Mediation analysis based on Baron and Kenny's (1986) process. This is a three-step process which involves three regression equations, i.e. first, regressing the dependent variable (IR) on the independent variable (HR practices) second, regressing the mediator (OJE) on the independent variable (HR practices); and third, regressing the dependent variable (IR) on both the independent variable and on the mediator (OJE) according to Baron and Kenny's process.

The aim of following this process of data analysis was that each stage would build on the previous one to facilitate identification of the mediation relationship between OJE, HR practices and intention to remain.

Table 5. 9: Data analysis Techniques used to generate Outcomes

Test Applied	Purpose
1 <b>Descriptive analysis</b>	To describe statistical information with regards to the background information of the respondents which include their age, gender, job title, marital status, years of experience and education level
2 <b>Cronbach Alpha</b>	To determine the reliability of the scale as it helps to determine whether all items are measuring the same factor.
3 <b>Normality test</b>	To determine whether the sample has been taken from a normally distributed population, although a certain level of tolerance is also sometimes accepted.
4 <b>Spearman correlation</b>	To measure the correlation between the variables.
5 <b>Multiple Regression analysis</b>	To examine the direct and mediational effect between variables, a multiple regression analysis was used following a three-step approach outlined by Baron and Kenny (1986).

### 5.13 Justification for Chosen Method to Test Mediation

Spencer (2011) suggests that when testing mediated relationships, Baron and Kenny’s (1986) approach of multiple regression analysis and structural equation modelling (SEM) are the two most widely used methods. While there is support for the SEM approach, the Baron and Kenny route remains, as Spencer (2011) notes, the most extensively applied method for testing mediation relationships. Indeed, the Social Sciences Citation index, according to Zhao *et al.*, 2010) indicates that the 1986 article by Baron and Kenny has been cited by more than 12,000 articles (as of September 2009). This suggests that their process is effective and valid for testing mediation relationships, and it is for this reason that it was adopted for current research.

The key benefit of using Spearman’s correlation to test the relationship between the variables was that this test incorporated the concept of monotonic statistically significant relationships. Variables could be linked through relationships that could not fit the existing definitions of linearity.



For example, the correlation curve could take the form of a curved line instead of a straight (Saunders et al., 2009). Spearman's correlation method allowed for distinguishing statistically significant monotonous relationships, thus increasing the validity of the study (Saunders et al., 2009). In turn, hierarchical regression allowed for ranking the specific elements of the regression framework (Saunders et al., 2009). The limitation, however, was that hierarchical regression was unable to evaluate complex relationships between the variables. In the case of the study, one example would be a possible link between on-the-job embeddedness, other HRM practices and intentions to remain.

#### **5.14 Ethical Considerations**

It is important to conduct research ethically to treat and engage with the research participants, respect their rights and treat their information following principles of confidentiality, data protection and anonymity (Creswell, 2003; Saunders et al., 2009). Zikmund et al. (2010) highlight the importance of transparency in communicating the objectives of the research, citing examples of unethical research practices, whereby sales pitch is sometimes camouflaged as research. Therefore, in order to comply with ethical guidelines, a detailed research information sheet was made available to the participants in advance, stating the research objectives and how the collected data would be collected, stored, used and disposed of. Additionally, this document was signed by the researcher to ensure his commitment to conducting this research following the highest ethical standards.

Furthermore, this problem of transparency is particularly significant in research involving interviews (Zikmund et al., 2010) and according to Dale et al. (as cited in Saunders et al., 2009), there are less ethical issues with questionnaires due to the structured questions which do not require probing responses. Also, participants were informed that details of the research findings would be published online and that copies would also be made available to their employers. In order to reassure the participants of the confidentiality of their data, it was also stressed that the primary research data used in the study would be completely anonymous. Additionally, once the participants were clear about the nature of the research, how it would be used and what was required from them, they were also told to sign a voluntary participation form as evidence of their willingness to freely participate in the survey and that they understood that they were free to pull out of the survey at any

time. Also, to further ensure the anonymity of the participants, they were not required to provide their names or any personal details that could be used to identify them.

### **5.15 Summary**

In developing an effective methodology for a study, which is exploring new constructs, as is the case with this work, it is important that the design is clear, coherent and logical so that the routes taken to achieve conclusions and make recommendations are clear. For this work, the first stage was to identify the most appropriate philosophical underpinning and whether the work would be inductive or inductive, and which data format (qualitative or quantitative) would provide the best fit for the objectives and scope of the work. At the same time, it was also recognised that focused consideration needed to be given to the sample instrument, including testing this rigorously through a pilot study to ensure, as far as possible, lack of ambiguity, bias, and increase the validity and reliability of the overall work. With these areas evaluated and incorporated into the overall study design, the aims of the work were reviewed against possible data analysis approaches and the best fit for clarity in terms of identification of mediation relationships was selected. The final stage in the design process was to ensure that all ethical considerations had been incorporated into the work. Overall, it is felt that the methodology and study design have incorporated all necessary controls and adjustments to ensure an appropriate fit and alignment with the study aims.

## **Chapter Six: Main study Findings and Analysis**

### **6.1 Introduction**

The main aim of this study is to investigate the relation between selected HR practices and intention to remain of national employees. Additionally, this study examines the mediation effect of on-job embeddedness on the relationships between national employees' selected HR practices and their attitudes to their organisations in Saudi construction industry. Also, this research focuses on the relationship between off -the-job embeddedness and the intentions to remain of national employees. Based on these objectives, a quantitative approach was adopted and involved administering a survey questionnaire to collect relevant data from the targeted sample. Hence, as explained in the previous chapter, data were collected from a sample of 374 Saudi nationals working for two construction organisations in Saudi Arabia. Hence, as it is essential to understand the relationship between several independent variables (IV) and dependent variable (DV), a number of statistical tests were conducted to analyse the data collected through the participants' survey . The Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS version 24) was used to analyse the data and test the hypotheses.

### **6.2 Research Hypotheses**

The hypotheses (**H**) upon which this research is based are outlined below:

**H1:** Perceived employee's selection is positively related to intention to remain.

**H1A:** perceived employee's selection is positively related to On-job embeddedness.

**H1-B:** On-job embeddedness mediates the relationship between perceived employee's selection and intention to remain.

**H2:** Perceived extensive training is positively related to intention to remain.

**H2-A** perceived extensive training is positively related to On-job embeddedness.

**H2-B:** On-job embeddedness mediates the relationship between perceived extensive training and intention to remain.

**H3:** Perceived employee compensation is positively related to intention to remain.

**H3-A:** perceived compensation is positively related to On-job embeddedness.

**H3-B:** On-job embeddedness mediates the relationship between perceived compensation of and intention to remain.

**H4:** Perceived employee participation is positively related to intention to remain.

**H4-A:** perceived employee's participation is positively related to On-job embeddedness.

**H4-B:** On-job embeddedness mediates the relationship between perceived participation of and intention to remain.

**H5:** Perceived job security is positively related to intention to remain.

**H5-A:** perceived job security is positively related to On-job embeddedness.

**H5-B:** On-job embeddedness mediates the relationship between perceived job security of and intention to remain.

**H6:** Perceived supervisor support is positively related to intentions to remain.

**H6A:** perceived supervisor support is positively related to On-job embeddedness.

**H6-B:** On-job embeddedness mediates the relationship between perceived supervisor support and intention to remain.

**H7:** On-job embeddedness is positively related to intention to remain.

**H8:** Off-job embeddedness is positively related to intention to remain.

The chapter follows the Steps of research plan, data screening, reliability test, validity test, descriptive analysis of respondent's profiles, normality test and multiple regression (see Figure 6.1).

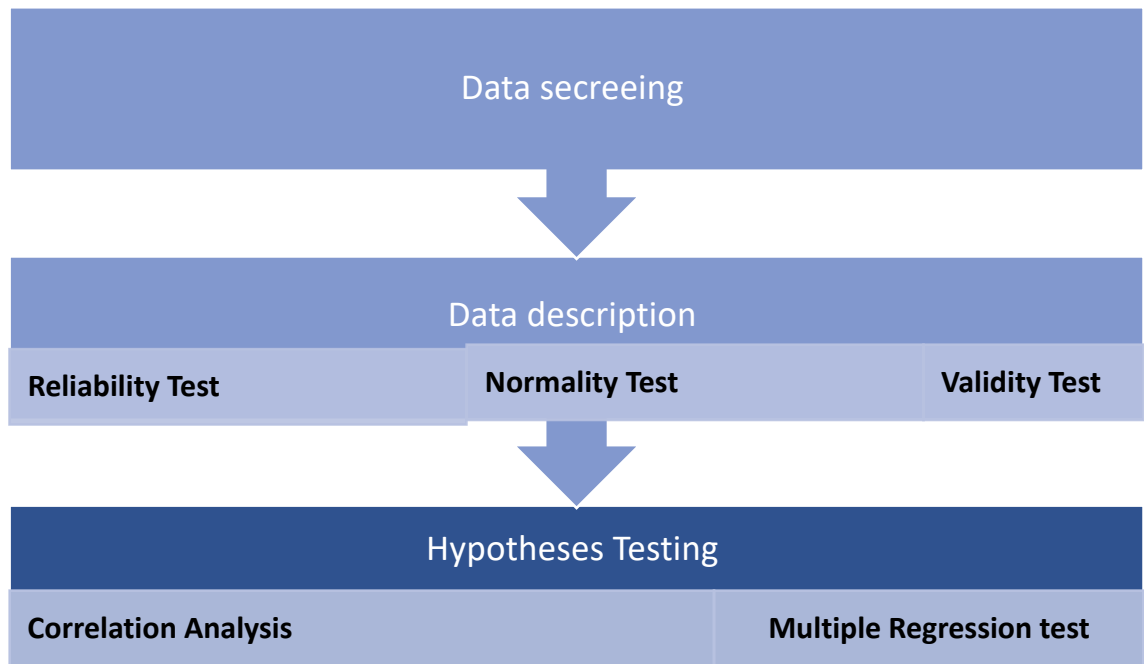


Figure 6. 1: Description of contents of Chapter six

### 6.3 Data Screening

To collect the quantitative data for this research, a total of 445 questionnaires were administered via *SurveyMonkey.com* among Saudi nationals working in the construction industry. In order to maximise the response rate and encourage the participants to complete the questionnaire, after a period of two weeks, the researcher contacted those who had not yet completed the questionnaire. Finally, by the end of the data collection period, 379 completed questionnaires were returned, re-coded and entered onto the SPSS v.24, which corresponds to a response rate of 86.7%. Following the data entry, the collected data were screened for missing values and to ensure that each item had been properly coded (Pallant, 2011). To achieve this, descriptive statistics, using frequency distributions, were conducted for each variable and based on the initial statistical data analysis, no missing values or improperly coded responses were found.

However, among the returned questionnaires, five contained missing responses and were therefore unusable for this research. As a result of this initial sifting process, the questionnaires with missing data were eliminated and excluded from the data analysis, yielding a net return of 374 usable questionnaires. This corresponds to a response rate of 84 percent, which is an acceptable level.

## 6.4 Reliability Testing

In research involving multi-items scales, the Cronbach's alpha test is a widely applied method to determine the reliability of the scale as it helps to determine whether all items are measuring the same factor (De Vellis, 1991). Overall, the scales used in this study aimed to measure the intention to remain and its determinants; a reliability score of .880 was obtained (see Table 6.1) which suggests a high internal consistency (Pallant, 2007). Indeed, according to Nunnally (1978), a value of alpha ( $\alpha$ ) equivalent to 0.70 and above shows that the items of a scale can be deemed reliable. With respect to the instrument employed in this research, the reliability score of the individual scales range from 0.793 to 0.948 (see Table 6. 2) which strongly suggests that this survey instrument is reliable to measure the core variables measured in this study: job embeddedness and the intention to remain.

A sample size larger than 30 and less than 500 is appropriate for most research. Furthermore, in research involving subsamples, such as male and female subsamples, a minimum size of 30 members for each category is necessary in order to generalise the findings. Moreover, in multivariate research including multiple regression analysis, the sample size should be several times, preferably ten times or more, as large as the number of variables in the study.

In addition to the above, in order to measure the internal consistency of a survey instrument involving multi-item scales, it is essential to conduct a reliability test (Churchill, 1979). The term reliability refers to how well a test measures what it is supposed to measure (De Vellis, 1991). In this regard, the Cronbach's alpha test, also referred to as the coefficient alpha, is commonly used to measure the reliability or internal consistency of a dataset. Hence, in this study, this test was used to determine whether the scales used to investigate the constructs of OJE and IR are reliable.

Acceptable values of the Cronbach's alpha range between 0.70 and 0.95, although, as Tavakol and Dennick, (2011) note, low values could mean insufficient questions, poor levels of inter-relation between items or heterogeneous constructs. The basic rationale behind using this test is that the Cronbach's alpha ensures that the data being evaluated is reliable and effective for answering the research questions.

The table below shows the values of the Cronbach's Alpha test; a value of .880 indicates a high level of internal consistency for the sample as it falls at the high end of the

acceptance range for this test as noted by Tavakol and Dennick (2011). To test the internal consistency of an instrument, it is necessary to measure the internal consistency of the overall questionnaire based on its items.

Table 6. 1: Internal Consistency: Cronbach’s Alpha

Cronbach’s Alpha	No. of factors
.880	9 factors

This consistency is further supported if the item-total statistics results for each variable in the research is considered. Hence, as indicated in the table below, across the key variables, the overall consistency remains about .88 for all items, which is within the acceptable range of .7 to .95. This, therefore, indicates a high level of inter-relatedness and consistency between the factors.

Table 6. 2: Reliability statistics for each item

Items	Cronbach's Alpha for each variable
ON-Job embeddedness (OJE)	.850
Off-job embeddedness (OJM)	.793
Perceived Employees Selection (RS)	.887
Extensive training (ET)	.906
Compensation& Incentives (IC)	.948
Employee Participation (EP)	.890
Employment security (ES)	.813
Perceived supervisor support (PSS)	.917
Intention to remain (IR)	.929

As noted above, checking the internal consistency of the data is an important initial step. as noted, before, a Cronbach’s alpha within the range of .70 to .95 suggests that when a general construct such as on-job embeddedness, is measured by multiple questions, the results remain similar. Hence, this does not only evaluate the consistency and inter-

relationships between factors, but also the consistency in the responses, which is the case for the data collected for this research. Following the data screening, the section below examines the respondents' personal profiles and characteristics.

## **6.5 Normality Test**

The objective of the normality test is to examine whether the population from which the sample was taken from is normally distributed. Furthermore, though some level of tolerance can be applied to the degree of normal distribution, in order to be valid and effective, subsequent tests on the data also require the population sample to be normally distributed., Kurtosis and Skewness are identified in the research methods literature as the widely used normality measures (Hair *et al.*, 2011; Martin and Bridgmon, (2012). Kurtosis refers to overall measure of flatness in the response distribution, while skewness refers to the degree of symmetry around the mean (Pallant, 2011). The ideal measurement outcome is  $<7$  for kurtosis and 2 for skewness. It has been suggested that there is no need to carry out normality tests for samples that are larger than 200, because such sample sizes are representative of a normal sample (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007; Hair *et al.*, 2011 and Pallant, 2011). However, in the current research, it was decided that the assumption that the sample was normally distributed should be tested for clarity and consistency. This view comes from the Central Limit Theory which puts forward the view that when a sample is over 200, then distribution should be viewed as normal (Field, 2009) however, with a sample size of over 200 variations in these outcomes is unlikely to have a major impact on results as De Vaus, (2002) notes. In general normality is tested by Kolmogorov-Smirnov (K-S) test, and whilst there are others that can be used such as the Anderson-Darling test, Anscombe-Glynn kurtosis test, the K-S test is the most widely used and is thus applied for this work based on evidence from Razali and Wah (2011).

Alongside this the Shapiro-Wilks test is applied to balance the potential for a lack of sensitivity in the K-S test when applied to larger samples such as that seen in the current work. The results for both normality tests are shown in the (Table 6. 3) below.



Table 6. 3: Normality Tests.

	Tests of Normality					
	Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>a</sup>			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
ON-Job embeddedness (OJE)	.079	374	.000	.985	374	.001
Off-job embeddedness (OJM)	.042	374	.143	.994	374	.177
Employees Selection (RS)	.144	374	.000	.943	374	.000
Extensive training (ET)	.106	374	.000	.956	374	.000
Compensation& Incentives (IC)	.114	374	.000	.951	374	.000
Employee Participation (EP)	.161	374	.000	.930	374	.000
Employment security (ES)	.122	374	.000	.960	374	.000
Perceived supervisor support (PSS)	.126	374	.000	.949	374	.000
Intention to remain (IR)	.130	374	.000	.945	374	.000
a. Lilliefors Significance Correction						

For both tests, where the significance level is greater than 0.05, then normal distribution can be assumed. As the table above indicates, other than off job embeddedness (OJM), both tests resulted in a significance level of less than 0.05. It should be noted here that the OJM variable is an independent variable with normal distribution. The indications therefore from this initial test is that there is not a normal distribution. However, when the scores for skewness and kurtosis are taken into account for each variable, as shown in the (Table 6. 4) below.

Table 6. 4: Skewness & Kurtosis.

		Descriptive	
		Statistic	Std. Error
	Mean	3.6786	.37837
ON-Job embeddedness (OJE)	Skewness	-.324	.126
	Kurtosis	-.247	.252
	Mean	3.2936	.35346
Off-job embeddedness (OJM)	Skewness	-.038	.126
	Kurtosis	-.268	.252
	Mean	3.3229	.20343
Employees Selection (RS)	Skewness	-.555	.126
	Kurtosis	-.587	.252
	Mean	2.7072	.23327
Extensive training (ET)	Skewness	.095	.126
	Kurtosis	-.976	.252
	Mean	2.8041	.24329
Compensation& Incentives (IC)	Skewness	.064	.126
	Kurtosis	-.986	.252
	Mean	3.8543	.19764
Employee Participation (EP)	Skewness	-.730	.126
	Kurtosis	-.037	.252
	Mean	3.1453	.16374
Employment security (ES)	Skewness	-.336	.126

	Kurtosis	-.742	.252
	Mean	3.3790	.21901
Perceived supervisor support (PSS)	Skewness	-.519	.126
	Kurtosis	-.392	.252
	Mean	3.2380	.18496
Intention to remain (IR)	Skewness	-.235	.126
	Kurtosis	-.944	.252

---

Based on the acceptability parameters indicated by George and Mallery (2010) that between -2 and +2 are indications of normal univariate distribution, it can be seen that in line with the outcomes from the K-S and S-W tests, there is some abnormality in the data. However, the range of deviation and skewness can potentially be viewed as being due in part to the overall sample size but also it is common in the case of Likert scale questions, which were used in this work, for normality tests to show a lack of effective distribution. What this means is that whilst the sample itself may be viewed as representative there are likely to be response within the data which cannot be generalized. However, given the overall internal consistency indicated in the first section, it is felt that the lack of normal distribution will not adversely impact on the outcomes.

Having identified the overall consistency of the data and evaluated the level of normality in a general way, before undertaking testing of the hypotheses through regression some key descriptive statistics in relation to demographics and the other variables need to be presented to deliver a top-level analysis of the responses given by the participants.

## 6.6 Validity test

A validity coefficient is a gauge of how strong (or weak) that “usefulness” factor is, it provides the strength of that relationship between test results and criterion variables (Nunnally, & Bernstein, 1994).

In general, validity coefficients range from zero to .50, where 0 is a weak validity and .50 is moderate validity. The possible range of the validity coefficient is the same as other correlation coefficients (0 to 1) and so, in general, validity coefficients tend not to

be that strong; this means that other tests are usually required. So, the validity coefficient is just another type of correlation coefficient. Therefore, we use SPSS statistical software to find validity correlation of all phrases of the questionnaire, the acceptable internal consistency for all questions had correlation coefficient ( $r > 0$ ), the minimum Pearson's Correlation value was (0.438) for question 12, and the maximum value was (0.947) for question 39 and 53, all Pearson's Correlation coefficient significant with ( $P\text{-value} < 0.01$ ). The inter-construct correlation matrix discriminant validity for all sections of the questionnaire show that all correlation coefficient ( $r > 0$ ) with significant ( $P\text{-value} < 0.01$ ), except the relation between Off-job embeddedness and Employment security significant at level 0.05 ( $P\text{-value} < 0.05$ ), The tendency towards consistency found in repeated measurements of the same phenomenon is referred to as reliability (Carmines & Zeller, 1979). Thus, the researcher may be sure of the validity and reliability of the questionnaire. (Table 6. 5).

Table 6. 5: Inter-construct correlation matrix discriminant validity

	OJE	OJM	RS	ET	IC	EP	ES	PSS	IR
OJE	1	.181**	.502**	.474**	.512**	.669**	.492**	.609**	.662**
OJM		1	.289**	.251**	.291**	.172**	.199*	.233**	.209**
RS			1	.455**	.438**	.411**	.378**	.480**	.480**
ET				1	.546**	.390**	.503**	.492**	.469**
IC					1	.425**	.521**	.562**	.555**
EP						1	.440**	.675**	.524**
ES							1	.586**	.562**
PSS								1	.632**
IR									1

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

\**. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).*

Interpreting the results, the study refers to the concept of construct validity. The prevalence of statistically significant correlations between the variables meant that the variance in the attained results indicated the actual variances in the perceptions of HRM practices (Carmines & Zeller, 1979). The findings were, therefore, indicative of the measured opinions on HRM and the perceived intentions to remain.

## 6.7 Respondents' Personal Profiles

This section deals with the descriptive statistics with regards the background information of the respondents which include their age, gender, job title, marital status, years of experience and education level. The demographic data of the respondents are shown in the table below:

### 6.7.1 Gender

Table 6. 6: Employees gender in the construction industry of private sector in Saudi.

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	294	78.6	78.6
Female	80	21.4	100
Total	374	100	

Most participants were male employees (294) and only 80 were females, which corresponds to a ratio of 78.6% of male respondents against 21.4% of female. As key HRM issue in the private sector of Saudi is the shortage of women workers. As per 2016, Saudi women constituted only 30% of employees in the private sector even though there were more females (53.1%) graduating from higher education than males (SAMA, 2017; Jadwa Investment Saudi Labour Market Update, 2017; see Figure 2.8 )

This seems to suggest that the employment of Saudi women in the private sector is limited compared to their male counterparts (SAMA, 2016). Indeed, the number of Saudi female employees in the private sector is less than the number of males as females account for only 21% of the number sample size. (see Table 6. 6). Independent test were performed to find weather if there is a difference in the intention to remain according to gender, significant difference found in favour of male who had the higher mean intention to remain (3.2664) out of (5) while female score was (2.9375);since (T= 2.199, P= 0.028 < 0.05 ) Consequently, this strong imbalance between male and female genders, which are approximately 80% and 20%, can affect the results since there is the need to consider other external or exogenous variables, such as cultural, social and religious, which may have a strong impact on the final research findings. The implication was that the findings were only applicable to male employees. Female specialists and their intentions to remain

were still questioned despite high construct validity. This was a direct consequence of relying on random sampling.

For a more detailed research, it would be helpful to develop the same research considering the entire population and then separate male from female respondents to analyse if there is an effective influence from some of the other mentioned external variables, which may provide valid and reliable information regarding the likelihood/willingness to remain in a specific workplace.

### 6.7.2 Age

Table 6. 7: Respondents age' profiles.

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
20-25 years	30	8.0	8.0
26-31 years	128	34.2	42.2
32-37 years	121	32.4	74.6
38-43 years	64	17.1	91.7
44-49 years	17	4.5	96.3
Over 50 years	14	3.7	100
Total	374	100.0	

Table 6. 7 above illustrates the respondents' ages, categorised into six groups ranging from twenty to fifty years old and above. The descriptive statistics showed that most respondents are between 26 to 37 years old. The small number of national workers under the age of 25 may indicate a high turnover intention within this age group.

### 6.7.3 Marital Status

Table 6. 8: Employees' Marital status in the construction industry in Saudi Arabia (n= 374).

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Married	251	67.1	67.1
Single	107	28.6	95.7
Divorced	15	4	99.7
Widowed	1	3	100
Total	374	100	

Table 6. 8 above shows that most participating national workers (67.1%) were married while 28.6% were single and only 4% were divorced; only 1% of the participants were widowed. Indeed, it was found that married employees with children are more likely to stay for a long time in organisations as compared to unmarried employees (Birsal, Boru, & İslamoğlu, 2012).

### 6.7. 4 Years of Experience

Table 6. 9: Employees years of experience in the construction industry in Saudi. (n= 374)

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Less than one year	24	6.4	6.4
One to less than 5 years	109	29.1	35.6
5 years to less than 10 years	87	23.3	58.8
10 years to less than 20 years	120	32.1	90.9
Over 20 years	34	9.1	100
Total	374	100.0	

The results in Table 6. 9 highlight that 35.5% of the respondents had less than five years of experience within their current organisation, followed by 23.3% with ten years of experience or less, 32.1% with 10 years of experience or less and lastly, 9.1% of the participants had 20 years of experience in their organisation.

### 6.7.5 Job Title

Table 6. 10: Employees job title in the construction industry in Saudi. (n=374).

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Manager	180	48.1	48.1
Supervisor	81	21.7	69.8
Middle and low-level management employee	105	28.1	97.9
Professional	8	2.1	100.0
Total	374	100	

The results show on the Table 6. 10 that managers constituted 48.1% of all respondents, followed by middle and low-level management employees with 28.1% and finally, professionals representing only 2.1% of the total number of respondents. In light of these descriptive statistics, it can be inferred that promotion in the Saudi construction industry occurs within a rather short time span as most employees fall into the 26-31 years old age category.



### 6.7.6 Education Level

Table 6. 11: participants' educational levels (n= 374).

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Secondary/Technical School	31	8.3	8.3
Higher Diploma	40	10.7	19.0
Bachelor's Degree	217	58.0	77.0
Master's Degree	82	21.9	98.9
PHD Degree	4	1.1	100.0
Total	374	100.0	

Table 6. 11 show that the majority of respondents were well educated as most of them hold a bachelor's degree (58.0%) while 19% had less than a bachelor's degree and had secondary or technical school qualifications. In addition, the results show that 21.9% of the respondents have a master's degree and 10.6% of them hold a Higher Diploma. Finally, only 1.1% of the participants have a PhD degree.

From the above results, it can be stated that the vast majority of the study sample is highly educated, which tends to suggest that the employees can make informed decisions with respect to leaving or remaining with their current employers.

## 6.8 Latent variables

Current research hasn't any latent variable to deal with it, we deal only with variables that are directly observed or (directly measured). "In statistics, latent variables (from Latin: present participle of lateo ("lie hidden"), as opposed to (observable variables), are variables that are not directly observed but are rather inferred (through a mathematical model) from other variables that are observed (directly measured). Mathematical models that aim to explain observed variables in terms of latent variables are called latent variable models, sometimes latent variables correspond to aspects of physical reality, which could in principle be measured, but may not be for practical reasons. In this situation, the term hidden variables is commonly used (reflecting the fact that the variables are "really there", but hidden). Other times, latent variables correspond to abstract concepts, like categories, behavioural or mental states, or data structures". (Borsboom & Mellenbergh, 2003).

One example of a latent variable within the context of the study would be the personality of employees and its impacts on intentions to remain. The study, however, was unable to account for this interference. Neither hierarchical regression nor Spearman's correlation possessed any integrated techniques for detecting latent variables (Saunders et al., 2009).

## 6.9 Correlation Analysis

The current study investigated the correlation between several constructs to determine the extent of the coherence and direction of the relationship between certain factors examined through this research (Bentler, 2007). Two types of correlation tests are frequently used in research: Pearson correlation and Spearman rank correlation. Whilst the Pearson correlation test is useful to deal with continuous data, the Spearman rank test is a statistical, non-parametric measure used with either ordinal or interval data. Furthermore, the Spearman correlation test can be useful if the data violated the Pearson's assumption or do not match its specific requirements (Pallant, 2011). As far as this study is concerned, given that the data collected through the survey are not compatible with the Pearson test because they are not subject to normal distribution, the Spearman correlation coefficient was employed to measure the correlation between the variables. The Spearman correlation coefficient can only range from -1.00 to +1.00. The "+" sign indicates a positive correlation while the "-" sign points to a negative correlation. While authors suggest different explanations for the coefficient correlation values, in the current research, Cohen's (1988) guidelines were employed to interpret the level of correlation between the research variables. according to Cohen suggestion that a value ranging from 0.10 to 0.29 indicates a weak correlation, a value of 0.30 to 0.49 indicates a moderate correlation while a value of 0.50 to 1.0 suggests a strong correlation (Table 6. 12) presents the values of the correlation coefficient used in this study. The value of running correlation analysis is that it identifies that a relationship exists, either positive or negative and is a good foundation for running subsequent analysis such as regression analysis that provides a more detailed examination of the relationship between two variables. The correlation analysis indicates that a relationship exists and at a broad level how strong that relationship is based on the Spearman's correlation figures. For the correlation analysis, each of the elements which made up the overall factor of "HR practices" was first considered individually, to identify if any of these showed a significant relationship with intent to remain. This was then followed by analysis of HR practices overall and the factors of OJE and OJM in relation to intent to remain.

Table 6. 12: Values of the correlation coefficient

Strong correlation	Moderate correlation	weak correlation
0.5 to 1.0	0.3 to 0.49	0.1 to 0.29

Based on the model proposed by Baron and Kenny (1986), there should be a significant correlation between factors when testing the mediational effect. However, Hayes (2009) pointed out that a mediating effect can still be observed between the variables even with no significant correlation between them. In another study, Fritz and MacKinnon (2007) argues that correlation between variables is not always required when testing the mediational effect. The current study, however, follows Baron and Kenny's (1986) recommendations and examines the mediational effect of the variables provided correlations can be observed. This approach was believed to be more cautious as it requires a certain level of correlation between the variables of the study.

### **6.9.1 Correlation between the Perceived Employee's Selection, On-Job**

#### **Embeddedness and the Employee's Intention to Remain**

This section investigated the correlation between the Perceived Employee's Selection, On-Job Embeddedness and the Employee's Intention to Remain. Therefore, the following hypotheses were formulated and tested:

**H<sub>1</sub>:** The perceived employee's selection is positively related to the intention to remain.

**H<sub>1A</sub>:** The perceived employee's selection is positively related to on-job embeddedness.

With respect to the relationship between perceived employee's selection and the intention to remain, the findings tend to suggest that that perceived employee's selection was positively correlated with the employee's intention to remain ( $r=.467$ ,  $p<0.01^{**}$ ). As, perceived employees' selection was positively and moderately correlated with the intention to remain, hypothesis H<sub>1</sub> is accepted. In addition, the results demonstrate that the on-job embeddedness was moderately and positively correlated with the preserved employees selection ( $r=.468$ ,  $p<0.01^{**}$ ).which also supports H<sub>1A</sub> hypothesis (see Table 6. 12).

Table 6. 13: The Relationship between perceived employees' selection, on-job embeddedness and intention to remain.

Spearman's rho Correlation Coefficient	Intention to remain (IR)	Employees selection (RS)	On-job embeddedness (OJE)
IR	1.000	.467**	.663**
RS	.467**	1.000	.468**
OJE	.663**	.468**	1.000

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

### 6.9.2 Correlation between Perceived Training and Employee's Intention to Remain

This section investigated the correlation between the Perceived Employee's training, On-Job Embeddedness and the Employee's Intention to Remain. Therefore, the following hypotheses were formulated and tested:

*H<sub>2</sub>: The perceived extensive training is positively related to the intention to remain.*

*H<sub>2A</sub>: The perceived extensive training is positively related to on-job embeddedness.*

With respect to the relationship between perceived employee's training and the intention to remain, the findings tend to indicate that the perceived training was moderately and positively correlated with the employee's intention to remain ( $r=.456$ ,  $p<0.01^{**}$ ). Perceived employee's training was moderately correlated with the intention to remain, which is consistent with hypothesis H<sub>2</sub>. Therefore, as it was found a positive correlation between the perceived employee's training and the intention to remain, hypothesis H<sub>2</sub> is supported. In addition, the results demonstrate that the on-job embeddedness was moderately and positively correlated with the preserved employees training ( $r=.456$ ,  $p<0.01^{**}$ ), which also supports H<sub>2A</sub> hypothesis (see Table 6. 13).

Table 6. 14: The Relationship between perceived employees training, on-job embeddedness and intention to remain

Spearman's rho Correlation Coefficient	Intention to remain	Perceived employees training	On-job embeddedness
IR	1.000	.456**	.663**
ET	.456**	1.000	.456**
OJE	.663**	.456**	1.000

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

### 6.9.3 Correlation between the Employee's Compensation and the Intention to Remain

This section investigated the correlation between the Perceived Employee's compensation, On-Job Embeddedness and the Employee's Intention to Remain. Therefore, the following hypotheses were formulated and tested:

**H<sub>3</sub>:** The perceived employee's compensation is positively related to the intention to remain.

**H<sub>3A</sub>:** The perceived compensation is positively related to on-job embeddedness.

With respect to the relationship between the employee's compensation and the intention to remain, the results show that the employee's compensation was significantly and positively correlated with the intention to remain ( $r=.548, p<0.01^{**}$ ). Also, it was found that the employee's compensation was correlated with the intention to remain which is a result consistent with hypothesis H<sub>3</sub>. Therefore, the positive correlation between the employee's compensation and the intention to remain means that H<sub>3</sub> hypothesis is supported. In addition, the results demonstrate that the on-job embeddedness was significantly and positively correlated with the perceived employee's compensation ( $r=.514, p<0.01^{**}$ ), which also supports H<sub>3A</sub> hypothesis. (see Table 6. 14).

Table 6. 15: The Relationship between perceived employees' compensation, on-job embeddedness and intention to remain

Spearman's rho Correlation Coefficient	Intention to remain	Perceived employee compensation	On-job embeddedness
IR	1.000	.548**	.663**
IC	.548**	1.000	.514**
OJE	.663**	.514**	1.000

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

#### **6.9.4 Correlation between the Perceived Employee's Participation and the Intention to Remain**

This section investigated the correlation between the Perceived Employee's participation, On-Job Embeddedness and the Employee's Intention to Remain. Therefore, the following hypotheses were formulated and tested:

*H<sub>4</sub>: The perceived employee's participation is positively related to intention to remain.*

*H<sub>4A</sub>: The perceived employee's participation is positively related to on-job embeddedness.*

With respect to the relationship between the perceived employee's participation and the intention to remain, the statistical data analysis indicated that the perceived employee's participation was significantly and positively correlated with the intention to remain ( $r=.515$ ,  $p<0.01^{**}$ ). This finding is consistent with hypothesis H<sub>4</sub> that there is a positive correlation between the perceived employee's participation and the intention to remain; therefore, H<sub>4</sub> hypothesis is supported. In addition, the results demonstrate that the on-job embeddedness was significantly and positively correlated with the perceived employees' participation ( $r=.674$ ,  $p<0.01^{**}$ ), which also supports H<sub>4A</sub> hypothesis. (see Table 6. 15).

Table 6. 16: The Relationship between perceived employees participation, on-job embeddedness and intention to remain

Spearman's rho	employee's intention to remain	perceived employee's participation	On-job embeddedness
IR	1.000	.515**	.663**
EP	.515**	1.000	.674**
OJE	.663**	.674**	1.000

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

### 6.9.5 Correlation between the Perceived Job Security and the Intention to Remain

This section investigated the correlation between the Perceived job security, On-Job Embeddedness and the Employee's Intention to Remain. Therefore, the following hypotheses were formulated and tested:

*H<sub>5</sub>: The perceived job security is positively related to the intention to remain.*

*H<sub>5A</sub>: The perceived job security is positively related to On-job embeddedness.*

The study also investigated the relationship between the employees perceived job security and the intention to remain. The findings demonstrate that the perceived job security was significantly and positively correlated with the intention to remain ( $r=.541$ ,  $p<0.01^{**}$ ). As this result is consistent with hypothesis H<sub>5</sub> that there is a positive correlation between perceived job security and intention to remain, so, hypothesis H<sub>5</sub> is supported. In addition, the results demonstrate that the on-job embeddedness was moderately and positively correlated with the employees perceived job security ( $r=.473$ ,  $p<0.01^{**}$ ), which also supports H<sub>5A</sub> hypothesis. (see Table 6. 16).



Table 6. 17: The Relationship between perceived job security, on-job embeddedness and intention to remain.

Spearman's rho Correlation Coefficient	employee's intention to remain	Perceived job security	On-job embeddedness
IR	1.000	.541**	.663**
ES	.541**		.473**
OJE	.663**	.473**	1.000

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

### 6.9.6 Correlation between the Perceived Supervisor Support and the Intention to Remain

This section investigated the correlation between the perceived supervisor support, On-Job Embeddedness and the Employee's Intention to Remain. Therefore, the following hypotheses were formulated and tested:

**H<sub>6</sub>:** The perceived supervisor support is positively related to the intention to remain.

**H<sub>6A</sub>:** The perceived supervisor support is positively related to on-job embeddedness.

This research also investigated the relationship between the participants' perceived supervisor support and the intention to remain. The findings demonstrated that the perceived supervisor support was significantly and positively correlated with the employee's intention to remain ( $r=.624, p<0.01^{**}$ ). As hypothesis H<sub>6</sub> stated that there is a positive correlation between the perceived supervisor support and the intention to remain, this hypothesis is supported. In addition, the results demonstrate that the on-job embeddedness was significantly and positively correlated with the perceived supervisor support ( $r=.596, p<0.01^{**}$ ), which also supports H<sub>6A</sub> hypothesis (see Table 6. 17).

Table 6. 18: The Relationship between perceived supervisor support, on-job embeddedness and intention to remain.

Spearman's rho Correlation Coefficient	employee's intention to remain	perceived supervisor support	On-job embeddedness
IR	1.000	.624**	.663**
PSS	.624**	1.000	.596**
OJE	.663**	.596**	1.000

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

### 6.9.7 Correlation between On-Job Embeddedness and the Intention to Remain

This section investigated the correlation between on-Job Embeddedness and the Employee's Intention to Remain. Therefore, the following hypotheses were formulated and tested:

*H<sub>7</sub>: On-job embeddedness is positively related to intention to remain.*

The relationship between the on-job embeddedness and the intention to remain was examined in this research and the findings indicated that on-job embeddedness was significantly and positively correlated with the employee's intention to remain ( $r=.663$ ,  $p<0.01^{**}$ ). This result is consistent with hypothesis H<sub>7</sub> that there is a positive correlation between on-job embeddedness and the intention to remain; therefore, H<sub>7</sub> hypothesis is supported. (see Table 6. 18).

Table 6. 19: The Relationship between on-job embeddedness and intention to remain.

Spearman's rho Correlation Coefficient	employee's intention to remain	On-job embeddedness
IR	1.000	.663
OJE	.663	1.000

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

### 6.9.8 Correlation between Off-Job Embeddedness and the Intention to Remain

This section investigated the correlation between off-Job Embeddedness and the Employee's Intention to Remain. Therefore, the following hypotheses were formulated and tested:

**H<sub>8</sub>:** *Off-job embeddedness is positively related to intention to remain.*

Furthermore, the relationship between off-job embeddedness and the intention to remain was investigated in this study and the results obtained revealed a correlation coefficient of. ( $r=.198$ ,  $p<0.01^{**}$ ). This suggest that that off-job embeddedness was positively correlated to a small degree with employee's intention to remain. Nonetheless, the result is consistent with hypothesis H<sub>8</sub> stating a positive correlation between off-job embeddedness and the intention to remain; therefore, H<sub>8</sub> hypothesis is supported. (see Table 6. 19).

Table 6. 20: The Relationship between, Off-job embeddedness and intention to remain.

Spearman's rho Correlation Coefficient	employee's intention to remain	Off-job embeddedness
IR	1.000	.198**
OJM	.198**	1.000

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

Based on the regression analysis test, it can be deduced from the R square value of .044, that 4.4% of employee intention to remain is explained by off-the-job embeddedness. (see ). Table 6. 21). However, the results of the regression analysis showed moderate relationship between off-the-job embeddedness and employee intention to remain, with a  $\beta$  of .365, indicating that when all other variables are held constant, employee intention to remain will increase by 36.5% if there is a 100% improvement in off-the-job embeddedness. Statistical significance was also established (p- value = 0.000 < 0.05), confirming that off-the-job embeddedness made unique significant contribution to the prediction of employee intention to remain. The results of the current study findings demonstrated moderately significant support for (off-the-job embeddedness). (see Table 6. 20). Table 6. 21: Multiple regression analysis of intention to remain on predictor variables Off-job embeddedness.

Variables	Variables	Beta	Sig	R	Adjusted R Square
Equation	DV = intention to remain IV = Off-job embeddedness	.365	.000	.209	.044

(N. 374). \*\* p < .01, \* p < .05, b = unstandardized coefficient, B= standardized coefficient

## **6.10 Multiple Regression Test to examine direct and mediational effect between Research variables**

To examine the direct and mediation effect between variables, a *Multiple* regression analysis was used following a three-step approach outlined by Baron and Kenny (1986). This approach has been used by many researchers to measure the meditation effect (Darwish, Singh and Mohamed, 2013; Harris, Wheeler and Kacmar, 2011; Juhdi, Pa'wan and Hansaram, 2013). According to (Baron, 1986) and (Kenny, 1986), a three-step procedure needs to be followed to examine the mediating effects of on-job embeddedness. (see Figure 6. 2). First, the independent variable (selected HR practices) should be related to the dependent variable (IR). Second, the independent variable (selected HR practices) should be positively related to the mediator variable (OJE). Finally, the mediating variable (OJE) should be related to the dependent variables (IR) with the independent variables (selected HR practices).

If the first three conditions are met and the beta weights of the independent variable (selected HR practices) decreases from step two to step three but remains significant, partial mediation can be supported. If the independent variable (selected HR practices) has an insignificant beta weight in the third step and the mediator (OJE) remains significant, then perfect mediation is supported. Also, "perfect mediation holds if the independent variable has no effect when the mediator is controlled" (p.1177). Mediation can also be categorised into partial and full mediation. As Baron and Kenny (1986) explained, full or perfect mediation can only be claimed if the independent variable is no longer significant when the mediator variable is controlled for. However, if the independent and mediator variables are both significant, partial mediation is supported.

To calculate the mediation effect, the researcher conducted 2 linear regression tests for each set of variables that could exhibit such a phenomenon. For example, the study conducted several regression tests for the relationships between on-the-job embeddedness, intentions to remain and selective staffing. The changes in the significance levels between the regression equations were indicative of the mediation effect.

It could be argued that using the terms 'partial' and 'full' helps convey the effect size or practical significance of a mediating process. Within the context of the study, partial statistical significance was only applicable to mediating variables. This phenomenon

occurred if the analysed variables still exhibited a statistically significant relationship without the presence of the mediator. A demonstration of full mediation implies that an underlying process can completely account for the  $X \rightarrow Y$  relationship, whereas a demonstration of partial mediation implies that it cannot. Consequently, a partial mediation effect might be viewed as smaller or less important than a full mediation effect. (Rucker et al. (2011)).

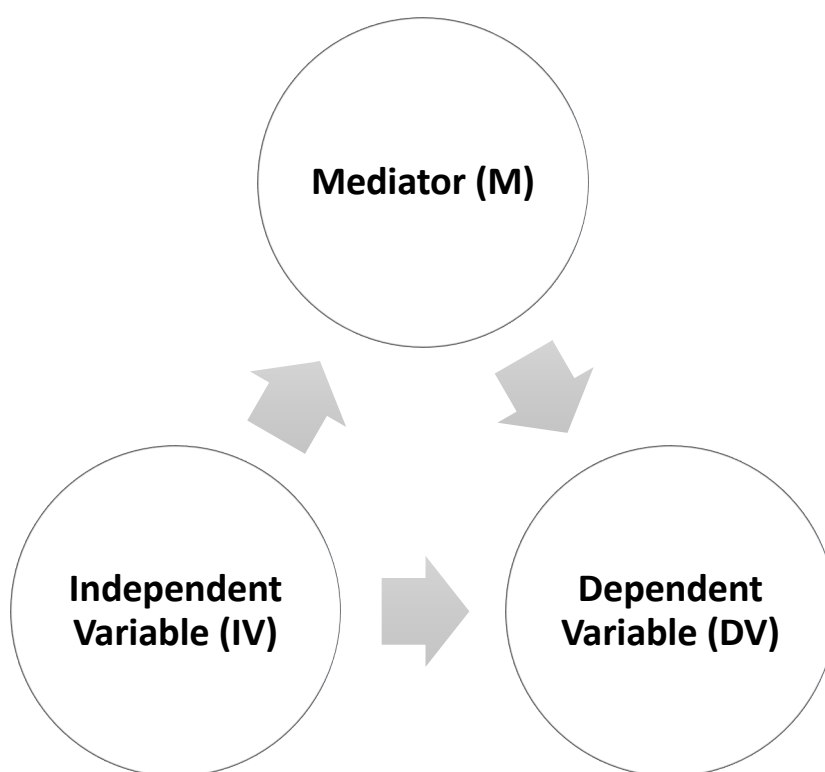


Figure 6. 2: A Standard Mediation Model.

R-squared ( $R^2$ ) and Adjusted R Square in multiple regression analysis are a statistical measure that represents the proportion of the variance for a dependent variable that's explained by an independent variable or variables in a regression model. Whereas correlation explains the strength of the relationship between an independent and dependent variable, R-squared explains to what extent the variance of one variable explains the variance of the second variable. So, if the  $R^2$  of a model is 0.50, then approximately half of the observed variation can be explained by the model's inputs. It is also known as the coefficient of determination, or the coefficient of multiple determination for multiple regression. In general, the higher the R-squared, the better the model fits your data. The Formula For R-Squared Is

$$R^2 = 1 - \frac{\text{Explained variation}}{\text{Total variation}}$$

The use and interpretation of R2 in social research; (Szociológiai Szemle, (1999).

The following Tables (from Table 6. 22 ) to Table 6. 27) show the results of the regression analysis:

- (1) regressing the dependent variable (IR) intention to remain on each independent variable (selected HR practices).
- (2) regressing the mediator variable, On-job embeddedness on each independent variable (selected HR practices).
- (3) regressing the intention to remain on both HR practices and the mediator, on-job embeddedness.

### **6.10.1 Testing the direct and Mediational Effect between the research variables**

Objective 5 aims to explore the mediating role that on- job embeddedness plays on the selected antecedents and national workers' intention to remain. Hence, hypotheses  $H_{1B}$ ,  $H_{2B}$ ,  $H_{3B}$ ,  $H_{4B}$ ,  $H_{5B}$  and  $H_{6B}$  were proposed to achieve this objective and demonstrate the extent to which on-job embeddedness mediates the relationship between selected HR practices (perceived employee's selection, perceived extensive training, perceived employee's compensation, perceived participation, perceived job security and perceived supervisor support) and the employee's intention to remain. The hypotheses were formulated as follows:

***H<sub>1B</sub>**: On-job embeddedness mediates the relationship between the perceived employee's selection and the intention to remain.*

***H<sub>2B</sub>**: On-job embeddedness mediates the relationship between the perceived employee's extensive training and the intention to remain.*

***H<sub>3B</sub>**: On-job embeddedness mediates the relationship between the perceived employee's compensation and the intention to remain.*

***H<sub>4B</sub>**: On-job embeddedness mediates the relationship between the perceived employee's participation and the intention to remain.*

*H<sub>5B</sub>*: On-job embeddedness mediates the relationship between the perceived employee's job security and the intention to remain.

*H<sub>6B</sub>*: On-job embeddedness mediates the relationship between the perceived supervisor support and the intention to remain.

### 6.10.2 On-Job Embeddedness as a Mediator between the Perceived Employee's Selection and the Intention to Remain

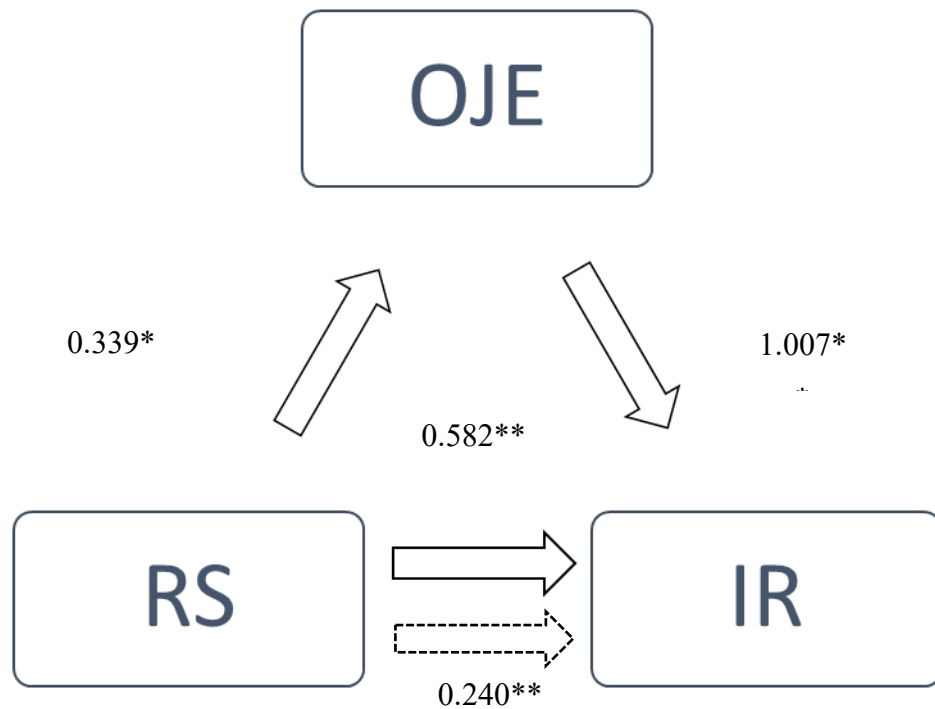


Figure 6. 3: Perception of on-job embeddedness (OJE) as a partial mediator between the perceived employee's selection (RS) and the intention to remain (IR).



Table 6. 22: Regression Analysis of selective staffing, on-job embeddedness, and intention to remain

Variables	Variables	Beta	Sig	R	Adjusted R Square
Equation 1	DV = intention to remain	.582	.000	.480	.231
	IV = selective staffing				
Equation 2	MV = On-job embeddedness	.339	.000	.502	.252
	IV = selective staffing				
Equation 3	DV = intention to remain	.240	.000	.683	.467
	IV = selective staffing	1.007	.000		
	MV = On-job embeddedness				

\*\*  $p < .01$ , \*  $p < .05$ , b = unstandardized coefficient,  $\beta$  = standardised coefficient.

DV= Direct variable, IV= Independent variable, MV= Mediator variable.

Table 6. 22 presents the effect of the mediation variable, on-job embeddedness (OJE), on the relationship between the perceived employee's selection (RS) and the employee's intention to remain (IR), with a direct path from RS to IR. The results show that RS has direct positive effect on IR ( $\beta=.582$ ) and that the direct path from RS to IR ( $\beta = .240$ ) was partially statistically significant after adding the mediator OJE. The above results also show that on-job embeddedness mediates the relationship between the perceived employee's selection and the intention to remain among the national workers. Thus, the results suggest that an indirect relationship between the perceived employee's selection and the intention to remain has been partially transmitted by on-job embeddedness. Therefore, this result constitutes an evidence of the partial mediational effect of OJE on RS and IR, as the direct effect of the independent variable RS on the dependent variable IR, after adding the mediator OJE, is partially significant with Adjusted R Square (0.467) which indicate that 46.7% of the observed variation in intention to remain can be explained by the model's inputs. Therefore, based on these results, it can be inferred that OJE does partially mediate the effect of the perceived employee's selection on the employee's intention to remain. This, therefore, leads to accepting hypothesis  $H_{1B}$  that OJE has a mediation effect on a perceived employee's selection and the intention to remain.

*H<sub>1B</sub>: On-job embeddedness mediates the relationship between the perceived employee's selection and the intention to remain.*

### 6.10.3 On- Job embeddedness as a Mediator between the Perceived employees Training and the Intention to remain

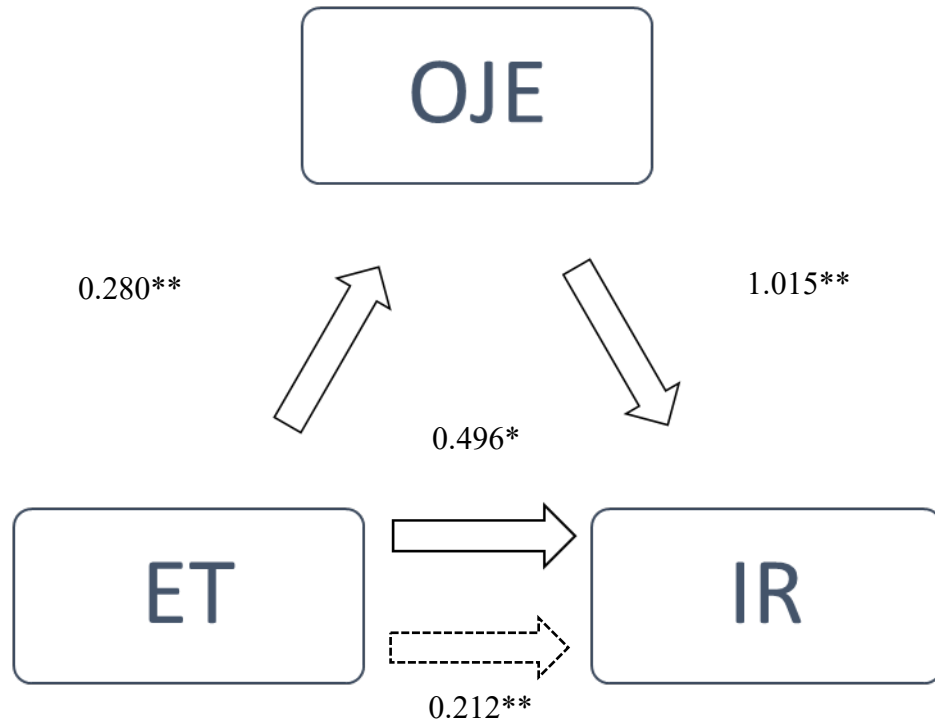


Figure 6. 4: Perception of the on-job embeddedness (OJE) as a partial mediator between the perceived training (ET) and the employee's intention to remain (IR).

Table 6. 23: Regression Analysis of perceived training, on-job embeddedness, and Intention to remain

	Variables	Beta	Sig	R	Adjusted R Square
Equation 1	DV = intention to remain	.496	.000	.469	.218
Equation 2	IV = Perceived training MV = On-job embeddedness	.280	.000	.474	.225
Equation 3	IV = Perceived training MV = On-job embeddedness	.212 1.015	.000 .000	.685	.469

\*\* p < .01, \* p < .05, b = unstandardized coefficient,  $\beta$  = standardised coefficient

Table 6. 23 presents the effect of the mediation variable, on-job embeddedness (OJE), on the relationship between the perceived training (ET) and the employee's intention to remain (IR), with a direct path from ET to IR. The results show that ET has direct positive effect on IR ( $\beta=.496$ ) and that the direct relation between ET and (IR) ( $\beta = .212$ ) was partially statistically significant after adding the mediator OJE.

The adjusted R square for Equation 1 was equal to 0.218, 0.225 for Equation 2 and 0.469 for Equation 3. This further supported the results that OJE was a mediator for the relationship between ET and IR. Therefore, the above analysis shows that on-job embeddedness (OJE) mediates the relationship between the perceived training (ET) and the intention to remain (IR) of Saudi nationals working the construction industry. Thus, the results tend to suggest that there is an indirect relationship between the perceived training (ET) and the employee's intention to remain (IR) that has been partially transmitted by on-job embeddedness (OJE).

Hence, this constitutes an evidence of the partial mediational effect of OJE on ET and IR. This is because the direct effect of the independent variable ET on the dependent variable IR, after adding the mediator OJE, is partially significant. Based on this result, it could be inferred that perceiving OJE as a set (fit, link and sacrifice) does partially mediate the effect of the perceived employee’s training (ET) on the employee’s intention to remain (IR), with Adjusted R Square (0.469) which indicate that 46.9% of the observed variation in intention to remain can be explained by the model's inputs.. This, therefore, leads us to accept the hypothesis that OJE has a mediation effect on the employee’s perceived training (ET) and the intention to remain.

*H<sub>2B</sub>: On-job embeddedness mediates the relationship between the perceived extensive training and the intention to remain.*

#### 6.10.4 On-Job embeddedness as a Mediator between Perceived Employee’s Compensation and the Employee’s Intention to Remain

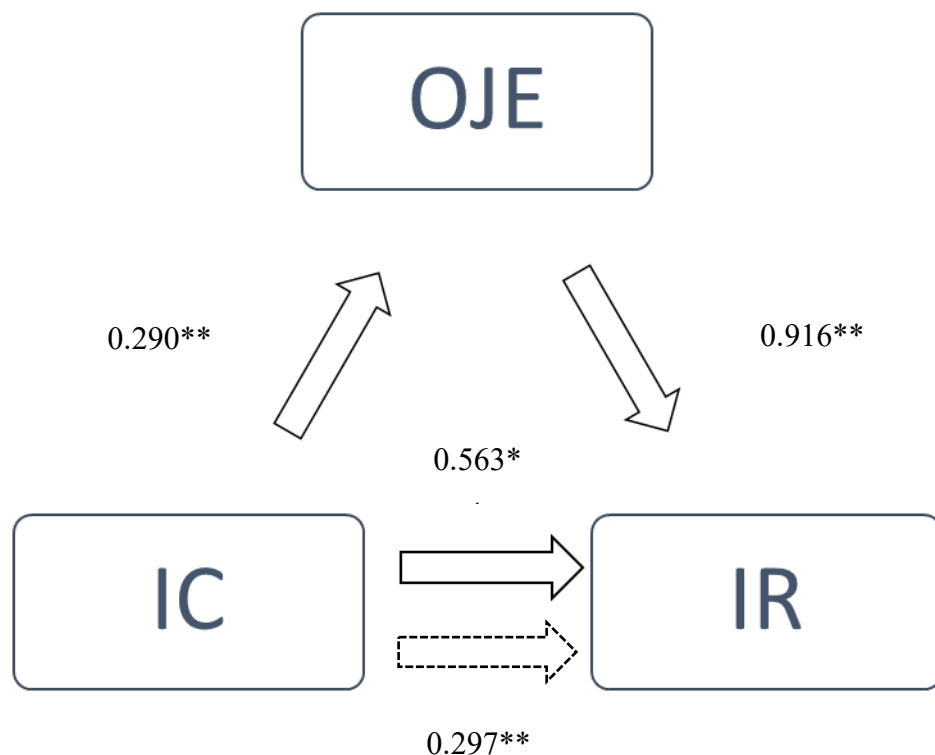


Figure 6. 5: Perception of the on-job embeddedness (OJE) as a partial mediator between the perceived compensation (IC) and the employee’s intention to remain (IR).

Table 6. 24: Regression Analysis of perceived employee’s compensation, on-job embeddedness, and Intention to remain.

Variables	Variables	Beta	Sig	R	Adjusted R Square
Equation 1	DV = intention to remain IV = Perceived employee compensation	.563	.000	.555	.308
Equation 2	MV = On-job embeddedness IV = Perceived employee compensation	.290	.000	.512	.263
Equation 3	DV = intention to remain IV = Perceived employee compensation MV = On-job embeddedness	.297 .916	.000 .000	.708	.501

\*\* p < .01, \* p < .05, b = unstandardized coefficient,  $\beta$  = standardised coefficient

Table 6. 24 presents the effect of the mediation variable, on-job embeddedness (OJE), on the relationship between the perceived employee’s compensation (IC) and the employee’s intention to remain (IR), with a direct path from IC to IR. The results show that IC has direct positive effect on IR ( $\beta=.563$ ) and that the direct path from IC to IR ( $\beta = .297$ ) was partially statistically significant after adding the mediator OJE. Hence, this result demonstrates that on-job embeddedness (OJE) mediates the relationship between the perceived compensation and the intention to remain of Saudi employees of the construction industry. Thus, this finding suggests that the indirect relationship between the perceived employee’s compensation and the employee’s intention to remain has been partially transmitted by on-job embeddedness. Therefore. This result constitutes an evidence of the partial mediational effect of OJE on IC and IR since the direct effect of the independent variable IC on the dependent variable IR, after adding the mediator OJE, is partially significant. This finding, therefore, tends to suggest that OJE does partially mediate the effect of the perceived employee’s compensation on the employee’s intention to remain with Adjusted R Square (0.501) which indicate that 50.1% of the observed variation in intention to remain can be explained by the model's inputs.

As a result, this leads us to accept the hypothesis that there is a mediation effect of OJE on the perceived employees' compensation (IC) and their intention to remain.

*H<sub>3B</sub>: On-job embeddedness mediates the relationship between perceived employee's compensation and the intention to remain.*

### 6.10.5 On- Job embeddedness as a Mediator between the Perceived Employee's Participation and the Employee's Intention to Remain

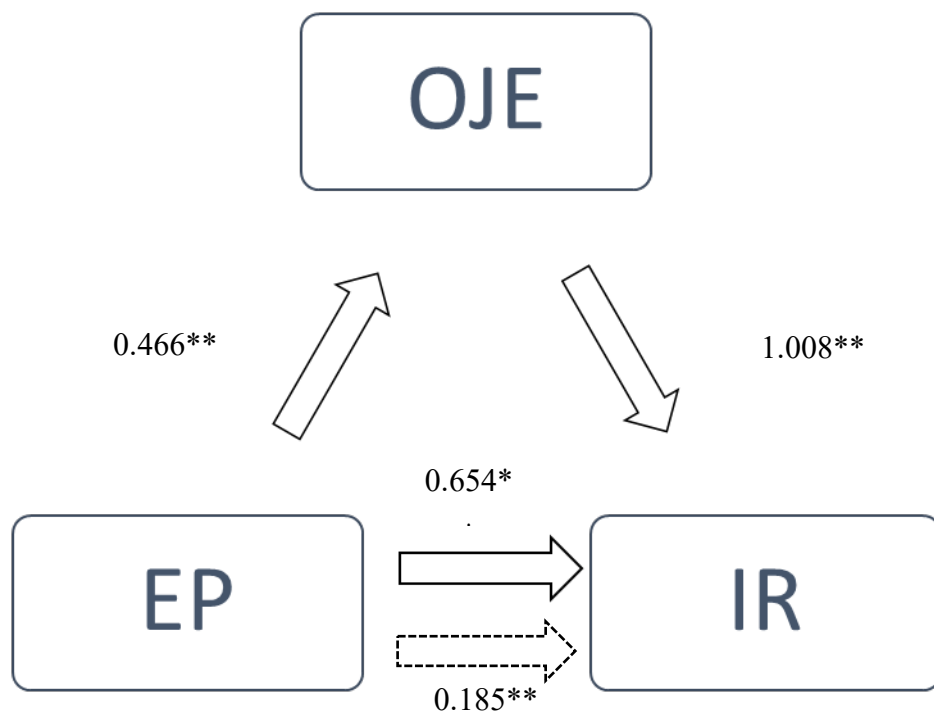


Figure 6. 6: Perception of the on-job embeddedness (OJE) as a partial mediator between the employee's perceived participation (EP) and the employee's intention to remain (IR).

Table 6. 25: Regression Analysis of Perceived employee participation, on-job embeddedness, and Intention to remain

	Variables	Beta	Sig	R	Adjusted R Square
	DV = intention to remain				
Equation 1	IV = Perceived employee participation	.654	.000	.524	.275
	MV = On-job embeddedness				
Equation 2	IV = Perceived employee participation	.466	.000	.669	.448
	DV = intention to remain				
Equation 3	IV = Perceived employee participation	.185	.004	.671	.450
	MV = On-job embeddedness	1.008	.000		

\*\* p < .01, \* p < .05, b = unstandardized coefficient,  $\beta$  = standardised coefficient

Table 6. 25 above presents the effect of the mediation variable, on-job embeddedness (OJE), on the relationship between the perceived employee's participation (EP) and the intention to remain (IR), with a direct path from EP to IR. The results show that EP has direct positive effect on IR ( $\beta=.654$ ) and that the direct path from EP to IR ( $\beta = .185$ ) was partially statistically significant after adding the mediator OJE. Hence, this finding suggests that on-job embeddedness (OJE) mediates the relationship between the perceived employee's participation (EP) and the intention to remain (IR) of Saudi employees in the construction industry. Thus, it can be concluded that the indirect relationship between the perceived employee's participation (EP) and the employee's intention to remain (IR) has been partially transmitted by on-job embeddedness (OJE). Therefore, this demonstrates the partial mediational effect of OJE on EP and IR because the direct effect of the independent variable EP on the dependent variable IR, after adding the mediator OJE, is partially significant. Based on the above results, it can be inferred that OJE does partially mediate the effect of the perceived employee's participation on the employee's intention to remain with Adjusted R Square (0.450) which indicate that 45% of the observed variation in intention to remain can be explained by the model's inputs.

This, also, leads us to accept the initial hypothesis that there is a mediation effect of OJE on the perceived employee's participation and the intention to remain.

*H<sub>4B</sub>: On-job embeddedness mediates the relationship between the perceived participation of and intention to remain.*

#### 6.10.6 On- Job embeddedness as a Mediator between Perceived Job Security and Employee's Intention to Remain.

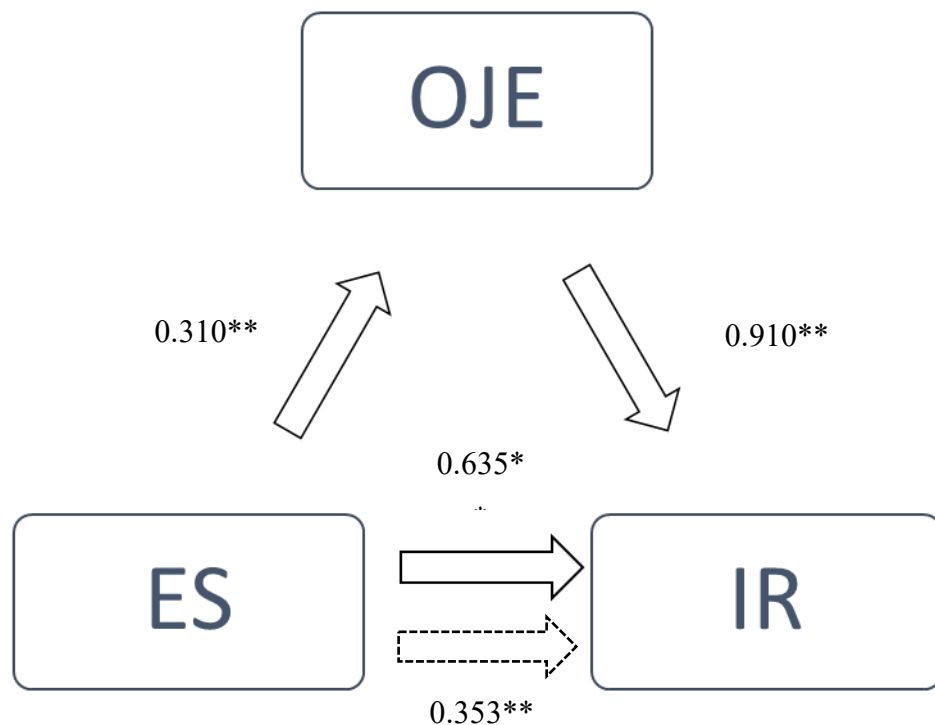


Figure 6. 7: Perception of the on-job embeddedness (OJE) as a partial mediator between the employee's perceived job security (ES) and the employee's intention to remain (IR).



Table 6. 26: Regression Analysis of Perceived job security, on-job embeddedness, and Intention to remain.

Variables	Variables	Beta	Sig	R	Adjusted R Square
Equation 1	DV = intention to remain IV = Perceived job security MV = On-job	.635	.000	0.562	.316
Equation 2	embeddedness IV = Perceived job security	.310	.000	.492	.242
Equation 3	DV = intention to remain IV = Perceived job security MV = On-job embeddedness	.353 .910	.000 .000	.715	.511

\*\* p < .01, \* p < .05, b = unstandardized coefficient,  $\beta$  = standardised coefficient

Table 6. 26 is a graphic representation of the effect of the mediation variable, on-job embeddedness (OJE), on the relationship between the employee's perceived job security (ES) and the employee's intention to remain (IR), with a direct path from ES to IR. The results show that ES has a direct positive effect on IR ( $\beta=.635$ ) and that the direct path from ES to IR ( $\beta = .353$   $p=.000$ ) was partially statistically significant after adding the mediator OJE. The above analysis also shows that on-job embeddedness (OJE) mediates the relationship between the perceived job security (ES) and the intention to remain (IR) of Saudi employees of the construction industry. Thus, this finding suggests that the indirect relationship between the employee's perceived job security (ES) and intention to remain (IR) has been partially transmitted by on-job embeddedness (OJE). This, therefore, demonstrates the partial mediational effect of OJE on ES and IR. This is because it was found that the direct effect of the independent variable ES on the dependent variable IR, after adding the mediator OJE, is partially statistically significant. Thus, it can be derived from this finding that OJE does partially mediate the effect of employees' perceived job security (ES) on their intention to remain (IR) with Adjusted R Square (0.511) which indicate that 51.1% of the observed variation in intention to remain can be explained by the model's inputs.

This, in turn, leads us to accept the hypothesized mediation effect of OJE on the employees' perceived job security (ES) and their intention to remain.

*H<sub>5B</sub>: On-job embeddedness mediates the relationship between the perceived job security of employees and their intention to remain.*

### 6.10.7 On- Job embeddedness as a Mediator to Perceived Supervisor

#### Support and Employee's Intention to Remain

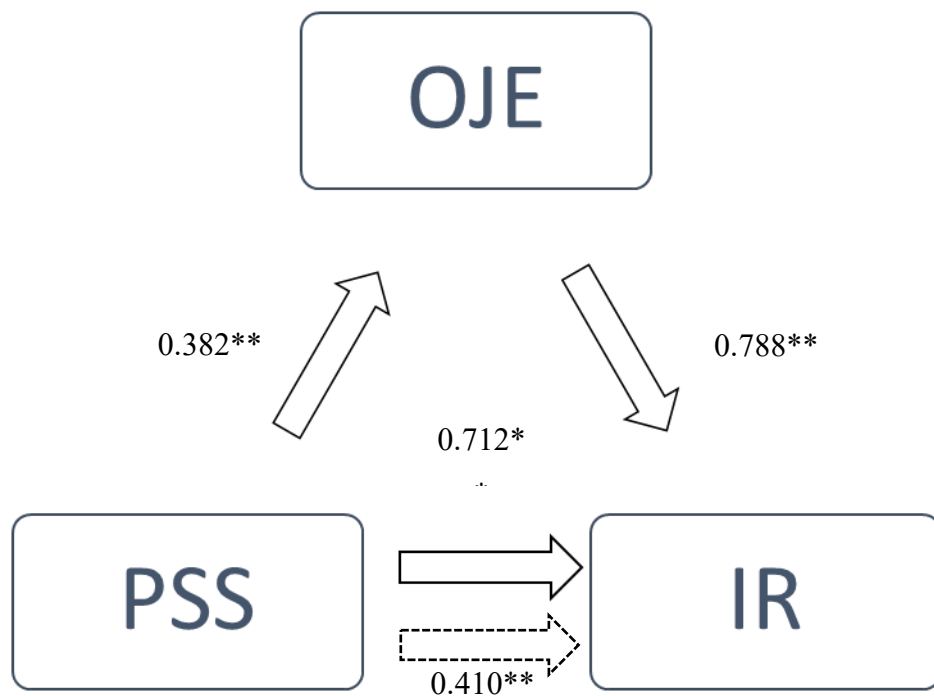


Figure 6. 8: Perception of the on-job embeddedness (OJE) as a partial mediator between the perceived supervisor support (PSS) and the employee's intention to remain (IR).

Table 6. 27: Regression Analysis of Perceived supervisor support, on-job embeddedness, and Intention to remain.

Variables	Variables	Beta	Sig	R	Adjusted R Square
Equation 1	DV = intention to remain IV = Perceived supervisor support MV = On-job embeddedness	.712	.000	.632	.399
Equation 2	DV = intention to remain IV = Perceived supervisor support MV = On-job embeddedness	.382	.000	.609	.370
Equation 3	DV = intention to remain IV = Perceived supervisor support MV = On-job embeddedness	.410 .788	.000 .000	.722	.521

\*\* p < .01, \* p < .05, b = unstandardized coefficient,  $\beta$  = standardised coefficient

Finally, as highlighted in Table 6. 27 , this study examined the effect of the mediation variable, on-job embeddedness (OJE), on the relationship between the employee's perceived supervisor support (PSS) and the intention to remain (IR), with a direct path from PSS to IR. The results show that PSS has direct positive effect on IR ( $\beta=.712$ ) and that the statistical analysis shows that the direct path from PSS to (IR) ( $\beta = .410$   $p= .000$ ) was partially statistically significant after adding the mediator OJE. Hence, the above analysis shows that on-job embeddedness (OJE) mediates the relationship between the perceived supervisor support (PSS) and the intention to remain (IR) of Saudi employees within the construction industry. Thus, the findings suggest that this indirect relationship between perceived supervisor support (PSS) and intention to remain (IR) has been partially transmitted by on-job embeddedness (OJE). This, therefore, proves the partial mediational effect of OJE on PSS and IR because as the direct effect of the independent variable PSS on the dependent variable IR, after adding the mediator OJE, is partially statistically significant.

From these results, it can therefore be concluded that OJE does partially mediate the effect of the perceived supervisor support (PSS) on the employee's intention to remain (IR) with Adjusted R Square (0.521) which indicate that 52.1% of the observed variation in intention to remain can be explained by the model's inputs. This, in turn, leads to accepting the initial hypothesis that there is a mediation effect of OJE on the employee's perceived supervisor support and the intention to remain.

***H<sub>6B</sub>:** On-job embeddedness mediates the relationship between the employee's perceived supervisor support and the intention to remain.*

## **6.11 Summary**

This chapter has presented the data analysis for the hypothesized relationships and the proposed mediational role of on-job embeddedness on the relationship between several selective HR practices and the employees' attitudes to their organisation (intention to remain). Hence, based on the statistical analysis, the perceived employee's selection, extensive training, compensation, participation, job security and supervisor support were found to have a positive relationship to the employee's intention to remain. The findings also showed that on-job embeddedness and off-job embeddedness were positively correlated to the employee's intention to remain. Moreover, the mediation test that was used in this study revealed that on-job embeddedness exhibited a partial mediator role in the relationship between selected HR practices and the employee's intention to remain.

Table 6. 28: List of hypotheses formulated in this research.

	Hypotheses	Results
H <sub>1</sub> :	Perceived employee's selection is positively related to intention to remain.	<b>Supported</b>
H <sub>1A</sub>	perceived employee's selection is positively related to On-job embeddedness.	<b>Supported</b>
H <sub>1B</sub>	On-job embeddedness mediates the relationship between perceived employee's selection and intention to remain.	<b>Supported</b>
H <sub>2</sub> :	Perceived extensive training is positively related to intention to remain.	<b>Supported</b>
H <sub>2A</sub>	perceived extensive training is positively related to On-job embeddedness.	<b>Supported</b>
H <sub>2B</sub>	On-job embeddedness mediates the relationship between perceived extensive training and intention to remain.	<b>Supported</b>
H <sub>3</sub> :	Perceived employee compensation is positively related to intention to remain.	<b>Supported</b>
H <sub>3A</sub>	perceived compensation is positively related to On-job embeddedness.	<b>Supported</b>
H <sub>3B</sub>	On-job embeddedness mediates the relationship between perceived compensation of and intention to remain.	<b>Supported</b>
H <sub>4</sub> :	Perceived employee participation is positively related to intention to remain.	<b>Supported</b>
H <sub>4A</sub>	perceived employee's participation is positively related to On-job embeddedness.	<b>Supported</b>
H <sub>4B</sub>	On-job embeddedness mediates the relationship between perceived participation of and intention to remain.	<b>Supported</b>
H <sub>5</sub> :	Perceived job security is positively related to intention to remain.	<b>Supported</b>
H <sub>5A</sub> :	perceived job security is positively related to On-job embeddedness.	<b>Supported</b>
H <sub>5B</sub> :	On-job embeddedness mediates the relationship between perceived job security of and intention to remain.	<b>Supported</b>

- H<sub>6</sub>: Perceived supervisor support is positively related to intentions to remain. **Supported**
- H<sub>6A</sub>: perceived supervisor support is positively related to On-job embeddedness. **Supported**
- H<sub>6B</sub>: On-job embeddedness mediates the relationship between perceived supervisor support and intention to remain. **Supported**
- H<sub>7</sub>: On-job embeddedness is positively related to intention to remain. **Supported**
- H<sub>8</sub>: Off-job embeddedness is positively related to intention to remain. **Supported**
-

## **Chapter Seven: Discussion**

### **7.1 Introduction**

This chapter provides a discussion of the results of the current research findings that was analysed and presented in chapter 6. The chapter is divided into four sections. The first section provides a summary of the research objectives, questions and hypotheses that were investigated in this research. The second section provides the discussion of the results from this research in relation to the research questions that this study seeks to answer. The third section discusses the contribution of this study.

### **7.2 Summary of Research Aims Objectives, Hypotheses and Questions**

The main aim of this study is to investigate how selected HR practices related to On-job embeddedness of Saudi nationals and their attitudes of organisation (intention to remain). Additionally, this study examines the mediation relation of on-job embeddedness on the relationships between Saudi national “ selected HR practices and their attitudes (intention to remain) to their organisations in Saudi construction industry. Also, to examine the associations between off-the-job embeddedness and the intentions of Saudi construction Saudi nationals to remain in their jobs.

In order to achieve the aims stated above, the research study will focus on the following research objectives:

1. To examine the relation of the antecedent variables (selected HR practices) and on-job embeddedness and intention to remain within the construction industry of Saudi Arabia.
2. To identify the relation of (On and off-job embeddedness) on Saudi nationals’ intentions of remaining in the Saudi construction industry.
3. To explore the mediating role that On- job embeddedness plays between the selected antecedents and Saudi nationals’ intention to remain.
4. To provide suitable recommendations for improving HR practices that influence job embeddedness and employees’ intentions to remain in the Saudi construction industry.

The overarching hypothesis of the current study was based on the theory that organisation job embeddedness will have significant relation on the relationship between antecedent

HRM practices and the intention to remain of national employees in Saudi construction organizations. Furthermore, current research will measure the meditation relation of on-job embeddedness between HR practices and intention to remain only. Accordingly, the following hypotheses were tested (Table 7. 1).

Table 7. 1 Breakdown of Research Hypothesis Results.

	<b>Hypotheses</b>	<b>Results</b>
<b>H<sub>1</sub>:</b>	Perceived employee's selection is positively related to intention to remain.	<b>Supported</b>
<b>H<sub>1A</sub>:</b>	perceived employee's selection is positively related to On-job embeddedness.	<b>Supported</b>
<b>H<sub>1B</sub>:</b>	On-job embeddedness mediates the relationship between perceived employee's selection and intention to remain.	<b>Supported</b>
<b>H<sub>2</sub>:</b>	Perceived extensive training is positively related to intention to remain.	<b>Supported</b>
<b>H<sub>2A</sub>:</b>	Perceived extensive training is positively related to On-job embeddedness.	<b>Supported</b>
<b>H<sub>2B</sub>:</b>	On-job embeddedness mediates the relationship between perceived extensive training and intention to remain.	<b>Supported</b>
<b>H<sub>3</sub>:</b>	Perceived employee compensation is positively related to intention to remain.	<b>Supported</b>
<b>H<sub>3A</sub>:</b>	Perceived compensation is positively related to On-job embeddedness.	<b>Supported</b>
<b>H<sub>3B</sub>:</b>	On-job embeddedness mediates the relationship between perceived compensation of and intention to remain.	<b>Supported</b>
<b>H<sub>4</sub>:</b>	Perceived employee participation is positively related to intention to remain.	<b>Supported</b>
<b>H<sub>4A</sub>:</b>	Perceived employee's participation is positively related to On-job embeddedness.	<b>Supported</b>
<b>H<sub>4B</sub>:</b>	On-job embeddedness mediates the relationship between perceived participation of and intention to remain.	<b>Supported</b>



<b>H<sub>5</sub>:</b>	Perceived job security is positively related to intention to remain.	<b>Supported</b>
<b>H<sub>5A</sub>:</b>	Perceived job security is positively related to On-job embeddedness.	<b>Supported</b>
<b>H<sub>5B</sub>:</b>	On-job embeddedness mediates the relationship between perceived job security of and intention to remain.	<b>Supported</b>
<b>H<sub>6</sub>:</b>	Perceived supervisor support is positively related to intentions to remain.	<b>Supported</b>
<b>H<sub>6A</sub>:</b>	Perceived supervisor support is positively related to On-job embeddedness.	<b>Supported</b>
<b>H<sub>6B</sub>:</b>	On-job embeddedness mediates the relationship between perceived supervisor support and intention to remain.	<b>Supported</b>
<b>H<sub>7</sub>:</b>	On-job embeddedness is positively related to intention to remain.	<b>Supported</b>
<b>H<sub>8</sub>:</b>	Off-job embeddedness is positively related to intention to remain.	<b>Supported</b>

### 7.3 Research questions

What is the mediating role of on- job embeddedness between the selected antecedent variables (perceived employee's selection, perceived extensive training, perceived employee compensation, perceived employee participation, perceived job security and perceived supervisor support) among national employees working in the construction industry and (intention to remain) as well as the identification of the relationship between off- job embeddedness and national employees ' intention to remain in the construction industry of Saudi? To answer the above question, this research also investigated the following secondary research questions:

RQ.1: What is the relation between the selected HR practices of Saudi nationals and their intention to remain in construction industry in Saudi?

RQ.2: What is the relation between selected HR practices of Saudi nationals and on the on- job embeddedness in construction industry of Saudi?

RQ.3: What is the relation between the on-job embeddedness of Saudi nationals and their intention to remain in the construction industry in the Saudi?

RQ.4: What is the relation between the of off- job embeddedness of Saudi nationals and their intention to remain in construction industry in Saudi?

RQ.5 what is the mediational role of on-job embeddedness between selected HR practices and intention to remain of construction industry of Saudi?

The selected antecedent HRM practices there were examined in relation to on-job embeddedness and the intention to remain of national workers in Saudi construction industry were perceived employee's selection, perceived extensive training, perceived compensation, perceived employee participation, perceived employee job security and perceived supervisor support. The current research findings showed support

## **7.4 Discussion of the Results**

Spearman Correlation Coefficient was used in the current study for the examination of the relationship between the selected antecedent HRM practices and employee intention to remain, for the examination of the relationship between on-the-job embeddedness and intention to remain and for the examination of the relationship between off-the-job embeddedness and intention to remain. In particular, spearman correlation coefficient was used to determine the direction and the strength of the relationship between each of the two relationships (Pallant, 2011). The discussion of the results of the current research findings is organised according to the predetermined research questions that the current study seeks to answer as follows:

**RQ1: What is the relation between the selected HR practices of Saudi nationals and their intention to remain in the construction industry in Saudi?**

In order to discuss the results of the research findings of this question, the results of the first six hypotheses H1 – H6 are discussed RQ1.

**RQ2: What is the relation between selected HR practices of Saudi nationals and on the on- job embeddedness in the construction industry of Saudi?**

In order to discuss the results of the research findings of this question, the results of the first six hypotheses H1A – H6A are discussed concerning RQ2.

**RQ3: What is the relation between the on-job embeddedness of Saudi nationals and their intention to remain in the construction industry in Saudi?**

In order to discuss the results of the research findings of this question, the results of the hypothesis H7 is discussed RQ3.

**RQ4: What is the relation between the off-job embeddedness of Saudi nationals and their intention to remain in the construction industry in Saudi?**

In order to discuss the results of the research findings concerning this question, the results of the hypothesis H8 is discussed RQ4.

#### **RQ5 what is the mediational role of on-job embeddedness between selected HR practices and intention to remain of the construction industry of Saudi?**

In order to discuss the results of the research findings of this question, the results of the six hypotheses H1B – H6B are discussed RQ5.

Sections 6.3.1 and 6.3.2 are subsequently discussed together below, given the connection between H1-H6 and H1A-H6A. Furthermore, based on these connections, the impact of job embeddedness in mediating the relationship between each antecedent HRM practices and intention to remain, H1B-H6B is also discussed.

#### **7.4.1 Relationship between perceived employee's selection and intention to remain**

*H1: Perceived employee's selection is positively related to the intention to remain.*

*H1A: Perceived employee's selection is positively related to On-job embeddedness.*

A moderate positive correlation was established between these two variables (.467,  $p < .01$ ). This result confirms the hypothesis H1. The study also established positive moderate correlation in terms of the relationship between perceived employee selection and on-job embeddedness, (.468,  $p < .01$ ). This result confirms the hypothesis H1A. Hence, in answering the research questions RQ2, perceived employee selection was found to have a positive relationship on on-the-job embeddedness. About RQ1, perceived employee's selection was found to have a positively moderately relationship on employee's intention to remain.

Based on the regression analysis, it can be deduced from the R square value of .231, 23.1% of employee intention to remain is explained by perceived employee selection. The results of the regression analysis showed a  $\beta$  of .582, indicating that when all other perceived HR practices (independent variables) are held constant, employee intention to remain will increase by 58.2% based on perceived employee selection. Statistical significance was also established ( $.000 < 0.05$ ), confirming that perceived employee selection made a uniquely significant contribution to the prediction of employee intention to remain. These findings correspond with previous studies such as Sun *et al.* (2007) and Wei *et al.* (2010) who identified employee selection as a high-performance HR practice

that affects the psychological aspects of the employee-employer relationship. These studies highlight employee selection as a factor that helps in shaping employee perception of the work environment, employee attitude and employee behaviour (Wei et al., 2010). For instance, it is explained that perceived employee selection is an important factor in establishing employee psychological contract about how employees view their relationship with the organisation (Cameron *et al.*, 2010; Torrington et al., 2014). Furthermore, Allen and Meyer (1990), Rezaeian (2005) and Kraimer *et al.* (2011) have also linked employee psychological, attitudinal and behavioural characteristics to higher levels of employee intention to remain and employee selection is identified as the first stage in developing employee-organisation fit and attachment (Holtom et al., 2006). This result needs to be considered as an effect of the Saudisation policy on how Saudi nationals are recruited and selected, as the overriding selection criteria is driven by the need to meet the mandatory nitaqat quota rather than the goal of recruiting the best person for the job requirements or achieving person-organisation fit (Al-dosary and Rahman, 2009; Randeree, 2009; Alsheikh, 2015).

The confirmed H1 and H1A hypotheses are also consistent with the evidence presented in (Chapter 2: Research Context). Given that the total number of the construction visas issued to migrant workers had reduced by almost 100,000 words in 2018 in comparison with the previous year (Jadwa Investment, 2019), it is valid to argue that selective admission and recruitment policies are followed at all levels, including migration mechanisms. The concept of ‘wasta’, which is literally translated as ‘who you know’ (Harbi et al., 2016), is also typical to the Saudi society and labour relations. Therefore, artificial barriers are established by the Saudi government and organisations to recruit non-nationals. Since these hypotheses have been confirmed, it is reasonable to summarise that the measures taken within the Saudisation policy are effective, especially taking into account that Saudi national employees from the construction industry are willing to demonstrate retention and high on-the-job embeddedness.

#### **7.4.2 The mediational role of OJE in the relationship between perceived employee selection and the intention to remain**

*H1B: On-job embeddedness mediates the relationship between perceived employee’s selection and intention to remain.*

In terms of the mediation effect of on-the-job embeddedness on the relationship between

perceived employee selection and intention to remain, the study findings showed support for H1B: On-job embeddedness mediates the relationship between perceived employee's selection and intention to remain. The findings showed that the direct path from RS to IR ( $\beta = .240$ ) was statistically significant after adding the mediator OJE. This means that OJE mediates the effect of perceived employee's selection RS on the employee's intention to remain. This result can be explained from the perspective of on-the-job embeddedness given that perceived employees selection is related to the level of compatibility that employee feel exists between their goals, values and skills and what is required by the job/organisation (Bambacas and Kulik, 2013). The study's finding of positive relationship between perceived employee's selection and on-the-job embeddedness confirms the person-job fit aspects in the on-the-job fit dimension of the job embeddedness theory of Mitchell *et al.* (2001), which states that the greater the level of congruence in the person-job fit, the more likely it is that the individual will feel a high level of personal and professional attachment to the organization (Holtom et al., 2006). Based on the results of the current research findings, it is also argued from the perspective of high-performance work practices that perceived employee selection is a mechanism that organisations can use to communicate fit between organisation/job requirements and culture and the skill, values and career plans of employees. This is supported by studies such as Lee et al. (2004), Bergiel et al. (2009) and Karatepe (2013), who linked selective staffing and the perceived person-job fit to the sacrifice dimension of on-the-job embeddedness, whereby organisational attachment is enhanced, and employees are unwilling to forfeit the benefits provided by fit between their career goals and the organisational values, culture and objectives as they may not find similar opportunities/benefits in another organization. This finding corresponds with previous studies such as Karatepe (2013), Ghosh and Gurunathan (2015) and Paşaoğlu (2015) who identified employee selection as a strategic HRM practice that can be used to not only recruit well qualified employees but to also shape their perception that they are working in the right place, which will, in turn, reduce quit intentions and improve employee retention. The current findings are also supported by Tharenou and Caulfield (2010) and Kraimer *et al.* (2011) who have linked compatibility/fit between the career aspirations of employees and the professional development opportunities that are provided by organisations to employee retention. It is also argued from an SHRM perspective of how HRM practices are implemented will determine how they are perceived by employees (Sun *et al.*, 2007; Ghosh and Gurunathan, 2015).

For example in terms of the perceived fit between the individual's goals and values and the overall organisational culture (Lee *et al.*, 2004; Jiang *et al.*, 2012; Kraimer *et al.*, 2012). Also, the Saudi context affected this finding, since it has been identified that there is high turnover of Saudi nationals in the private sector, due to contradiction in the expectations of Saudi national employees with limited competence, who are looking for well-paying, status-enhancing positions and private sector companies who are looking for hard-working, competent workers that are willing to accept minimum employment benefits (Mellahi, 2007; Al-dosary and Rahman, 2009; Moussa, 2013). Furthermore, studies show that there is lack of competent national employees in Saudi private sector (Azhar *et al.*, 2016) and Saudi construction (Assaf and Al-Hejii, 2006;). Hence, from this perspective, it is formulated that perceived employee selection will have positive correlation with on-the-job embeddedness and intention to remain.

### **7.4.3 The relationship between perceived extensive training and employee intention to remain**

*H2: Perceived extensive training is positively related to the intention to remain.*

*H2A: Perceived that extensive training is positively related to On-job embeddedness.*

In terms of the relationship between perceived extensive training and employee intention to remain, a moderate positive correlation was established between these two variables (.456,  $p < .01$ ). This result confirms that a perceived extensive training is positively related to the intention to remain (Hypothesis H2). Furthermore, the study also established a positive moderate correlation terms of the relationship between perceived extensive training and on-job embeddedness (.456,  $p < .01$ ). This result confirms that the perceived extensive training is positively related to on-the-job embeddedness (Hypothesis H2A). Hence, in answering the research questions RQ2, a perceived extensive training was found to have a positive relationship on on-the-job embeddedness. About RQ1, a perceived extensive training was found to have a positively moderately relationship with intention to remain of Saudi nationals. Additionally, based on the regression analysis, it can be deduced from the R square value of .218, that 21.8% of employee intention to remain is explained by perceived extensive training. Furthermore, the results of the regression analysis showed a  $\beta$  of .496, which indicates that when all other perceived HR practices (independent variables) are held constant, employee intention to remain will increase by 49.6% based on the perceived extensive training.

Statistical significance was also established ( $.000 < 0.05$ ), confirming that a perceived extensive training made a uniquely significant contribution to the prediction of employee intention to remain. Furthermore, in the context of the current research, training and competence development has been identified as an important factor that motivates Saudi nationals to work and stay on in specific organisation (Al-Ahamadi, 2002; Ramady and Rahman, 2009; Jehanzeb et al., 2013), and based on the social exchange theory, it is argued that by investing in the professional development of employees, organisations demonstrate investment in long-term relationship with the employee, which in turn will be reciprocated by the employee (Tanova and Holtom, 2008; Allen and Shanock, 2013).

These findings on the importance of training are highly relevant to the context of Saudi Arabia. Only 40% of private organisations from this country were reported to have in-house human resource development facilities and infrastructure (Al-bahussin and El-garaihy, 2013). Moreover, around 79% of training courses and initiatives were said to take place randomly (Azhar et al., 2016). Underestimating the role of training, the private sector of Saudi Arabia will not be able to transform its labour force and achieve positive employee reactions to the working process (i.e. job embeddedness and retention).

#### **7.4.4 The mediational role of OJE in the relationship between perceived extensive training and intention to remain**

*H2B: On-the-job embeddedness mediates the relationship between perceived extensive training and intention to remain.*

In terms of the mediation effect of on-the-job embeddedness on the relationship between perceived extensive training and intention to remain, the study findings showed support for this hypothesis. The findings showed that the direct path from ET to IR ( $\beta = .212$ ) was statistically significant after adding the mediator OJE. This means that OJE can mediate the effect perceived employees training on employee's intention to remain. Overall these results are consistent with the social exchange theory (Blau, 1964; Kuvaas, 2008; Snape and Redman, 2010) and the SHRM theory AMO framework (Appelbaum *et al.*, 2001; Boxall and Purcell, 2008; Jiang *et al.*, 2012). The results confirm a previous study of Kraimer *et al.* (2011), who linked training, development, perceived fit between employee career objectives and internal career opportunities with job embeddedness and employee retention.

The results of the current research findings also established that extensive training has a positive impact on job embeddedness from the perspective of fit and sacrifice dimensions. This finding is supported by studies developed by Chiang *et al.* (2005), Samuel and Chipunza (2009), Choi and Dickson (2010) and Bambacas and Bordia (2009), who linked training with employee retention and reduced turnover intention. The findings of the current research did not corroborate the argument of previous research conducted by Benson *et al.* (2004), Bergiel *et al.* (2009) and Haines *et al.* (2010) who showed that job embeddedness did not mediate the impact of training. However, such assertions are also considered to be a possibility, given studies developed by Achoui and Mansour (2007) and Al-dosary and Rahman (2009), who have linked high turnover among Saudi national workers in the private sector with the pursuit of better paying or higher status job offers. Hence, from this perspective, it is formulated that on-the-job embeddedness will mediate the relationship between perceived extensive training and intention to remain.

#### **7.4.5 The relationship between perceived employee's compensation and intention to remain**

*H3: Perceived employee compensation is positively related to the intention to remain.*

*H3A: Perceived compensation is positively related to On-job embeddedness.*

The hypothesis H3 is confirmed since there is a moderate positive correlation (.548,  $p < .01$ ) between perceived employee's compensation and employee intention to remain. Similarly, the hypothesis H3A is confirmed since there is a moderate positive correlation between perceived employee's compensation and job embeddedness (.514,  $p < .01$ ). Concerning RQ1, a perceived employee's compensation was found to have a significant positive relationship on the intention to remain of national workers. Regarding the questions RQ2, a perceived employee's compensation was found to have a significant positive relation on on-the-job embeddedness. Additionally, the R square (.308) shows that 30.8% of employee's intention to remain is explained by perceived compensation. The results of the regression analysis showed a  $\beta$  of .563, which means that when all other perceived HR practices (independent variables) are held constant, employee's intention to remain increase by 56.3% based on the increase of the perceived compensation. A statistical significance was also established (.000,  $p < .05$ ), confirming that perceived compensation made a uniquely significant contribution to the prediction of employee intention to remain.



From the perspective of the job embeddedness model, these results correspond with the fit and sacrifice dimension of the OJE construct. In terms of the fit dimension, due to the perceived fairness of the incentive system at the surveyed construction organisations, there is a perceived fit between the employment objectives of the survey participants and the rewards that are provided by their organisations. Hence, leading to a higher organisational attachment and lower turnover intentions, which in turn increase the intention to remain. This is consistent with the perspective of the social exchange theory since the main research findings support the view of the social exchange norm of reciprocity, which states that employees will reciprocate similar beneficial gesture or attitude that employers extend to them (Blau, 1964; Chen and Francesco, 2003; Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005; Halbesleben and Wheeler, 2008; Hom *et al.*, 2009). Also, it can be deduced that there are a low turnover intention and a high intention to remain since the material inducement that is created by providing competitive pay signals and an employer's long-term view of the employment relationship as a result of the corporate willingness to make a substantial material investment in rewarding employee performance. Overall, the results of this section of the findings support studies developed by Allen *et al.* (2003), who linked perceived employee's compensation to lower turnover intention, and Allen and Griffeth (2001), who stated an effective relationship between contingent reward practices and lower turnover intention. This result supports the previous studied developed by Shaw *et al.* (1998), Hom *et al.* (2009) and Shaw *et al.* (200?), who linked employee loyalty and low turnover intentions to rewards systems that offer high levels of material inducement to motivate employee performance, and also Peterson and Luthans (2006), who stated that motivation-enhancing practices are correlated to job-specific sacrifice.

The obtained results are consistent with the findings of Bambacas and Kulik (2013) and Karatepe (2013), who emphasised the role of reward-based and performance-related factors influencing job embeddedness. Even though these research observations were received in the US and Chinese contexts, they are still applicable to the context of Saudi Arabia, taking into account the confirmed hypotheses H3 and H3A. Similarly, it was asserted by Holtom *et al.* (2008) that pay inequality can provoke higher turnover rates. The government of the KSA, as well as private company owners, should not underestimate the role of monetary reward and compensation in attracting and retaining skilled employees in the domestic construction industry.

#### **7.4.6 The mediational role of OJE in the relationship between perceived employee's compensation and intention to remain**

*H3B: On-the-job embeddedness mediates the relationship between perceived employee's compensation and intention to remain.*

In terms of the mediation effect of on-the-job embeddedness on the relationship between perceived employee's compensation and intention to remain, the study findings support this hypothesis. The result showed that the direct path from IC to IR ( $\beta = .297$ ) was statistically significant after adding the mediator OJE. This means that OJE mediates the effect of perceived employee's compensation on the employee's intention to remain. Overall, the research results link perceived fair reward system to organisational commitment and employee retention. These findings are consistent with the COR theory (Hobfoll, 2001; Bergiel *et al.*, 2009; Chiang and Birtch, 2010; Kiazad *et al.*, 2015; Hobfoll, 2018). Also, the Saudi context influences this relationship, since there is a high level of pay disparity in the Saudi private sector, which also applies to the construction sector due to the high proportion of foreign workers in the industry and the high pay discrimination that exists between the pay system that is applied to Saudi nationals and the pay system for the foreign workers (Ramady, 2013; Alshanbri *et al.*, 2014).

#### **7.4.7 The relationship between perceived employee's participation and employee intention to remain**

*H4: Perceived employee participation is positively related to the intention to remain.*

*H4A: Perceived employee's participation is positively related to On-job embeddedness.*

The hypothesis H4 is confirmed since a moderate positive correlation was established between perceived employee's participation and employee intention to remain (.515,  $p < .01$ ). The hypothesis H4A is also confirmed since there is a moderate positive correlation between perceived employee's participation and on-job embeddedness (.674,  $p < .01$ ). About RQ1, a perceived employees participation was found to have a positive and significant relationship on the intention to remain of Saudi national. Regarding the research questions RQ2, a perceived employee's participation was found to have a significant positive relation on on-the-job embeddedness. Based on the regression analysis, the R square (.275) shows that 27.5% of employee intention to remain is

explained by perceived employee participation. The results of the regression analysis showed a  $\beta$  of .654, which means that when all other perceived HR practices (independent variables) are held constant, employee intention to remain will increase by 65.4% according to a 100% increase in perceived employee participation. Statistical significance was also established (.000,  $p < 0.05$ ), confirming that perceived employee participation made a uniquely significant contribution to the prediction of employee intention to remain. The results from this section of the current research findings support the OJE fit, links and sacrifice dimensions of Mitchell *et al.*'s (2001) job embeddedness theory.

The confirmed hypotheses H4 and H4A are especially relevant to the context of the Saudi Arabia because the participation of organisational leaders and managers still remains a problem for the private sector in the KSA (SAMA, 2017). For this reason, the expectations and perceptions of the target population revealed a dependency between the involvement rate and on-the-job embeddedness. Saudi national employees from the construction industry would be happy to work for highly involved organisations practicing participative leadership. At the same time, it is easier for private construction companies to practice leadership and managerial involvement than for state-owned organisations (Jeddah Chamber Report, 2016).

#### **7.4.8 The mediational role of OJE on the relationship between perceived employee's participation and intention to remain**

*H4B: On-the-job embeddedness mediates the relationship between perceived employee participation and intention to remain.*

The study findings supported this hypothesis H4B and showed that the direct path from EP to IR ( $\beta = .185$ ) was statistically significant after adding OJE, which mediates the effect of perceived employee participation on the employee's intention to remain. These results are supported by empirical studies developed by Maertz *et al.* (2003), who found a positive correlation between employee retention and the normative pressures created by strong intra-organisational links with other people in the organisation, and between good co-worker relationships and employee organisational commitment (Moynihan and Pandey, 2007).

The lack of effective managerial participation at all levels in private construction companies may be explained by the missing formal regulatory framework for HRM in Saudi Arabia in the early 2000s (Mellahi and Wood, 2002). Moreover, a large share of construction employees has been historically and traditionally represented by foreign workers (Mellahi, 2007), and it was challenging for Saudi national owners to be genuinely engaged in employee-employer communication. Saudi Vision 2030 will contribute to the transformation process of private companies' HR approaches and strategies, and on-the-job embeddedness will strengthen its role as a mediator in the relationship between employee participation and intention to remain.

#### **7.4.9 The relationship between perceived job security and employee intention to remain**

*H5: Perceived job security is positively related to the intention to remain.*

*H5A: Perceived job security is positively related to On-job embeddedness.*

Both hypotheses are confirmed since there is respectively a moderate positive correlation between perceived job security and employee intention to remain (.541,  $p < .01$ ) and perceived job security and job embeddedness (.473,  $p < .01$ ). Regarding the research question RQ1, perceived job security was found to have a positive and significant relationship on the intention to remain of Saudi national. For the research questions RQ2, perceived job security was found to have a positive moderated relation on on-the-job embeddedness. From the regression analysis, an R square value of .316 explains that 31.6% of employee intention to remain is explained by perceived job security. Furthermore, the results of the regression analysis showed a  $\beta$  of .635, indicating that when all other perceived HR practices (independent variables) are held constant, employee intention to remain will increase by 63.5% if there is a 100% improvement in perceived job security. Statistical significance was also established ( $.000 < 0.05$ ), confirming that perceived job security made a uniquely significant contribution to the prediction of employee intention to remain. These findings support previous empirical studies of Shaw *et al.* (1998), Chiboiwa *et al.* (2009), Samuel and Chipunza (2009) and Holmes *et al.* (2013), who identified in the Saudi Context a significant positive correlation between job security and employee retention.

It was identified during the theoretical review of the previous literature that Saudi employees are very much concerned about the social status of their jobs (Moussa, 2013). National and foreign employees from the private sector report about the lack of job security in comparison with the public sector, emphasise the lack of career advancement opportunities, point to poor performance appraisal systems, and demonstrate dissatisfaction with management-employee communication and poor recognition systems (Iqbal, 2010). This background information related to Saudi Arabia explains why job security is perceived as a determinant of job embeddedness and willingness to stay. Saudi women are said to experience a lower degree of job security (SAMA, 2017).

#### **7.4.10 The mediational role of OJE on the relationship between perceived job security and intention to remain**

*H5B: On-the-job embeddedness mediates the relationship between perceived job security and intention to remain.*

This hypothesis is supported, and the result showed that the direct path from ES to IR ( $\beta = .353$ ) was statistically significant after adding, which is perceived as a set of fit, link and sacrifice that mediates the effect of perceived job security on employee's intention to remain. These findings are consistent with the reciprocity principle of the social exchange theory, which argues that such HRM practices which signal long-term employer investment in the employment relationship with inducing similar obligation from employees to reciprocate the same long-term perspective (Tanova and Holtom, 2008; Allen and Shanock, 2013). In contrast, studies such as Amar (2004) have argued that job security has no significant correlation with employee retention, particularly about the retention of knowledge workers. This category of workers is classified as new generation skilled employees, who prefer their freedom and have no expectations of long-term employment from employers and who consider employment mobility as positive feedback from the labour market and evidence of their worth (Amar, 2002; 2004). Similarly, the study by Benson and Brown (2007) argues that job security is not a significant antecedent for the retention of all types of workers. The authors distinguish between the impact of job security on routine and knowledge workers (i.e. workers whose tasks are varied and complex), whereby significant correlation between job security and retention was only identified with the routine workers.

In the context of the current research, the mediating role of on-the-job embeddedness is considered to be important in the relationship between perceived job security and intention to remain, due to the lack of job security in the Saudi private sector (Al-Dosary and Rahman, 2009). Also, the Saudi people value strong relationships and show a strong sense of belonging, and it is expected that this will be reflected in their organisational attachment based on the job embeddedness theory, which asserts that the community dimension reflects the extent to which individuals feel embedded within their community, and it shows significant influence on the employees' intentions to stay in the organisation (Mitchell et al., 2001; Ng and Feldman, 2010).

#### **7.4.11 The relationship between perceived supervisor support and employee intention to remain**

*H6: Perceived supervisor support is positively related to intentions to remain.*

*H6A: Perceived supervisor support is positively related to On-job embeddedness.*

Both hypotheses are confirmed since there is a strong positive correlation (.624,  $p < .01$ ) between perceived supervisor support and employee intention to remain (H6) and a significant positive correlation (.596,  $p < .01$ ) between perceived supervisor support and job embeddedness. About the research question RQ1, perceived supervisor support was found to have a positive and significant relationship with intention to remain of Saudi national. Regarding the research questions RQ2, perceived supervisor support was found to have a positive and significant effect on on-the-job embeddedness. Additionally, based on the regression analysis, from the R square (.399) emerged that 39.9% of employee intention to remain is explained by perceived supervisor support. Furthermore, the results of the regression analysis showed a  $\beta$  of .712, indicating that when all other perceived HR practices (independent variables) are held constant, employee intention to remain will increase by 71.2% if there is a 100% improvement in perceived supervisor support. Statistical significance was also established ( $.000 < 0.05$ ), confirming that perceived supervisor support made a uniquely significant contribution to the prediction of employee intention to remain. The results of the current findings support studies such as Kraimer et al. (2011) that identified the provision of growth opportunities, autonomy and involvement in decision making as some of the major ways through which leaders can support members beyond the requirements of the employment contract (Kraimer et al., 2011).

Concerning the Saudi context, there is the need for training and on-going support from the perspective of cultural re-orientation, performance management and general workplace effectiveness. More so, given the project-based environment of the construction sector that requires discipline, keeping to deadlines and working with people from different backgrounds (Mellahi, 2007). Returning to the concept of 'wasta' (Ramady, 2016), it is reasonable to state that supervisor support is what is expected by Saudi national employees working for the private sector from their employers. Hence, a more participative leadership style will significantly contribute to improving private worker's job embeddedness as well as their retention.

#### **7.4.12 The mediational role of OJE on the relationship between perceived supervisor support and intention to remain**

*H6B: On-job embeddedness mediates the relationship between perceived supervisor support and intention to remain.*

This hypothesis is supported, and the result showed that the direct path from PSS to IR ( $\beta = .410$ ) was statistically significant after adding the mediator OJE. This means that OJE perceived as a set (Fit, Link and Sacrifice) mediates the effect of perceived supervisor support on employee's intention to remain. This result supports studies such as Eisenberger *et al.* (2001) and Kraimer *et al.* (2011) which argue that because supervisors act as representatives of the organisation that have authority for leading and appraising the performance of subordinates, employees will view their supervisors' favourable or unfavourable disposition towards them as representative/symbolic of the organisation's support. Hence, from this perspective, these results are consistent with the COR theory which suggests that employees accrue job embeddedness to the extent that they perceive fit between their values, goals and expectations and those of the job and the organisation, to the extent that they have strong, valuable links in the organisation and to the extent that they feel a strong need to protect these valuable resources that they have accumulated by remaining in the organisation (Hobfoll, 1989; Harris *et al.*, 2011). Additionally, perceived supervisor support is identified in the literature as a component of perceived organisational support that is an important determining factor in how employees view their relationship with the organisation (Kraimer *et al.*, 2011).

This is further supported by previous empirical studies such as Masterson (2001 cited in Shanock and Eisenberger, 2006 and Bhatnagar, 2014), which suggested, based on the social exchange theory, that perceived supervisor support will generate the feeling of obligation in employees to reciprocate the positive behaviour that has been received from the supervisor as well as the desire to assist their supervisors in attaining their goals. More specifically, this result is based on the fact that perceived supervisor support is considered to be a very important variable in the context of this research topic, given the gap that has been identified in the attitude of Saudi nationals and what is required for effective working in a multicultural, performance-oriented workplace environment and the lack of cross-cultural integration skills (Mellahi, 2007).

#### **7.4.13 The relationship between On-job embeddedness and intention to remain**

*H7: On-the-job embeddedness is positively related to the intention to remain.*

This result confirmed the hypothesis H7 since there is a strong positive correlation between on-the-job embeddedness and employee intention to remain (.663,  $p < .01$ ). In answering the research question RQ3, OJE was found to have a significant positive impact on the intention to remain of Saudi national workers. Furthermore, in terms of the impact of OJE on the intention to remain, the results of the current findings demonstrated significant support for all the three OJE dimensions of links, fit and sacrifice. In terms of the OJE links, these were supported by the sense of belonging and interdependent relationships and connection that were derived from being integrated into the organisation's social network, comprising of close working and frequent interactions with colleagues. In terms of OJE fit, this was significantly supported by the degree of organisational identity, person-job fit, self-identification with colleagues, and the sense of compatibility with the organisational goals and values that were perceived by the participants. These results support previous studies such as Mitchell *et al.* (2001), Lee *et al.* (2004), Holtom *et al.* (2006), Bergiel *et al.* (2009) and Bambacas and Kulik (2013) which linked intention to remain/low turnover intentions to OJE constructs such as congruence between employee-employer goals/person-organisation fit, strong bond or shared similarities with co-workers and reluctance to sacrifice current organisational benefits.



Furthermore, similar to Bergiel et al. (2009), the results of the current study showed positive correlation between OJE perceived as a set (Fit, Link and Sacrifice) and employee's intention to remain, whereby the higher the degree of valuable fit and links elements that the employee benefits from the organisation, the greater the loss/sacrifice that will be suffered if the employee decides to leave (Bergiel et al., 2009), thereby reducing turnover intention and increasing intention to remain. Similar to Bambacas and Kulik (2013), the current research found a positive correlation between OJE fit and intention to remain (reduced turnover intentions) and between OJE links and intention to remain/reduced turnover intentions. However, unlike the study by Bambacas and Kulik (2013), which investigated OJE construct in its disaggregated components, the current did not find a negative correlation between OJE sacrifice and intention to remain/reduced turnover intentions.

#### **7.4.14 The relationship between off-job embeddedness and intention to remain**

*H8: Off-job embeddedness is positively related to the intention to remain.*

This hypothesis is confirmed since there is a positive correlation (.198,  $p < .01$ ) between off-the-Job embeddedness and employee intention to remain. Regarding the research question RQ4, off-the-job embeddedness was found to have a positive impact on the intention to remain of Saudi national workers. Also, based on the regression analysis, it can be deduced from the R square (.044), 4.4% of employee intention to remain is explained by off-the-job embeddedness. However, the results of the regression analysis showed the moderate relationship between off-the-job embeddedness and employee intention to remain, with a  $\beta$  of .365, indicating that when all other variables are held constant, employee intention to remain will increase by 36.5% if there is a 100% improvement in off-the-job embeddedness. Statistical significance was also established ( $.000 < 0.05$ ), confirming that off-the-job embeddedness made a uniquely significant contribution to the prediction of employee intention to remain. These results support previous studies such as Lee et al. (2004), Wheeler, Harris, and Sablynski (2012), Crossley, Bennett, Jex, and Burnfield (2007) and Kiazad et al. (2015), which showed that on-the-job embeddedness had a stronger effect on work-related outcomes than off-the-job embeddedness.

From the perspective of the COR theory resource accumulation principle, the reason for the moderate/lower level impact of off-the-job embeddedness on the intention to remain in comparison to the impact of OJE could be because it is easy for the surveyed employees to obtain alternative employment in their community (Allen, 2006). This result can be explained with the fact that off-the-job embeddedness fit dimension was moderately supported by the level of compatibility that the Saudi national workers had with the weather, environment and lifestyle that were offered in their community. In terms of the sacrifice dimension of off-the-job embeddedness, this was moderately supported by unwillingness of the participants to forfeit their sense of belonging, security, community social ties and the benefits that were associated with their present neighbourhood. Fit and Links components emerged as the strongest off-the-job factors that embedded the Saudi national employees in their community. In particular, the results of the current research identified family roots and community benefits (including weather, sports, outdoor activities, cultural events and arts) to be the strongest non-work domain factors contributing to the aggregate/global effect of off-the-job embeddedness on intention to remain. In the current research context, this is a very plausible explanation given that the Saudisation programme makes it very easy for Saudi nationals to gain employment in the private sector, due to the mandatory quota for filling positions with Saudi nationals (De Bel-Air, 2015), which the construction companies have to adhere to. Hence, this makes it easy for the Saudi national workers to easily change their current job for one that offers greater fit or benefits without having to relocate.

## **7.5 Research Contribution**

In terms of the research contribution, this thesis makes both theoretical and practical contributions to the field of SHRM, turnover studies and the literature on cross-cultural relevance of best practice HRM models.

### **7.5.1 Theoretical Contribution**

The study findings make a significant contribution to studies about SHRM practices, job embeddedness and employee retention. In particular has contributed to reducing the research gap in the areas of HRM practices, job embeddedness and employee retention about the management and retention of Saudi national workers in the Saudi Arabia construction industry.

The theoretical contribution of this study is derived from the perspectives of the COR theory and Social Exchange Theory, which provide insights about how HRM practices can be used to embed/enmesh employees in their job by enhancing the extent of the congruence between employees' job and community and other aspects of their life, their links to other people in the organisation and community and the sacrifice that they would have to make if they decide to leave the job. This thesis has investigated the impact of six antecedent HRM practices on the intention to remain of Saudi national workers in the Saudi Arabia construction industry.

Furthermore, it examined the relationship between HRM practices and job embeddedness and the mediating impact of on-job embeddedness on the relationship between the investigated HRM practices and intention to remain. Understanding these relationships is crucial because of the shortage of qualified/competent Saudi national workers and the high level of turnover identified with Saudi nationals in the Saudi construction sector. The study used various analytical models derived from the SHRM and turnover literature including the job embeddedness model (Mitchell et al., 2001) conservation of resources theory (Hobfoll, 1998), social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) and AMO theory (Appelbaum et al., 2000) to examine the relationship between the job embeddedness construct, antecedent HRM practices and intention to stay and to provide theoretical framework for understanding the nature of the relationship between the three variables and how they relate to the specific context of employee retention in the Saudi construction sector. Hence, providing cross-cultural relevance for the application of these models in a non-Western environment context.

Furthermore, one of the unique aspects of this study is that it used OJE to explain the relationship between HRM practices and employees' intention to remain. To date, very few studies have investigated the mediating role of job embeddedness in the relationship between antecedent HRM practices and employee intention to remain. Hence, the results of the current study have provided insights, which will help to reduce the research gap in this area. The study outcomes showed that the investigated antecedent HRM practices were generally positively correlated to employee's intention to remain. Hence, it can be deduced that the investigated HRM practices are also negatively correlated to turnover intentions of Saudi national workers in the Saudi Arabia construction industry.

Furthermore, the current research makes a significant contribution to the job embeddedness literature by providing empirical evidence of the relevance and effectiveness of best practice HRM in a non-Western cultural context and the context of Arab culture. Also, the finding that OJE explains employee intention to remain in Saudi Arabia indicates that the job embeddedness model is potentially applicable cross-culturally as a model for investigating turnover.

### **7.5.2 Practical contribution**

from a practical perspective, this study provides managers in the Saudi construction sector with insights into how HRM practices can be designed to proactively manage employer-employee relationships in order to improve the retention of Saudi national workers in the Saudi Arabia construction industry. Furthermore, given that no other study has investigated this topic in relation to the Saudi context, the current research also contributes to the literature by extending the study of job embeddedness in non-western cultural context and in Saudi Arabia in particular. This study also provides applied contribution in terms of its relevance to practitioners, given that there are limited resources for understanding and addressing turnover in cross-cultural contexts. Hence, from this perspective, this thesis will provide practitioners with useful information that will enable them to make and implement HRM policies and strategies for managing turnover in their specific national/cultural context. This research has also helped to provide insight into the rarely researched area of the specific national/cultural factors that affect the impact of HRM practices on “employee intention to remain” in the Middle East region and the mediation role of job embeddedness. Hence, the results of the current research will be useful to managers and HR practitioners that are interested in the literature concerning HRM challenges that are associated with employee retention in the medial East cultural context and the Saudi Arabia construction sector in particular. The study findings provide useful indicators and frameworks that can be used by managers and HR practitioners to devise effective policies and practices in organisations that will create the right conditions for employee embeddedness and favourable employee perception in terms of how the HRM practices are implemented. The study will also be of interest to academic researchers that are interested in the theoretical perspectives for advancing further research in the topic area.

Additionally, it has been suggested in the literature that the effect of person-job fit on employee embeddedness is more likely to be higher in individualistic cultural contexts than in collectivist cultural contexts. Furthermore, it was expected that off-the-job/community factors would have significant impact on the embeddedness of individuals from collectivist culture. However, the results of this research contradict such assumptions, showing stronger correlation between person-job fit, employee OJE and intention to remain and weaker correlation between person-community fit, off-the-job embeddedness and intention to remain. Furthermore, parallel - stronger correlation was found between OJE fit elements and intention to stay than between OJE links elements and intention to stay. Hence, from this perspective, this research makes an important contribution to cross-cultural research in job embeddedness and turnover, which suggests that on-the-job embeddedness is just as important and can be even more important than off-the-job embeddedness in facilitating employee retention. Furthermore, person-job fit, which represents the fit dimension of OJE, is just as important as the links dimension in collectivist cultural contexts. Hence, highlighting the importance of ensuring organisational identity of individuals in collectivist cultural contexts from a strategic HRM perspective.

Other important contribution of this research includes the findings that job embeddedness partially mediates the effect of HRM practices on the intention to remain of Saudi national workers in the construction sector, highlighting the fact that employee retention can be improved by increasing job embeddedness. Hence, the investigated antecedent HRM practices can be strategically designed to increase embeddedness of the Saudi national workers, which will in turn increase their intention to remain. Additionally, from the perspective of off-the-job embeddedness, the study findings showed support for earlier studies, which identified community links and fit as important off-the-job components that are linked to lower turnover in collectivist cultural contexts. The findings support Lee et al (2004; 2014), which identified quality of available recreational activities and good weather and Mitchell et al. (2001) and Ramesh and Gelfand (2010), which identified family roots as important off-the-job embeddedness factors. According to these authors, person-community fit can be determined by location advantages such as good weather and availability of leisure facilities and activities in the local area that are of interest or importance to employee as these resources support their lifestyle. Similarly, family roots represent important links to the local area and constitute valuable benefits that may be considered too costly to lose, if leaving present job would mean relocation.

Hence, the study results indicate that there is scope for organisations to explore how non-work domain influences can be used to strengthen employee attachment to the organisation.

Overall, these research results create awareness for managers and HR practitioners in the Saudi construction industry to understand that the HR practices on their own, only partially facilitate employee intention to remain and strategic design and application of these practices is required in order increase employee embeddedness, which in turn will deepen organisational attachment and provide employees with stronger reasons for wanting to stay longer with their present organisation. Despite the relevance and appropriateness of the job embeddedness model for the Saudi construction sector context that was investigated in this research, it also recognised that such outcomes may not necessarily prevail in all cross-cultural contexts. Hence, it is expected that difference views may arise from other researchers concerning this subject. However, given that no other studies have investigated job embeddedness in relation to the six antecedent HRM variables that were examined in this study and a cross-cultural context, it is not possible to make direct comparison with previous studies concerning this.

## **Chapter Eight: Conclusion**

### **8.1 Study Summary**

The objective of this thesis was to investigate on- job embeddedness as an explanatory mechanism in the relationships between selected HR practices and national workers' intentions to stay in the context of the construction industry in Saudi Arabia. The methodology chapter was presented in Chapter five, providing a comprehensive discussion of the methodology, including the research paradigms and methods that were adopted for the study and the data analysis techniques that were used. In chapter three, the literature review chapter was presented, providing critical analyses of the turnover construct, important traditional turnover models, the retention construct, the job embeddedness construct and key job embeddedness theories, review of relevant studies that investigated the relationship between HRM practices and on-job embeddedness, the different HRM practices and approaches, normative SHRM theories and the literature review research gap. The main research gap was that very little research had been conducted on the antecedents to job embeddedness and no one, to our knowledge, had examined how perceptions of HR practices influence perceptions of organisational job embeddedness in the Saudi context. Accordingly, the following research questions were developed to address the identified research gaps:

**RQ1:** What is the relation between the selected HR practices of Saudi nationals and their intention to remain in the construction industry in Saudi?

**RQ2:** What is the relation between selected HR practices of Saudi nationals and on the on- job embeddedness in the construction industry of Saudi?

**RQ3:** What is the relation between the on-job embeddedness of Saudi nationals and their intention to remain in the construction industry in Saudi?

**RQ4:** What is the relation between the off-job embeddedness of Saudi nationals and their intention to remain in the construction industry in Saudi?

**RQ5** what is the mediational role of on-job embeddedness between selected HR practices and intention to remain of the construction industry of Saudi?

Following the literature review, discussion of the research framework and development of the research hypotheses was presented in Chapter four, which detailed the conceptual framework for the thesis and the development of the research hypothesis.

Following which the analysis of the research findings and the discussion of the results of the findings were presented in chapters six and seven including discussion of the research contribution, research implications and the research strengths, limitations and future directions. Overall, the results of the current research findings supported the core premise of the job embeddedness theory, as it relates to the issues of employee retention and explaining why people remain in organisations beyond attitudinal or affective factors. Both effective work and non-work influences were found to have a significant relationship on employee intention to remain in the survey Saudi construction organisations. Similar to Mitchell et al. (2001a; b), the results of the current research findings confirm the importance of job embeddedness in explaining employee retention by separately examining the effects of both work and non-work influences. However, unlike Mitchell et al (2001a; b), which posited work and non-work influences as having equal degree of impact on employee retention, the current findings showed that work influences (OJE) had a greater impact on job embeddedness and employee retention, while off-the-job embeddedness had weaker but moderately significant impact on job embeddedness and employee intention to remain. The current study's findings showed that perceived antecedent HRM practices were positively correlated to employee intention to remain and lower turnover intentions through OJE constructs that enhance the perception of organisational fit, links and sacrifice. Furthermore, the study highlighted several HRM implications for managers in the Saudi construction sector that can be used to proactively improve the retention of Saudi national workers in the sector.

## **8.2 Practical implication**

The current study highlights several implications for managers in the Saudi construction sector. As predicted, the current study findings demonstrated that perceived antecedent HRM practices are positively correlated to employee intention to remain and lower turnover intention through OJE constructs that enhance perception of organizational fit, links and sacrifice. Hence, from this perspective, proactive steps can be taken by managers to increase the impact of OJE links dimensions by designing HRM strategies that are aimed at increasing employee retention and reducing voluntary turnover. For example, OJE links dimension can be further developed through team-based project work, cross functional team approaches and long-term projects that facilitate development of intra-organisational ties (Lee et al., 2004).



A major implication for the managers is to take note of the fact that on-job embeddedness is influenced by best practice HRM practices including employee perceived selection, perceived extensive training, perceived compensation, perceived participation, perceived job security and perceived supervisor support, which in turn can help to improve the retention of Saudi national workers in the Saudi construction industry. From this perspective, managers need to be cognisant of the reality that HRM practices may not in themselves directly influence employee retention and that proactive tactics are required regarding the types HRM practices that are implemented and how they are implemented in order to generate fit, link and sacrifice elements that will embed employees and cause them to stay. Accordingly, the following tactics are recommended for enhancing employee job embeddedness based on the investigated six antecedent HRM practices.

### **8.3 Recommendations for Managerial Practice**

#### **8.3.1 Improving employee retention through perceived employee selection**

Given that the results of the current findings indicated that improvement in employee selection can generate up to 58.2% increase in intention to remain, the following HRM practices can be implemented to improve and link perceived employee selection to retention strategy: robust recruitment and selection processes that are designed to select candidates whose skills and values match with the job and organisational requirements, providing candidates with comprehensive information about the job requirements, work environment and organisational culture so that they can self-select or self-deselect from the recruitment process based on the compatibility of the provided information with their employment objective (Holtom et al., 2006; Mathis and Jackson, 2008). Induction programme for newcomers and on-the-job training that are designed to increase person-job fit and familiarise new employees with aspects of their jobs and to develop job/organisation specific skills that enable them to perform effectively in their jobs (Halvorsen et al., 2015).

#### **8.3.2 Improving employee retention through perceived extensive training**

Given that the results of the current findings indicated that improvement in extensive training can generate up to 49.6% increase in intention to remain, the following HRM practices can be implemented to improve and link perceived extensive training to retention strategy: training in firm-specific skills that have purposefully been designed

for the achievement of organisational goals and to facilitate greater effectiveness, person-job fit and internal career advancement (Bambacas and Kulik, 2013). Furthermore, from the perspective of strengthening organisational attachment through the fit dimension of OJE, person-job fit can be uniquely enhanced through job sculpting by tailoring jobs to include tasks that leverage the unique skills set possessed by employees or according to their competence and interests (Butler and Waldrop, 1999; Ganesan and Gauri, 2012). This will enhance the social exchange relationship by increasing trust in the employment relationship (Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005; Hom et al., 2009) and also provide employees with instrumental resources that can be used to acquire further resources such as promotion, which will in turn increase OJE and intention to remain, as employees will be reluctant to forfeit such employment benefits (Hobfoll, 2001). Furthermore, in-house training programmes are recommended as a strategy for connecting employees with other organisational members and hence increasing their sense of relatedness to the organisations (Haines et al., 2010). Also, based on the SHRM AMO framework, supervisors and line managers can work with individual employees to develop a personal development or career development plan, which combines the development of knowledge, skills and abilities (KSA), provision of motivation enhancing inducements that encourage optimal use of these KSAs for the achievement of organisational goals and objectives and the opportunity to participate or apply these KSA within the organisation and in relation to providing employees with higher levels of responsibility, work enrichment, more say in their career development and access to internal career advancement opportunities (Halvorsen et al., 2015).

### **8.3.3 Improving employee retention through perceived compensation and incentives**

Based on the result of the current findings which indicated that improvement in perceived compensation and incentives can generate up to 56.3% increase in employee intention to remain, the following HRM practices can be implemented to improve and link perceived compensation and incentives to retention strategy: Designing and implementing financial compensation and incentive system that increase employees perception of how much material resources they will stand to lose by leaving the organisation, such as paying higher than the market-rate salary (Holtom et al., 2006), linking increase in financial incentives to tenure. For example, by deferring bonuses and or other financial reward,

whereby such compensation payments are made in stages that are linked to achievements that are tied to a longer future time payout periods instead of lump sum (Cappelli, 2000). Furthermore, competitive salaries can be used as extrinsic motivator to increase employee perception of OJE sacrifice and hence their intention to remain (Salamin and Hom, 2005; Samuel and Chipunza, 2009; Nyberg, 2010). It is also suggested that the focus of retention strategies should be narrowed to high performance or talented employees rather than seeking to reduce general employee turnover. Furthermore, the retention strategy should be designed to support current market trends and conditions by focusing retention efforts on those skill areas that are highly demanded in the market or that are required for the firm's success (Capelli, 2000).

### **8.3.4 Improving employee retention through perceived employee participation**

Given that the results of the current findings indicated that improvement in perceived employee participation can generate up to 65.4% increase in intention to remain, the following HRM practices can be implemented to improve and link perceived employee participation to retention strategy: Work design and employee empowerment practices that give employees some level of autonomy to design and plan their work tasks and make job-related decisions such as being trusted to solve client problems without having to undergo unnecessary bureaucratic processes to obtain approval for every action/decision (Holtom et al., 2006). Flatter organisation structures and autonomous work systems with fewer hierarchical chains of command can also be implemented to decentralise command and control and provide employees with higher-level responsibilities and involvement in decision-making. This can include implementation of self-managing teams and leadership/management development programmes such as client/customer service management and project management that train employees to be able to problem solve and make the right decisions in relation to specific business areas without having to defer to superiors all the time (Senior and Fleming, 2006; Holtom et al., 2006).

### **8.3.5 Improving employee retention through perceived job security**

Based on the result of the current findings which indicated that improvement in perceived job security can generate up to 63.5% increase in intention to remain, the following HRM practices can be implemented to improve and link perceived job security to retention

strategy: showing preference for primary employment systems that support the employment of high numbers of permanent staff/core workers including internal labour market strategies that are designed to provide internal promotion opportunities, skills development and career advancement within the organisation (Schuler and Jackson, 1987; Budd, 2004; Osterman, 2011).

### **8.3.6 Improving employee retention through perceived supervisor support**

Based on the result of the current findings which indicated that improvement in perceived supervisor support can generate up to 71.2% increase in intention to remain, the following HRM practices can be implemented to improve and link perceived supervisor support to retention strategy: provide supervisors and line managers with training on leader-subordinate relationship management and on the use of relationship-oriented transformational leadership styles such as individualised consideration and inspirational motivation that increase employee perception of supervisor/managerial support and their sense of purpose and identity with the organisation (Bass and Avolio, 1994; Northouse, 2010; Holmes et al., 2013). However, given that use of transformational leadership strategies such as individualised consideration can involve significant financial and other types of resource investment such as time, there is also need for such strategies be carefully crafted to target and cultivate retention of higher performers or other similar employees that are value adding to the organisation. Furthermore, from the perspective of social exchange theory, HRM policies and practices can be designed to encourage and facilitate relational/transformational leadership strategies such as intellectual stimulation and motivational inspiration through which supervisors/managers can mentor, inspire and cultivate trust and positive social exchange relationships with subordinates (Boies et al., 2015; Yu et al., 2018). Furthermore, such HRM policies and practices can include training, special projects, creativity programmes, employee empowerment and other organisational creative processes that can help to prevent inertia and challenge employees to be creative and more vested in the organisation and hence in the employment relationship, which will in turn increase organisational psychological contract and employee embeddedness (Kim and Lee, 2007; Dardar et al., 2012; Boies et al., 2015). Furthermore, supervisors and managers should be held accountable for employee retention as part of their key performance indicators (Bryant and Allen, 2013).

Supervisor support can also be used to increase employee retention by ensuring role clarity for subordinates, embedding subordinates into the organisational network to create opportunities for interaction with other members (such as socialisation programmes that help new employees to socialise with one another) and designing work that promote cohesion and growth opportunities (Bryant and Allen, 2013).

Additionally, in line with Holtom et al (2006), it is recommended that managers in the Saudi construction industry should understand how Saudi national workers are currently embedded in the organisation and the extent of their embeddedness in order to be able to design and implement effective HR practices-based retention strategies. Overall, this study has shown that the six HRM practices of employee selection, extensive training, compensation, participation, supervisor support and job security can be used to directly and indirectly influence employee intentions to remain. This helps to create awareness for how managers can further influence employee turnover intentions through careful design and implementation of HRM practices that will create/increase the fit, links and sacrifice components of the organisational environment that will embed employees in their present job, increase their intention to remain and discourage them from seeking alternative employment. The current research also highlights the importance for supervisors and managers to understand the role of job embeddedness in facilitating the relationship between HRM practices and employee intention to remain and the fact that the antecedent HRM practices in themselves only have moderate positive impact on retention. Hence, job embeddedness is required in order to achieve stronger influence on employee intention to remain.

## **8.4 Research Strengths and Limitations**

### **8.4.1 Research Strengths**

The job embeddedness model was developed based on the Western concept of HRM systems and practices. A key goal of the current thesis was to test the suitability of the model in a non-Western cultural context. Furthermore, unlike previous studies, which only considered one dimension of the construct, usually on-job embeddedness, the current study has investigated both dimensions of on-the-job and off-the-job dimensions. Another area of strength of the current study is in the demographic diversity of the sample in terms of gender, age, the occupational areas and tenure.

Hence, it is believed that to this extent, the results of the current research are not biased by any unique or unusual characteristics.

## **8.4.2 Research Limitations**

In terms of the limitations of the study, just like any other research project, some limitations are recognised in this study, which are subsequently explained in the following sections:

### **8.4.2.1 Theoretical Limitations**

One theoretical limitation of this research relates to the range of HRM practices that were tested, only six HRM practices were investigated in this research, however it is suggested in the SHRM literature that best HRM practices consists of a bundle of practices, which include other practices such as performance appraisal, information sharing and others, which interlink and reinforce one another to generate favourable organisational outcomes (Pfeffer, 1998). Furthermore, in this research, demographic factors such as gender, age, tenure, income, level of education and job level were used as control variables. However, these variables could also be important variables that would have provided further explanation about the moderating impact of job embeddedness on the relationship between HRM practices and intention to remain. Another area of limitation that is recognised in this research concerns the conceptualisation of job embeddedness as a retention construct, whereas some studies have argued that job embeddedness can also indirectly facilitate leaving/turnover via its links dimensions. Hence, this represents a conceptual issue that needs to be addressed, which was not examined or captured in this study. Additionally, while this study suggests that employee retention can be improved through increased job embeddedness, the OJE construct only addresses the impact of psychological variables on turnover and does not address economic or sociological factors such as the impact that external market variables have on turnover intentions or the impact of education or socio-economic status (Mueller and Price, 1990). Finally, the current research has treated the job embeddedness variables as aggregate constructs, which makes it difficult to determine how HRM practices affect specific components of on-the-job and off-the-job embeddedness. Furthermore, it is difficult to assess how each specific component mediates the relationship between HRM practices and employee retention.

#### **8.4.2.1 Methodological Limitations**

In term of the methodology limitations of the study, the current study was conducted using a cross-sectional time horizon. However, although turnover intention has been identified as the best predictor of actual turnover, which in essence infers that “intention to remain” is the best predictor of actual retention, this cannot be assessed until after it has occurred in the future. Hence, longitudinal study is required in order to be able to assess the degree to which the surveyed Saudi national workers will follow through on their intention to remain. Secondly, because the scope of the research investigation carried out in this study is limited to the construction sector in Saudi Arabia, the reliability of the associated predictors is potentially limited to construction sector and the cultural context. This also potentially limits the generalisability of the research findings, as it is possible that employees in non-construction organisations may possess different job attitude and behaviour in relation to intention to remain. Hence, it will be necessary to test the reliability of the findings in different organisational contexts. Also, with respect to the sample size that was used in this research, which is considered to be of comparable size with sample sizes that were utilised in previous studies such as Crossley et al. (2007), Erich et al. (2009), Bambacas and Kulik (2013) and Thomas et al. (2013), there is still need to exercise some restraint in generalising of the results of the research findings, given that the sample population was derived from only two Saudi construction companies. Furthermore, though the study findings supported the research hypothesis to confirm the positive relationship between the tested HRM practices and intention to remain, the study did not investigate the possibility of moderating conditions that can limit the positive impact of the antecedent HRM practices on intention to remain or how OJE evolves over time. Finally, another area of methodology limitation is in respect to the use of self-reported questionnaires for the collection of the survey data and the surveyed employees comprised the only source for the data that was obtained for the testing of the hypotheses. Hence, creating the risk of common method bias and the risk that the observed relationships may have been exaggerated (Buchanan and Bryman, 2009). However, this is a common issue that has been reported by other job embeddedness studies such as Allen (2006) and Crossley et al (2007). In order to minimise the risk of single source bias, in line with the advice of Podsakoff et al. (2003), all participants were assured of the complete anonymity of their data and encouraged to answer all questions as honestly as possible. Furthermore, no identification data was requested at any point during the data collection process.

## 8.5 Recommendations for Future Research

Given the potential limitation that was identified with the findings from the current research with respect to generalisability of the research results due to the fact that the research sample was drawn solely from the construction industry, it is recommended that future research in this topic area should expand the research context to multiple industry sectors for validation and comparative purposes. Secondly, in respect to the limitations of the cross-sectional research timeframe that was applied in the current study of the intention to remain of Saudi national workers, longitudinal time-frame approach is recommended for future studies in order to be able to assess the degree to which the surveyed Saudi national workers will follow through on their intention to remain. This will make it possible to measure the extent to which employee intention to remain has converted to actual employee retention in the future.

Thirdly, given that the use of the survey method to gather data from single source may cause common method bias, it is recommended that multiple data gathering methods should be employed in future research to improve triangulation and validity. Hence, in addition to the use of quantitative data collection instruments, qualitative methods such as in-depth interviews that collect and compare data from the perspective of subordinates and their supervisors can help to provide deeper insights into the relationship between HRM practices, job embeddedness and employee intention to remain.

Fourthly, in order to improve understanding of how each of the different components of the OJE construct is uniquely affected by specific HRM practices and their subsequent impact on intention to remain, it is recommended that future research should investigate each element of the OJE construct as separate components, rather than as aggregate constructs. Additionally, given that only six HRM practices based on soft model of HRM were tested in the current research, future research should investigate additional HRM practices such as promotion, performance appraisal, reduced status differentials and extensive information sharing. It will also be interesting to test the extent to which job embeddedness is affected by HRM practices that are based on the hard model of HRM. Furthermore, future research should examine the relationship between job on-embeddedness and off-the-job embeddedness on the one hand and the relationship between specific community-related outcomes and employee intention to remain (a work-related outcome).



Hence, examining the cross-domain/bi-directional relationship between the work and non-work domains.

Last/y, from the perspective of COR theory, future research should investigate how/whether resource surpluses that are created in one domain can generate positive cross-domain outcomes that further reinforce job embeddedness and employee intention to remain and the specific types of resource surpluses that can generate positive employee retention outcomes. Additionally, unlike studies such as Voydanoff (2004), Ferris et al (2007), Devine-Wright (2009) and Ng and Feldman (2010), which highlighted negative outcomes of community embeddedness, the data from the current research shows a positive perspective of community embeddedness. However, this research has been conducted based on the cross-sectional time frame and it is recommended that future research should examine both positive and negative impact of community embeddedness on employee retention using longitudinal timeframe. From a practitioner perspective, it is also recommended that future research should investigate how the off-the-job embeddedness construct can be operationalised from the perspective of SHRM and HRM practices that are specifically designed to improve employee retention by transferring resources from non-work to work domain and in terms of reducing the conceptual ambiguity that is currently associated with the construct.

Furthermore, given that demographic factors were used as control variables in the current research, it is also recommended for future research to test the effect that demographic variables have on moderating impact of job embeddedness in the relationship between HRM practices and intention to remain. Finally, in order to improve the cross-cultural relevance of the research findings, it is recommended that future research in this area should include distinct measures of cultural factors such as power-distance and collectivist orientation to test whether such variables have any systematic influence on job embeddedness.

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## **Appendix A : Questionnaires, Permissions and Ethics**

### **CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH**

“The Influence of Human Resources Management on Job Embeddedness and voluntary Turnover Intention: A Case Study of the constructions industry in Saudi Arabia”.

#### **Purpose**

This project is being conducted by saif Alharbi as part of a Doctor of Business Administration program at Plymouth University in the UK.

You are invited to participate in a web-based online survey on a research study titled The Influence of Human Resources Management on Job Embeddedness and turnover Intention: A Case Study of the constructions industry in Saudi Arabia. If you agree to take part in this study, you will be asked to complete an online survey/questionnaire. In the survey, you will first be asked some questions about your background such as nationality, Age, gender, marital status and Educational level. Then you will be asked questions concerning about the HR practices, job embeddedness and intention to remain. the total amount of time you will be asked to answer this study questions is expected to be 10 minutes.

#### **Participation**

Your participation in this survey is voluntary. You may refuse to take part in the research or exit the survey at any time without penalty. You are free to decline to answer any particular question you do not wish to answer for any reason. You may choose to stop your participation in this study at any time. Your decision to stop your participation will have no effect on you or your organization.

#### **Benefits**

You will receive no direct benefits from participating in this research study. However, your responses may help us learn more about employee’s retention and to have a better understanding about current HR practices implemented on your organization to improve employee’s retention through your participation in the study.

**Costs:**

You do not have to pay to participate in this research study.

**Compensation:**

You will not be compensated for participating in this study.

**Confidentiality:**

Your survey answers will be sent to a link at SurveyMonkey.com where data will be stored in a password protected electronic format. Survey Monkey does not collect identifying information such as your name, email address, or IP address. Therefore, your responses will remain anonymous. No one will be able to identify you or your answers, and no one will know whether or not you participated in the study. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, there will be no more risk of harm than you would normally experience in daily life. The anticipated risks associated with participation in this research will be minimal. Your name will not be on the survey, so your answers will be anonymous. The anonymous surveys will be kept for use in future research and might be shared with other researchers. The information you give will be entered into an electronic database and analyzed, data will be kept separate from identifying information and will be linked only by a code that will be kept in locked storage to which only the researcher will have access. In this process, your information will be combined with information from other people taking part in the study.

**Contact:**

If you have questions at any time about the study or the procedures, you may contact me saif Alharbi or Email me on [saif.alharbi@plymouth.ac.uk](mailto:saif.alharbi@plymouth.ac.uk) . Also, Questions regarding the survey, or the doctoral research, can be directed to the principal supervisor: DR. Atul Mishra (Director of Studies)] via phone at: +44 (0)1752 585620 or via email at E: [atul.mishra@plymouth.ac.uk](mailto:atul.mishra@plymouth.ac.uk) .If you feel you have not been treated according to the descriptions in this form, or that your rights as a participant in research have not been honoured during the course of this project, or you have any questions, concerns, or complaints that you wish to address to someone other than the investigator, you may contact Plymouth university at Drake circus Plymouth Devon PL48AA United Kingdom Tel:+44(0)175260600.

ELECTRONIC CONSENT: Please select your choice below. You may print a copy of this consent form for your records. Clicking on the “Agree” button indicates that

- You have read the above information
- You voluntarily agree to participate
- You are 18 years of age or older

## **Appendix B : Ethical Approval Application**

Date: 30 April 2018

Dear Saif,

Ethical Approval Application No: FREIC1516.33

Title: Investigation on job embeddedness and its relation to turnover intention in private sector of Saudi Arabia

Thank you for your application to the Faculty Research Ethics & Integrity Committee (FREIC) seeking ethical approval for your proposed research.

The committee has considered your revised application and is satisfied that the project complies with Plymouth University's ethical standards for research involving human participants.

Approval is for the duration of the project. However, please resubmit your application to the committee if the information provided in the form alters or is likely to alter significantly.

The FREIC members wish you every success with your research.

Yours sincerely

*(Sent as email attachment)*

Dr James Benhin

Chair

Faculty Research Ethics & Integrity Committee

Faculty of Business Faculty of Business

### **Faculty of Business**

University of Plymouth                      T    +44 (0) 1752585587

Drake Circus                                      E    [FoBResearch@plymouth.ac.uk](mailto:FoBResearch@plymouth.ac.uk)

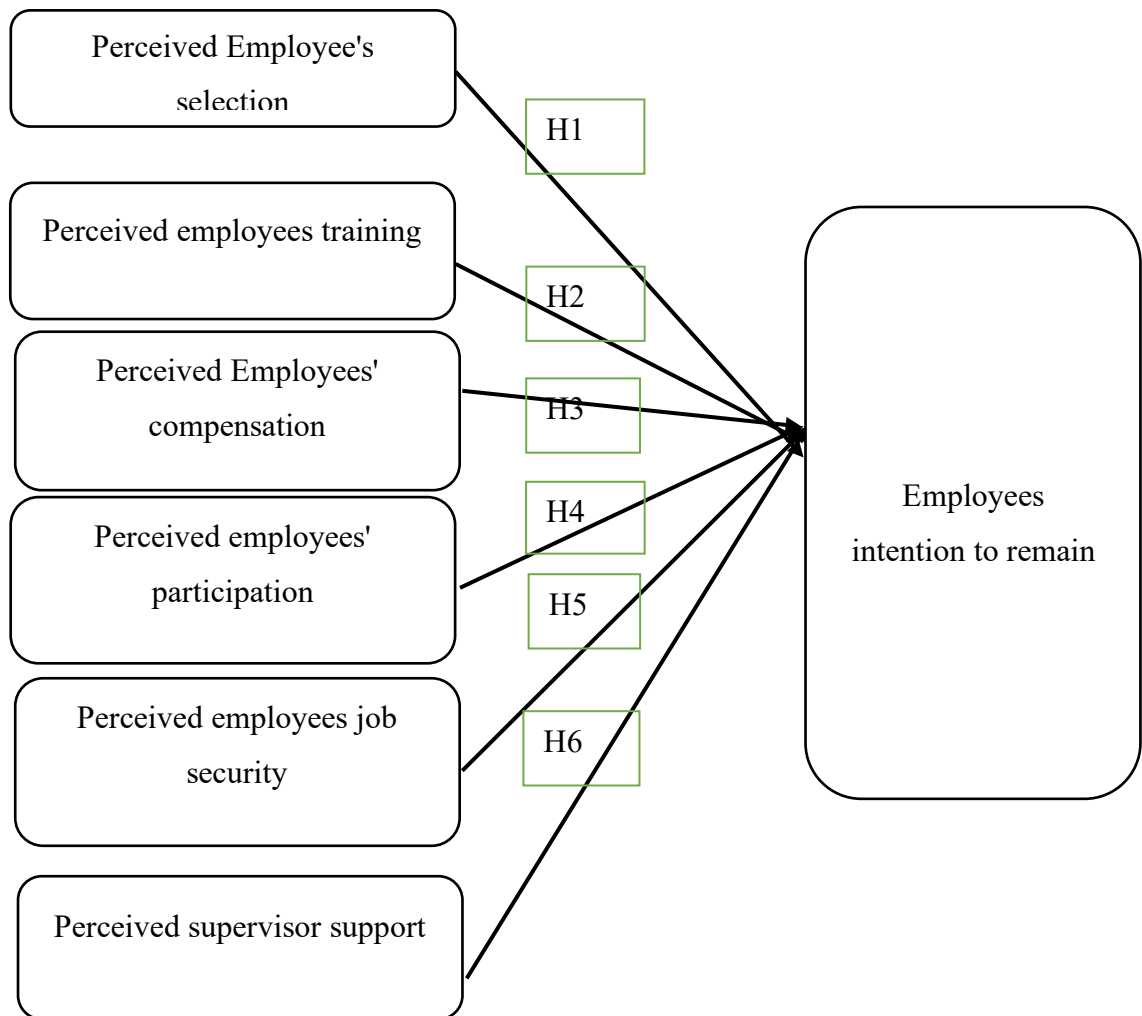
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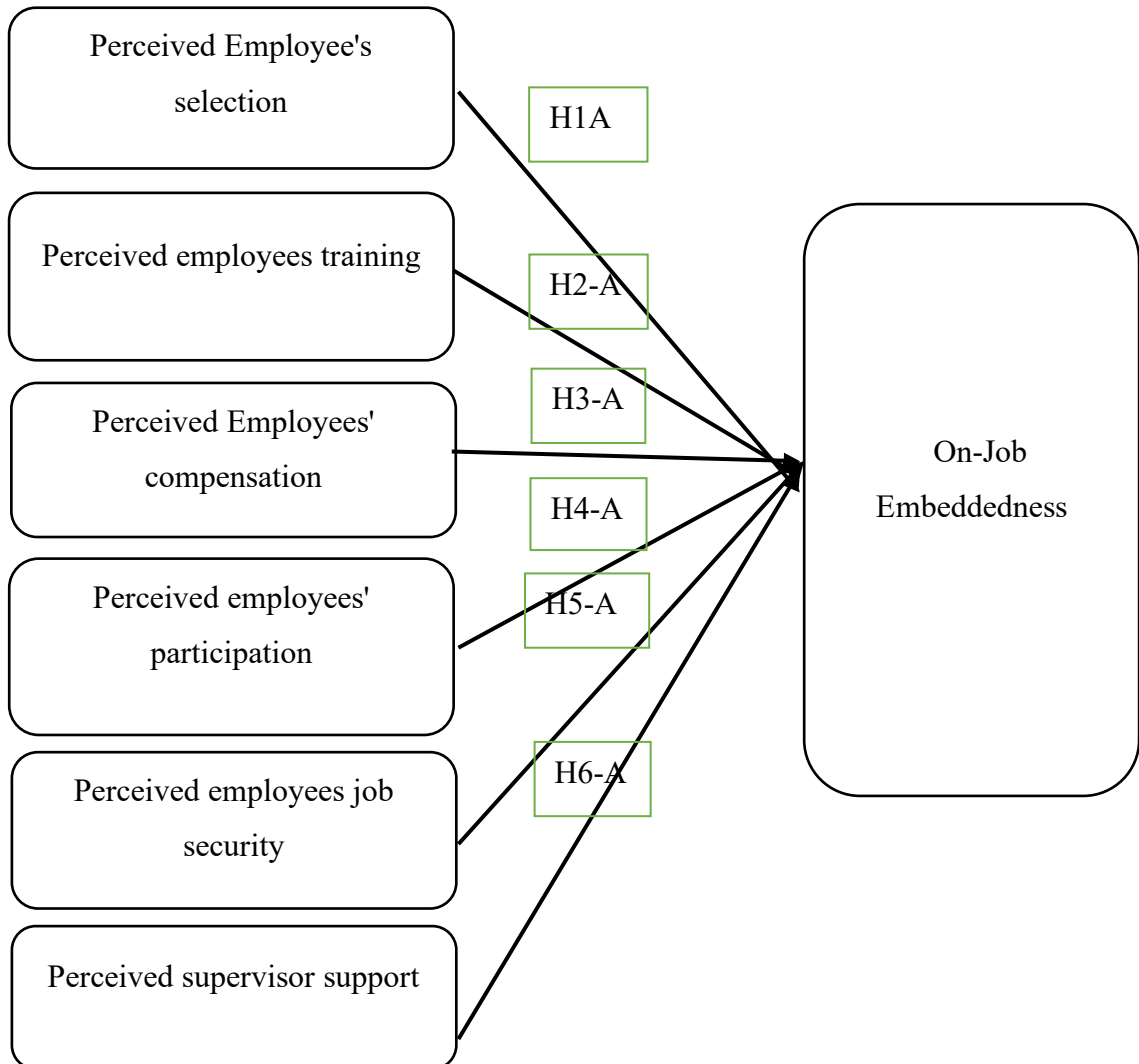


## Appendix C: Research conceptual Models

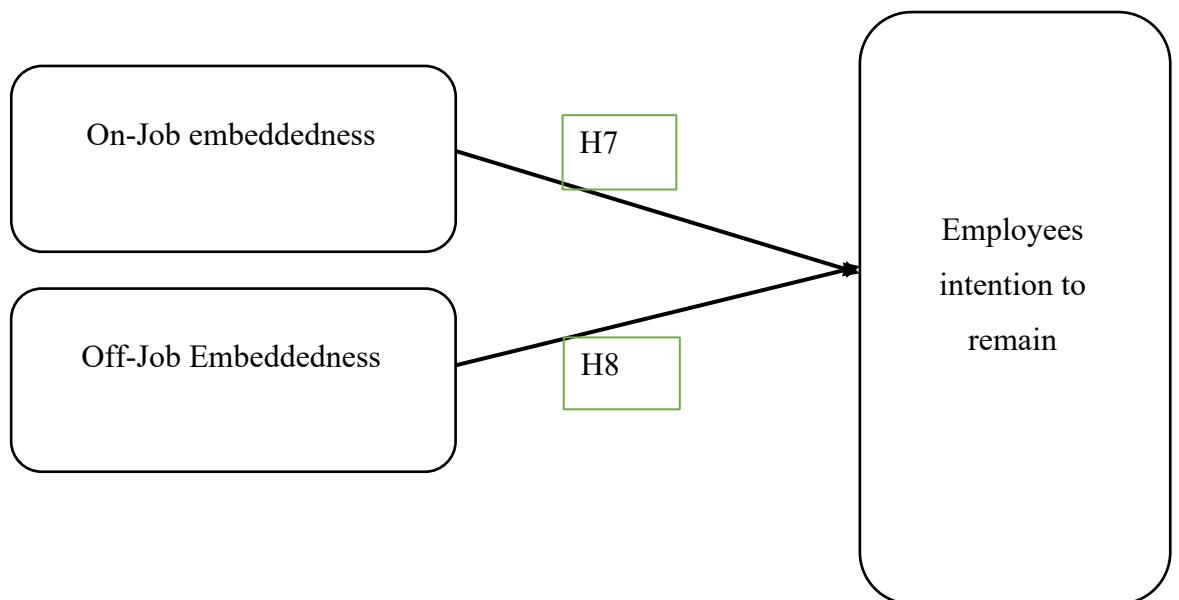
**Model 1: The relation between selected HR practices and employee's on-job embeddedness to remain.**



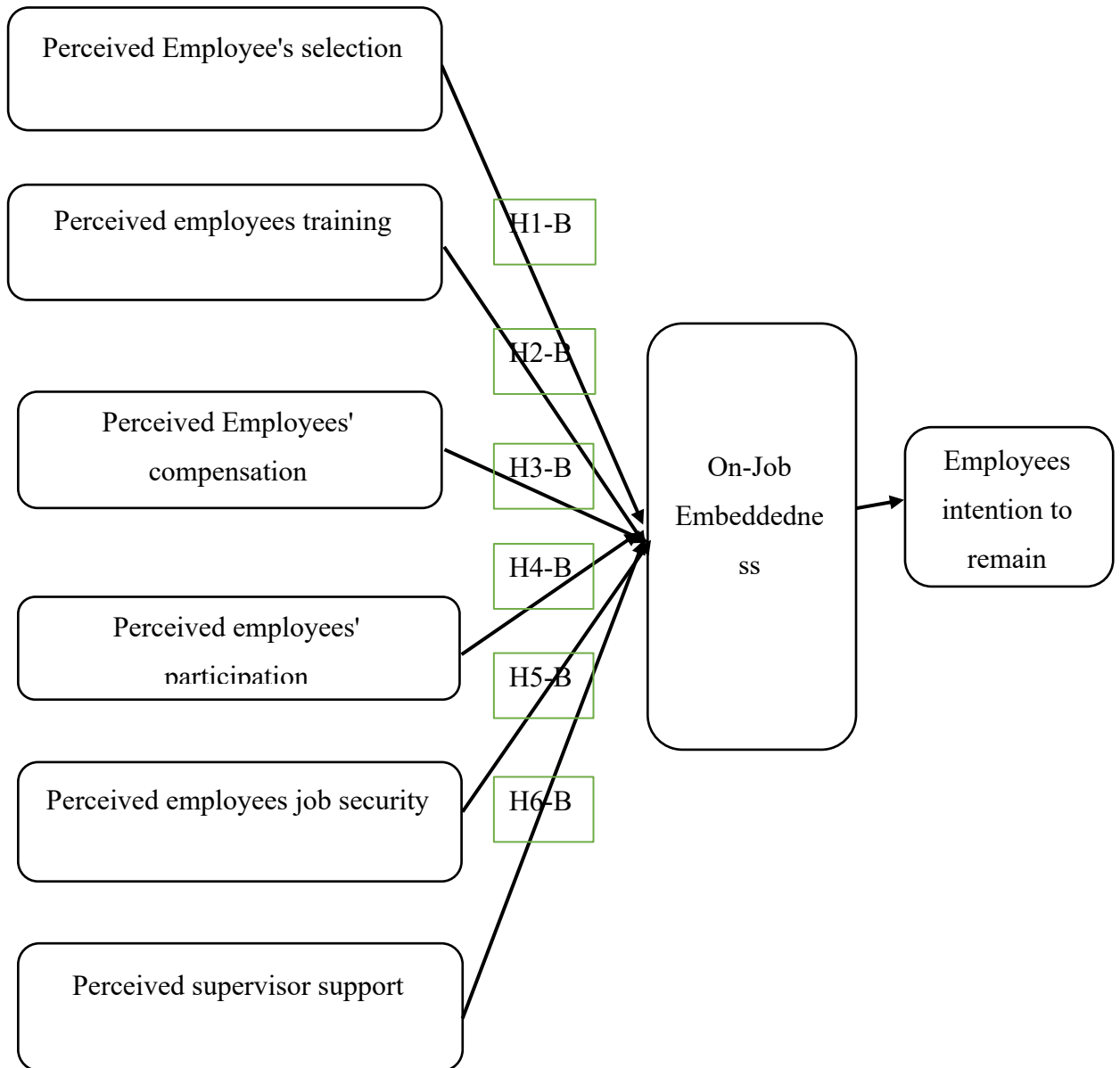
**Model 2: The relation between selected HR practices and employee's intention to remain.**



**Model 3: Relationship between off-job and On-job embeddedness and intention to remain.**



**Model 4: The mediational role of on-job embeddedness in the relation between selected HR practices and employee's intention to remain.**



## Appendix D: The full list of research items

Items Number	Items Questions	Item code
1	My job utilizes my skills and talents well.	OJE
2	I feel like I am a good match for my organization.	OJE
3	I like the authority and responsibility I have at this organization.	OJE
4	My co-workers are similar to me.	OJE
5	I would sacrifice a lot if I left this job.	OJE
6	I believe the prospects for continuing employment with my organization are excellent.	OJE
7	if I stay with my organization; I will be able to achieve most of my goals.	OJE
8	I have a lot of freedom on this job to pursue my goals.	OJE
9	I am a member of an effective work group.	OJE
10	I work closely with my co-workers.	OJE
11	on the job, I interact frequently with my work group members.	OJE
12	I really love the place where I live.	OJM
13	The place where I live is a good match for me.	OJM
14	The weather where I live is suitable for me.	OJM
15	The area where I live offers the leisure activities that I like (sports, outdoor activities, cultural events & arts).	OJM
16	Leaving the community where I live would be very hard.	OJM
17	if I were to leave the community, I would miss my non-work-friends.	OJM

18	If I were to leave the area where I live, I would miss my neighbourhood.	OJM
19	people respect me a lot in my community.	OJM
20	My family roots are in this community.	OJM
21	I participate in cultural and recreational activities in my local area.	OJM
22	Great effort is taken to select the right person.	RS
23	Long-term employee potential is emphasized.	RS
24	Considerable importance is placed on the staffing process.	RS
25	Very extensive effort is made in selection.	RS
26	Extensive training programs are provided for individuals in their jobs at your firm.	ET
27	Employees in their jobs will normally go through training programs every few years at your firm.	ET
28	there are formal training programs to teach new hires the skills they need to perform their job at your firm.	ET
29	Formal training programs are offered to employees in order to increase their promo ability at your firm.	ET
30	incentive system at your firm encourage employees to pursue company objectives.	IC
31	Incentives system at your firm is fair at rewarding people who accomplish company objectives.	IC
32	incentive system at your firm encourages people to reach company goals.	IC
33	Incentive system at your firm really recognizes people who contribute the most to the company.	IC

34	I am in this job are often asked by my supervisor to participate in decisions.	EP
35	Individuals in this job are allowed to make decisions.	EP
36	Employees are provided the opportunity to suggest improvements in the way things are done.	EP
37	supervisors keep open communications with employees in this job.	EP
38	I am in this job can expected to stay with this organization for as long as they wish.	ES
39	Job security is almost guaranteed to employees in this job.	ES
40	it is very difficult to dismiss employee from his /her job at my firm.	ES
41	Help is available from the organization when I have a problem.	PSS
42	My supervisor cares about my general satisfaction at work.	PSS
43	My supervisor cares about my opinions.	PSS
44	My supervisor really cares about my well-being.	PSS
45	Barring unforeseen circumstances, I would remain in this organization indefinitely.	IR
46	If I were completely free to choose, I would prefer to continue working in this organization.	IR
47	I expect to continue working as long as possible in this organization.	IR

## **Appendix E: Questionnaires English version**

### **Section One: Background Information.**

#### **1) Nationality:**

- Saudi  Non-Saudi

#### **2) Gender:**

- Male  Female

#### **3) Age:**

- 20-25 years  26-31 years  32-37 years  
 38-43 years  44-49 years  
 over 50 years

#### **4) Marital Status:**

- Married  single  Divorced  Widowed

#### **5) Years of experience:**

- less than one year.  
 one to less than 5 years.  
 5 years to less than 10 years.  
 10 years to less than 20 years.  
 over 20 years.

#### **6) Job Title:**

- Manager.  
 supervisor.  
 Middle and low-level management employee.  
 Professional.

#### **7) Educational Level:**

- Secondary/Technical School  
 Higher Diploma  
 bachelor's Degree  
 Master's Degree  
 PHD Degree



**Section two: About on-job embeddedness.**

<b>On- job – Embeddedness (OJE)</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>
8-my job utilizes my skills and talents well.	5	2	3	2	1
9-I feel like I am a good match for my organization.	5	2	3	2	1
10-I like the authority and responsibility I have at this organization.	5	2	3	2	1
11-My co-workers are similar to me.	5	4	3	2	1
12-I would sacrifice a lot if I left this job.	5	4	3	2	1
13-I believes the prospects for continuing employment with my organization are excellent.	5	4	3	2	1
14-if I stay with my organization; I will be able to achieve most of my goals.	5	4	3	2	1
15-I have a lot of freedom on this job to pursue my goals.	5	4	3	2	1
16-I am a member of an effective work group.	5	4	3	2	1
17-I work closely with my co-workers.	5	4	3	2	1
18-on the job, I interact frequently with my work group members.	5	4	3	2	1

**Section three: About off-job embeddedness.**

<b>Off- job – Embeddedness (OJM)</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>
19-I really love the place where I live.	5	4	3	2	1
20-The place where I live is a good match for me.	5	4	3	2	1
21-The weather where I live is suitable for me.	5	4	3	2	1
22-The area where I live offers the leisure activities that I like (sports, outdoor activities, cultural events &arts).	5	4	3	2	1
23-Leaving the community where I live would be very hard.	5	4	3	2	1
24-if I were to leave the community, I would miss my non-work-friends.	5	4	3	2	1
25-If I were to leave the area where I live, I would miss my neighborhood.	5	4	3	2	1
26-people respect me a lot in my community.	5	4	3	2	1
27-My family roots are in this community.	5	4	3	2	1
28-I participate in cultural and recreational activities in my local area.	5	4	3	2	1

**Section four: Perceived Employees Selection:**

<b>Perceived Employees Selection (RS)</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>
29-Great effort is taken to select the right person.	5	4	3	2	1
30-Long-term employee potential is emphasized.	5	4	3	2	1
31-Considerable importance is placed on the staffing process.	5	4	3	2	1
32-Very extensive effort is made in selection.	5	4	3	3	1

**Section Five: perceived employees training:**

<b>perceived employees training (ET)</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>
33-Extensive training programs are provided for individuals in their jobs at your firm.	5	4	3	2	1
34-Employees in their jobs will normally go through training programs every few years at your firm.	5	4	3	2	1
35-there are formal training programs to teach new hires the skills they need to perform their job at your firm.	5	4	3	2	1
36-Formal training programs are offered to employees in order to increase their promo ability at your firm.	5	4	3	2	1

**Section six: perceived employees Compensation.**

<b>perceived employees Compensation (IC)</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>
37-incentive system at your firm encourage employees to pursue company objectives.	5	4	3	2	1
38-Insenttives system at your firm is fair at rewarding people who accomplish company objectives.	5	4	3	2	1
39-incenttive system at your firm encourages people to reach company goals.	5	4	3	2	1
40-Incentive system at your firm really recognizes people who contribute the most to the company.	5	4	3	2	1

**Section seven: perceived Employee Participation.**

<b>perceived Employee Participation (EP)</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>
41-I am in this job are often asked by my supervisor to participate in decisions.	5	4	3	2	1
42-Individuals in this job are allowed to make decisions.	5	4	3	2	1
43-Employees are provided the opportunity to suggest improvements in the way things are done.	5	4	3	2	1
44-supervisors keep open communications with employees in this job.	5	4	3	2	1

**Section eight: Perceived employment security.**

<b>Perceived employment security (ES)</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>
45-I am in this job can expected to stay with this organization for as long as they wish.	5	4	3	2	1
46-Job security is almost guaranteed to employees in this job.	5	4	3	2	1
47-it is very difficult to dismiss employee from his /her job at my firm.	5	4	3	2	1

**Section nine: Perceived supervisor support.**

<b>Perceived supervisor support (PSS)</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>
48-Help is available from the organization when I have a problem.	5	4	3	2	1
49-My supervisor cares about my general satisfaction at work.	5	4	3	2	1
50-My supervisor cares about my opinions.	5	4	3	2	1
51-My supervisor really cares about my well-being.	5	4	3	2	1

**Section ten: Intention to remain.**

<b>Intention to remain (IR)</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>
52-Barring unforeseen circumstances, I would remain in this organization indefinitely.	5	4	3	2	1
53-If I were completely free to choose, I would prefer to continue working in this organization.	5	4	3	2	1
54-I expect to continue working as long as possible in this organization.	5	4	3	2	1

9) Would you like to receive a copy of the summary report of the study?

Yes       No

Please provide your email

.....

Thank you very much for taking the time to complete this survey. Your help in providing this information is greatly appreciated. If there is anything else you would like to tell us, please do so in the space provided below.

.....

Thank you for your time and co-operation in completing this survey

## Appendix F: Questionnaires Arabic version

### القسم الأول: المعلومات الشخصية والوظيفية:

#### ١- الجنسية:

سعودي  غير سعودي

#### ٢- الجنس

ذكر  أنثى

#### ٣- العمر:

٢٠ إلى ٢٥ سنة

٢٦ إلى ٣١

٣٢ إلى ٣٧

٣٨ إلى ٤٣  ٤٤ إلى ٤٩

٥٠ سنة فأكثر

#### ٤- الحالة الاجتماعية :

أعزب  متزوج  مطلق  أرمل

#### ٥- سنوات الخبرة:

أقل من سنة واحدة  من سنة أقل من ٥ سنوات  من ٥ سنوات الى أقل من ١٠ سنة

من ١٠ سنوات الى أقل من ٢٠ سنة

٢٠ سنة فأكثر

#### ٦- المسمى الوظيفي :

مشرف  مدير

موظف إداري (مستوى متوسط)  موظف مهني

#### ٧- المستوى التعليمي:

دبلوم عالي  تعليم ثانوي أو فني

بكالوريوس  ماجستير  دكتوراه

القسم الثاني: العوامل الداخلية المؤثرة في الاندماج الوظيفي

العوامل الداخلية المؤثرة في الاندماج الوظيفي	أوافق بشدة	أوافق	محايد	لا أوافق	لا أوافق بشدة
٨					تستخدم وظيفتي مهاراتي وموهبتي جيدا
٩					أشعر بأنني مناسباً للشركة.
١٠					أنا أحب السلطة والمسؤولية لدي في هذه الشركة.
١١					زملائي في العمل مثلي.
١٢					من الممكن ان أضحي بالكثير إذا تركت هذه الوظيفة.
١٣					أعتقد ان احتمال الاستمرار في العمل لدى الشركة ممتاز.
١٤					إذا بقيت أعمل لدى الشركة سوف اكون قادر على تحقيق معظم اهدافي.
١٥					لدي الكثير من الحرية في هذا العمل لمتابعة أهدافي.
١٦					انا عضو في مجموعة عمل فعالة.
١٧					أنا اعمل بشكل لصيق مع زملائي في العمل.
١٨					أنا اتواصل بشكل مستمر مع اعضاء مجموعة العمل أثناء العمل.



القسم الثالث: العوامل الخارجية المؤثرة في الاندماج الوظيفي

أوافق بشدة	أوافق	محايد	لا اوافق	لا اوافق بشدة	العوامل الخارجية المؤثرة في الاندماج الوظيفي	
					أنا حقا أحب المكان الذي أعيش فيه.	١٩
					المنطقة التي اعيش فيها هي مناسبة بالنسبة لي.	٢٠
					مناخ المنطقة التي أعيش فيها مناسب لي.	٢١
					المنطقة التي اعيش فيها تقدم الانشطة الترفيهية التي أحب (الرياضية الانشطة في الهواء الطلق المناسبات الثقافية والفنية).	٢٢
					ترك المجتمع الذي اعيش فيه سوف يكون من الصعب جدا.	٢٣
					لو كان لي ان اترك المنطقة سوف أفقد أصدقائي في الحي.	٢٤
					إذا كان لي ان اغادر المنطقة التي اعيش فيها سوف أفقد جيراني.	٢٥
					الناس يحترموني كثيرا في منطقتي.	٢٦
					جدوري العائلية في هذه المنطقة.	٢٧
					أشارك في الانشطة الثقافية والترفيهية في منطقتي المحلية.	٢٨

القسم الرابع: اختيار المرشحين					
اختيار الموظفين	أوافق بشدة	أوافق	محايد	أوافق لا	لا أوافق بشدة
٢٩					جهد كبير يتم اتخاذه لاختيار الشخص المناسب.
٣٠					يتم التشديد على إمكانيات الموظف على المدى البعيد.
٣١					يتم وضع أهمية كبيرة على عملية التوظيف.
٣٢					بذلت جهود واسعة جدا في الاختيار.

القسم الخامس: تدريب الموظفين					
التدريب المكثف	أوافق بشدة	أوافق	محايد	لا أوافق	لا أوافق بشدة
٣٣					يتم توفير برامج تدريبية مكثفة للموظفين في وظائفهم في الشركة.
٣٤					الموظفين في وظائفهم عادة يتدربون من خلال برامج التدريب كل بضع سنوات في الشركة.
٣٥					هناك برامج تدريبية رسمية لتعليم الموظفين الجدد المهارات التي يحتاجونها لأداء عملهم في الشركة.
٣٦					تقدم برامج التدريب الرسمية للموظفين من أجل زيادة القدرة الترويجي لها في الشركة.

القسم السادس: الحوافز والتعويضات					
لا اوافق بشدة	لا اوافق	محايد	اوافق	اوافق بشدة	الحوافز والتعويضات للموظفين
					٣٧ نظام الحوافز في الشركة تشجع الموظفين لتحقيق أهداف الشركة.
					٣٨ نظام الحوافز في الشركة عادل في مكافأة الموظفين الذين ينجزون أهداف الشركة.
					٣٩ نظام الحوافز في الشركة يشجع الناس على تحقيق أهداف الشركة.
					٤٠ نظام الحوافز في الشركة يعرف حقا بالأشخاص الذين ساهموا أكثر للشركة

القسم السابع: مشاركة الموظفين					
لا اوافق بشدة	لا اوافق	محايد	اوافق	اوافق بشدة	مشاركة الموظف
					٤١ غالبا ما يطلب من العاملين في هذه الوظيفة من قبل المشرف المشاركة في اتخاذ القرارات.
					٤٢ يسمح للأفراد في هذه الوظيفة لاتخاذ القرارات.
					٤٣ يتم إعطاء الفرصة للموظفين للاقتراح لتحسين الطريقة التي تتم بها الأمور.
					٤٤ المشرفين يدعون طرق التواصل مفتوحة مع الموظفين في هذه الوظيفة.

القسم الثامن: الأمان الوظيفي					
لا أوافق بشدة	لا أوافق	محايد	أوافق	أوافق بشدة	الامان الوظيفي
					٤٥ أتوقع أن أبقى في هذه الوظيفة طالما أرغب في ذلك.
					٤٦ الأمان الوظيفي تقريبا مكفول لدي في هذه الوظيفة.
					٤٧ من الصعب جدا الاستغناء عني في هذه الشركة.

القسم التاسع: دعم المشرف للموظفين					
لا أوافق بشده	لا أوافق	محايد	أوافق	أوافق بشده	دعم المشرف للموظفين
					٤٨ أستطيع الحصول على المساعدة من الشركة عندما تكون لدي مشكلة
					٤٩ مشرفي في العمل يهتم برضاي العام داخل العمل
					٥٠ مشرفي في العمل يهتم برئي.
					٥١ مشرفي حقا يهتم بمصالحي في العمل.

القسم العاشر: نية البقاء في العمل وعدم البحث عن وظيفة أخرى						
لاوافق بشدة	لاوافق	محايد	وافق	وافق بشدة	نية البقاء في الوظيفة الحالية	
					إذا لم تطرأ ظروف غير متوقعة، أود أن أبقى في هذه المنظمة إلى أجل غير مسمى	٥٢
					لو كنت حراً للاختيار تماماً للاختيار، وأنا أفضل أن أستمر في العمل لدى الشركة	٥٣
					أتوقع أن أستمر في العمل لأطول فترة ممكنة في هذه المنظمة.	٥٤

هل ترغب في الحصول على نسخة من نتائج هذه الدراسة؟

نعم

لا

يرجى كتابة بريدك الإلكتروني في حالة الإجابة بنعم:

.....

في الختام نشكرك على قيامك بتعبئة هذا الاستبيان، كما نقدر كل ما قدمته من مساعدة لتوفير هذه المعلومات. إذا كان لديك شيء آخر تود إضافته، يرجى كتابة ذلك في المكان المخصص أدناه.

.....

.....

.....

شكراً لتعاونك ووقتكم الثمين الذي بذلته للإجابة على أسئلة الاستبيان

## Appendix G: Pilot study results

### 1 Results of the pilot study

#### 1.1 Demographic Variables

1) Gender: There were 26 females and 57 males.

Table

Frequency distribution (1)

		<b>Nationality</b>			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
<b>Valid</b>	Saudi	83	100.0	100.0	100.0

		<b>Gender</b>			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
<b>Valid</b>	Male	57	68.7	68.7	68.7
	Female	26	31.3	31.3	100.0
	Total	83	100.0	100.0	

		<b>Age</b>			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
<b>Valid</b>	from 20 to 25 years	7	8.4	8.4	8.4
	from 26 to 31 years	28	33.7	33.7	42.2
	from 32 to 37 years	29	34.9	34.9	77.1
	from 38 to 43 years	13	15.7	15.7	92.8
	from 44 to 49 years	1	1.2	1.2	94.0
	from 50 to 55 years	5	6.0	6.0	100.0

	Total	83	100.0	100.0
<b>Experience</b>				
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
				Cumulative Percent
<b>Valid</b>	less than one year	2	2.4	2.4
	one year to less than 5 years	32	38.6	41.0
	5 years to less than 10 years	20	24.1	65.1
	10 years to less than 20 years	22	26.5	91.6
	over than 20 years	7	8.4	100.0
	Total	83	100.0	100.0

Table

Frequency distribution (2)

<b>Job Title</b>					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
<b>Valid</b>	manager	37	44.6	44.6	44.6
	supervisor	22	26.5	26.5	71.1
	employee	24	28.9	28.9	100.0
	Total	83	100.0	100.0	

<b>Education level</b>					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
<b>Valid</b>	secondary school	4	4.8	4.8	4.8
	higher diploma	10	12.0	12.0	16.9
	Bachelor's degree	52	62.7	62.7	79.5
	Master's degree	17	20.5	20.5	100.0
	Total	83	100.0	100.0	

<b>Marital status</b>					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
<b>Valid</b>	married	53	63.9	63.9	63.9
	single	22	26.5	26.5	90.4
	divorced	7	8.4	8.4	98.8
	widowed	1	1.2	1.2	100.0
	Total	83	100.0	100.0	



Table

Reliability test

<b>Reliability Statistics</b>		
<b>Constructs</b>	<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>	<b>N of Items</b>
<b>On-job embeddedness</b>	.848	4
<b>Off-job embeddedness</b>	.784	4
<b>Perceived employees selection</b>	.863	4
<b>Perceived employees training</b>	.901	4
<b>Perceived employees Compensation</b>	.935	4
<b>Perceived Employee participation</b>	.854	4
<b>Perceived employees security</b>	.819	3
<b>Perceived Supervisor support</b>	.903	4
<b>Intention to remain</b>	.900	3

Table

Correlations

<b>Correlations</b>										
		<b>OJE</b>	<b>OJM</b>	<b>ET</b>	<b>IC</b>	<b>RS</b>	<b>EP</b>	<b>ES</b>	<b>PSS</b>	<b>IR</b>
<b>OJE</b>	Pearson	1	.210	.350**	.482**	.444**	.693**	.288**	.530**	.595**
	Sig.		.057	.001	.000	.000	.000	.008	.000	.000
	N	83	83	83	83	83	83	83	83	83
<b>OJM</b>	Pearson	.210	1	.189	.310**	.213	.107	-.073	.210	.193
	Sig.	.057		.087	.004	.053	.335	.512	.056	.080
	N	83	83	83	83	83	83	83	83	83
<b>ET</b>	Pearson	.350**	.189	1	.520**	.428**	.223*	.378**	.394**	.321**

	Sig.	.001	.087		.000	.000	.042	.000	.000	.003
	N	83	83	83	83	83	83	83	83	83
<b>IC</b>	Pearson	.482**	.310**	.520**	1	.371**	.374**	.377**	.479**	.352**
	Sig.	.000	.004	.000		.001	.001	.000	.000	.001
	N	83	83	83	83	83	83	83	83	83
<b>RS</b>	Pearson	.444**	.213	.428**	.371**	1	.365**	.300**	.434**	.430**
	Sig.	.000	.053	.000	.001		.001	.006	.000	.000
	N	83	83	83	83	83	83	83	83	83
<b>EP</b>	Pearson	.693**	.107	.223*	.374**	.365**	1	.328**	.656**	.420**
	Sig.	.000	.335	.042	.001	.001		.002	.000	.000
	N	83	83	83	83	83	83	83	83	83
<b>ES</b>	Pearson	.288**	-.073	.378**	.377**	.300**	.328**	1	.409**	.451**
	Sig.	.008	.512	.000	.000	.006	.002		.000	.000
	N	83	83	83	83	83	83	83	83	83
<b>PSS</b>	Pearson	.530**	.210	.394**	.479**	.434**	.656**	.409**	1	.596**
	Sig.	.000	.056	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000
	N	83	83	83	83	83	83	83	83	83
<b>IR</b>	Pearson	.595**	.193	.321**	.352**	.430**	.420**	.451**	.596**	1
	Sig.	.000	.080	.003	.001	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	83	83	83	83	83	83	83	83	83

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

\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

OJE = On- job embeddedness; OJM = Off- job embeddedness; ET = Extensive training; IC = Compensation and Incentives; RS = Selective staffing; EP = Employee participation; ES = Employment security; PSS = Perceived supervisor support; and IR = Intention to remain

